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In Defense of Black Women: Black Women Advocacy and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, 1945–1995

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IN DEFENSE OF BLACK WOMEN: BLACK WOMEN ADVOCACY AND THE NATIONAL
ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF COLORED PEOPLE, 1945–1995

by

Crystal Ellis

A Dissertation Submitted in
Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of

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in African and African Diaspora Studies

at

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ABSTRACT

IN DEFENSE OF BLACK WOMEN: BLACK WOMEN ADVOCACY AND THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF COLORED PEOPLE, 1945–1995

by

Crystal Ellis

The University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, 2020
Under the Supervision of Professor Gladys Mitchell-Walthour

In the period following World War II, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) served as the longest standing and most experienced organization serving African Americans. It was during this postwar period, from 1945 to 1995, that its membership boomed at the regional and local levels and the organization worked to ensure federal anti-discrimination policies benefited black Americans through their various branches. In this dissertation, which draws on research from the NAACP archives, I argue that from 1945 to 1995 the NAACP addressed the needs of black women by advocating for them in housing struggles, employment litigation, and the fight against police brutality. The key issues that emerged for black women were housing, defense against police brutality, and employment advocacy. I apply the theoretical framework of intersectionality to analyze how these three advocacy issues for the NAACP operated at the intersections of race, gender, and class in the lives of black women in the United States.

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Over the past century, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)—founded in 1909—has served as the premier organization focused on ensuring that the rights and protections of the United States Constitution extends to all citizens regardless of race or color. In this dissertation, I argue that, from 1945 to 1995, the NAACP advocated for black women in housing, defended black women in cases of police violence, and fought employment discrimination on behalf of black women in the workforce. I will do this drawing on my research in the NAACP archives at the Library of Congress, which document the organization’s work from 1945 to 1995. In this introduction to my dissertation, I begin by discussing the general history of the NAACP prior to the period from 1945 to 1995. Second, I discuss the scholarly contribution of my dissertation research to understanding black civil rights organizations and the role black women played in them. Third, I include a methodological discussion of the parameters and significance of the research period from 1945 to 1995, which is the focus of my dissertation. Fourth, I discuss intersectionality and its importance for understanding how black women engaged the NAACP and shaped its local and regional agendas from 1945 to 1995. Finally, I provide an outline of my dissertation chapters.

The NAACP was founded in February 1909 by a group of white abolitionists including Mary White Ovington, Oswald Garrison, William Walling and Henry Moskowitz.¹ They founded the organization as a response to a race riot that had occurred a year earlier, in August 1908, in Springfield, Illinois. The riot had been fueled by rape and murder accusations—

¹ Charles Kellogg, *NAACP: A History of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, 1890–1920* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1967); “1908 Springfield race riot led to the creation of the NAACP,” *Windy City Times*, September 12, 2008, originally published by the *(Springfield) State Journal-Register*, <http://www.windycitymediagroup.com/lgbt/1908-Springfield-race-riot-led-to-the-creation-of-the-NAACP/64038.html>.

allegations that were later proven false—against two black men. In 1909, this group called a public meeting of both white and black people to address the historic problem of lynching and other forms of violence against black Americans. The group included prominent activists W. E. B. Du Bois, Mary Church Terrell, Ida Wells-Barnett, and Archibald Grimke. At the outset, the NAACP sought to ensure the rights guaranteed to black populations by the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Amendments to the United States Constitution.² The contemporary mission statement of the NAACP, is *to secure the political, educational, social, and economic equality of rights in order to eliminate race-based discrimination and ensure the health and well-being of all persons.*

Though the NAACP was founded at the start of the twentieth century, it was not until the middle of the century that the organization had established branches across the United States. After the establishment of the national branch in 1912 in New York, the NAACP grew from three branches in 1913 to nearly nine hundred branches by the beginning of World War II.³ It is this second half of the twentieth century—from 1945 to 1995—that I am interested in. In this dissertation, I examine the nationwide initiatives and branch activity of the NAACP between 1945 and 1995. Specifically, I examine the tactics, strategies, and planning through which the organization responded to black women’s issues at the local and regional scale during this timeframe. These tactics, strategies, and planning are revealed in the NAACP national archives, which include detailed documentation of activities from all of its branches. According to archival documents, an NAACP branch was required to report activities to the national headquarters and get approval for legal and political engagement—especially around issues that could have an

² Kellogg, *NAACP*.

³ Josue Estrada and James Gregory, “NAACP Branch Activities, 1912–1923, and Database of Branches, 1912–1964,” NAACP Branch Activities, 1912–1923: Mapping American Social Movements, University of Washington, University of Washington. depts.washington.edu/moves/NAACP_map-early.shtml.

impact on the public view of the NAACP as an entity. I analyze these reports to explore how local branches engaged black women's concerns in concept and practice, as well as how they communicated these concerns to the organization's national leadership.

The NAACP was established as a national organization with a fundamental principle in mind: to address violence against black populations in the United States. This principle and mission of the organization would have been shared by the various branches that made up the organization. In this dissertation, I analyze the details from cases of various branches—contained in the NAACP archival papers—to reflect on and explore the experiences of black women in the United States as understood through their engagement with the NAACP. Because I am assuming various branches of the NAACP operate under the same principle (of addressing and responding to violence against black people), I must also highlight the variables that can influence how branches operate distinctly and locally. These distinguishing variables are discussed in the limitations area of the conclusion of this dissertation.

Statement of the Problem and Purpose of Study

In this dissertation, I examine how the NAACP addressed black women's issues from 1945 to 1995. The cases black women brought to the NAACP reveal the racism and sexism—and their intersections—that they confronted in their everyday lives.

Furthermore, black women were often part of the NAACP. In the decades following its founding in 1909, black women became a greater part of the NAACP membership, due in part to criticism of the organization's white reformist foundation. In addition, because they often experienced multiple systems of oppression, black women were part of the advocacy population

least likely to reproduce these systems in their leadership strategies.⁴ Because black women served in leadership and administrative roles in the NAACP, it is likely that their presence within the ranks of the organization made it possible for black women to seek help more readily from the organization. Perhaps black women's involvement in the NAACP explains why some of their cases were taken seriously and pursued by local branches in the second half of the twentieth century.

While I am interested in the role of black women as agents of change, I am also interested in their role as recipients of social advocacy efforts. The efforts of black women at the leadership and administrative levels in the NAACP during the selected historical period, from 1945 to 1995, emerges from historical narratives that tend to also focus on black women in positions as agents of change, and less often as recipients or being directly impacted by social advocacy efforts. Black women have been recognized by historians including Joy James, Leslie Brown, Lee Sartain, Bernice Barnett, Bettye Collier-Thomas, Deborah Gray White, and Cynthia Harrison as playing significant roles in advocacy throughout the twentieth century.⁵ These authors explore the significant progressive contributions black women made to society in the twentieth century and how their efforts often go unrecognized due to racism and sexism. While there is recognition of the invisibility of black women's contributions as agents of change, or individuals whose

⁴ Patricia Hill Collins, *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment* (New York: Routledge, 2000); Larry Salomon, "Movement History: Black Women and the Montgomery Bus Boycott," *Third Force*, June 30, 1995, 36.

⁵ See Joy James, *Transcending the Talented Tenth: Black Leaders and American Intellectuals* (New York, NY: Routledge, 1997); Leslie Brown, *Upbuilding Black Durham: Gender, Class, and Black Community Development in the Jim Crow South* (Durham: University of Chapel Hill, 2008), Lee Sartain, *Invisible Activists: Women of the Louisiana NAACP and the Struggle for Civil Rights, 1915–1945* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2007); Bernice McNair Barnett, "Invisible Southern Black Women Leaders in the Civil Rights Movement: The Triple Constraints of Gender, Race, and Class," *Gender & Society* 7, no. 2 (1993): 162–82; Bettye Collier-Thomas and V. P. Franklin, eds., *Sisters in the Struggle: African American Women in the Civil Rights-Black Power Movement* (New York: New York University Press, 2001); Deborah Gray White, *Ar'n't I a Woman?: Female Slaves in the Plantation South* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1985); and Cynthia Harrison "Bridges and Barriers: Sex, Class, and Race in Twentieth-Century U.S. Women's Movements." *Journal of Women's History* 13, no. 4 (2002): 191–99.

labor or actions produce change, there appears to be limited recognition on how acts towards social change impact the lives of black women as a service population. In other words, while historical narratives often view black women as agents of change, in terms of them supporting protests, movements, and organizational affairs, black women are less often viewed as the constituents whom black civil rights organizations serve. My dissertation hopes to examine black women in their specific role engaging with the NAACP as *constituents of advocacy*.⁶

In addition, historical literature on the NAACP as an organization in particular is also heavily focused on black women as laborers for various NAACP causes. Existing literature points to black women forming the initial networks necessary for the success of the NAACP, and also being responsible for significant policy shifts such as leading advocacy efforts like the Anti-Lynching Campaign and the organizing before and after the landmark *Brown v. Board of Education*. Furthermore, in their own work, black women point out how their contributions and the influence they have in advocacy, are overlooked. Less concerned specifically with the contributions of women in the ranks of the NAACP, this dissertation adds to the scholarly conversation by centering the stories, experiences, and voices of the black women who sought assistance from the NAACP in response to their experiences with police violence, housing discrimination, and employment discrimination.

It is this role of black women as *constituents of advocacy*—and their dynamic relationships with the NAACP—that I am interested in examining in my dissertation. Through my archival research, I argue that black women were agents of change and, just as importantly,

⁶ I am using the term *constituents of advocacy* to underscore that black women who sought out the NAACP for advocacy help were not passive beneficiaries in any sense. In fact, black women leaders in the ranks of the NAACP remind us that black women were a driving force within the organization as well. In using *constituents of advocacy*, I hope to underscore the co-equal relationship between the black women who sought out the NAACP for support and the organization that depended on its membership at the local, state, and national levels.

constituents who were at the focus of NAACP advocacy efforts in the latter half of the twentieth century. In other words, black women sought advocacy from the civil rights organization as a way to address their concerns at home, in the workplace, and in their communities. Analyzing the ways in which black women were the focus of NAACP advocacy in the twentieth century helps us to understand the ways in which black women engaged the NAACP as a guarantor of civil rights at the local, regional, and national levels. Black women engaged the organization in a variety of ways that were complex, fraught, and deeply insightful. It is my hope that this research will demonstrate that there are particular concerns of black women and they were courageous enough to seek assistance. By drawing on archival research, I hope to lift the voices of black women and underscore the fact that, even though they may have not always won their cases, these documents show the effort they took to combat racism and sexism in their homes, workplaces, and communities. They are no longer invisible. The NAACP played an important role in providing assistance to these women and through their documentation of their work leaves us with the particular experiences of middle-class and low-income black women.

I am further interested in black women as *constituents of advocacy* in that it requires a conversation about how black women inhabited the intersections of race, class, and gender. This research seeks to address the way that social advocacy issues are often defined one dimensionally—specifically, by focusing solely on racism or sexism individually. I examine the experiences of black women through describing the sexist *and* racist elements of social advocacy issues that emerged from NAACP's actions in the lives of black women. In contrast to a larger theme of advocacy issues being considered one dimensionally and often not based on all of the needs of a distinct population, I argue that black women constituted a distinct, heterogeneous group of constituents who highlighted a need to think about race, gender, and class *together and*

simultaneously. Specifically, the social identities of black women can be better understood from examining their experiences as informed by multiple systems of oppression and for the purpose of these research, sexism and racism.⁷ By examining the experiences of black women based on intersecting systems of oppression, I can confront how social topics are often (incorrectly) narrowly defined through a single system of oppression. For black Americans, this misperception emerges predominantly as an analysis exclusively concerned with race and racism. Centering black women as constituents of NAACP advocacy remind us of the ways that race is always already connected to ideas of class, gender, sexuality, and ability. These points will be expanded with greater detail in later chapters.

Parameters and Significance of the Research Period, 1945–1995

The frame of this research is the period from 1945 to 1995. This period is bookended by the years just after World War II and leading up to the years just before the start of the twenty-first century. Throughout this dissertation, I refer to the period from 1945 to 1995 interchangeably as the “post-World War II era” or the “postwar period.” There are both ideological and practical reasons for defining the research period from 1945 to 1995 as the central focus of my dissertation.⁸

The ideological rationale is embedded in factors characterizing the period such as postwar social marginalization; the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 1960s; the emergence of scholarly literature on intersectionality by women like Kimberlé Crenshaw, Patricia Hill Collins, and Audre Lorde; the Black Power Movement; the institutionalization of

⁷ Collins, *Black Feminist Thought*; Kimberlé Crenshaw, “Mapping the Margins.”

⁸ In addition, the NAACP archives at the Library of Congress, my primary research location, has certain restrictions on documents that are less than or equal to 30 years old. I will explore this restriction more in my methodology section. This restriction, as I will elaborate on later in this dissertation, is the primary reason I limit my timeline to 1995.

Black Studies; and legislation like the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title VII of the Civil Rights Act, and the housing provision to the Civil Rights Act in 1968. These developments, movements, and policies were the result of the social climate. During the civil rights movement, black people in the United States put pressure on the state to enact policies to promote black citizenship. During the Black Power era, blacks focused on self-empowerment. On college and university campuses, this self-empowerment manifested in a demand for courses on black people with black faculty. Black feminists called for acknowledgement for black women's particular needs of resistance to multiple forms of oppression. It is in this context that black women filed their cases of discrimination with the NAACP.

The practical reasons which I will explore with greater detail in the methodology chapter, are imposed by the restrictions and limitations in the location of primary collection, the Library of Congress. In short, the NAACP archives at the Library of Congress restrict access to documents that are less than or equal to 30 years old.

What makes this period from 1945 to 1995 significant related to the ideological rationale for this research, are the changes in population and advocacy needs. During this period after World War II, U.S. cities experienced significant changes in the demographics of their populations. Specifically, urban industrial cities experienced an influx in Black Americans from southern rural areas.⁹ The influx of the black populations in many cities resulted in environments that necessarily produced effective reform movements like those in Chicago, New York and Philadelphia.¹⁰ It has been argued that city-dwelling Black Americans during the era had better

⁹ Wilson Record, "American Racial Ideologies and Organizations in Transition," *Phylon* 26, no. 4 (1965): 315–29.

¹⁰ Record, "American Racial Ideologies and Organizations in Transition"; Justin Gammage, "Black Power and the Power of Protest: Re-Examining Approaches for Radical Economic Development," *Review of Black Political Economy* 44, no. 1 (2017): 23–36.

access to education, political resources and understood the complexities of social justice.¹¹ In addition, during the postwar period, American industries experienced increased automation resulting in mass unemployment. On top of this mass unemployment, Black Americans experienced employment discrimination in both the private and public sectors. This environment caused employment inequality to become an urgent, shared concern for organizations including the NAACP, CORE, SCLC and SNCC.¹² The confluence of issues and concerns facing black Americans in the latter part of the twentieth century make this period a useful one to illustrate all the ways in which the NAACP advocated on behalf of people who sought help with advocacy.

The growing role of the NAACP in black communities in the period from 1945 to 1995 also makes this period a meaningful timeframe to study. In the earlier part of this time period, from 1942 to 1950, the NAACP was the only organization experienced in fighting against racial injustice and race-based violence.¹³ The public relevance of the NAACP during this era is related to several important factors, one key development being the fact that the NAACP membership grew eightfold. Furthermore, the organization became increasingly concerned with black representation in popular culture, voter engagement, housing equality, involving itself as a key voice in landmark cases including *Brown v. Board of Education* and *Smith v. Allwright*.¹⁴ Determining that black image in popular culture was directly connected to political and social mistreatment, the NAACP leadership paid strategic attention in this era to the way black women and men were represented in popular culture.¹⁵ The national NAACP leadership utilized

¹¹ Record, “American Racial Ideologies and Organizations in Transition.”

¹² Record, “American Racial Ideologies and Organizations in Transition”; Gammage, “Black Power and the Power of Protest.”

¹³ Kevin M. Kruse and Stephen Tuck, eds. *Fog of War: The Second World War and the Civil Rights Movement* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2012).

¹⁴ *Smith v. Allwright* was a Supreme Court decision on voting rights and desegregating primary voting access in southern states. 321 U.S. 649 (1944). See Megan Ming Francis, *Civil Rights and the Making of the Modern American State* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014).

¹⁵ Kruse and Tuck, *Fog of War*.

publications and materials including the organization's publication, the *Crisis*, to advocate the necessity of positive black images in popular culture. In other words, "these activists saw popular culture as a central battleground in the wartime fight for equality, believing that the black image shaped the place of black men and women in the white mind, and by extension, American society."¹⁶

The NAACP served as a dominant organization working to improve the social welfare of Black Americans during this period.¹⁷ In addition, much of this organization's leadership and organizing emerged, and continued to thrive under the guidance of black women. The NAACP depended on the existing networks of black women to garner resources necessary for their initial success. In addition, many of the volunteers, field secretaries and administrators during this era were predominantly black women. The NAACP during this period introduced direct action to their traditional advocacy approaches from influences of the Civil Rights and Black Power Movements as well the institutionalization of Black Studies.

Organizations that popularized direct action advocacy work in this era included the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC, founded 1957), Congress Of Racial Equality (CORE, founded 1942), and the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC, founded 1960). These organizations introduced a new ideology characterized by direct action, a term that refers to strategies and acts for economic and political improvement that directly involved the working class and grassroots efforts.¹⁸ The NAACP found interest in this ideology because they began to see it as an effective method towards achieving policy change and a key interest of the organization. For example, CORE and SNCC during the post-World War II era popularized

¹⁶ Kruse and Tuck, *Fog of War*, 9.

¹⁷ Francis, *Civil Rights*; Gammage, "Black Power."

¹⁸ Record, "American Racial Ideologies and Organizations in Transition"; Gammage, "Black Power and the Power of Protest."

direct action approaches that engaged communities at the grassroots level. The NAACP adopted direct action ideologies in social advocacy popularized by these organizations.¹⁹ In 1956, The NAACP held a series of community seminars facilitating discussions about the best way to address employment discrimination. The NAACP also worked with CORE in 1963, participating in protests to bring attention to racial discrimination in employment.²⁰

For my specific research investigation, I am interested in how NAACP's adoption of direct action tactics and strategies from the influence of the Civil Rights and Black Power Movement impacted the lives of Black women. This topic is significant because it provides an investigation that expands on existing narratives of the relationship between social advocacy and black women during the post-World War II era. As I will present in the historical context of this paper, much of the existing literature capturing the historical work of the NAACP focuses on black women as contributors, leaders or agents of change. This historical work does recognize the limitation, and marginalization that occurred when the work of black women was marginalized by societal racism and sexism; however, there is not a significant focus on how social advocacy transformed the lives of black women not engaged in labor towards systemic change. The points introduced here will be discussed in greater detail when I introduce the gap where my research fits.

Theoretical Framework

The research in this dissertation is qualitative, and I employ the theoretical framework of intersectionality. The use of intersectionality in this dissertation is defined in one of two approaches of intersectionality defined by Sumi Cho, Kimberlé Crenshaw, and Leslie McCall in

¹⁹ Gammage, "Black Power and the Power of Protest."

²⁰ Gammage, "Black Power and the Power of Protest."

the article, “Towards a Field of Intersectionality Studies, Theory, Applications and Practice” (2013).²¹ The approach used here, is defined in the following excerpt from their article:

The first approach applies an intersectional frame of analysis to a wide range of research and teaching projects. Aggregated together in this category are undertakings that build on or adapt intersectionality to a tend to a variety of context-specific inquiries, including, for example, analyzing the multiple ways that race and gender interact with class in the labor market; interrogating the ways that states constitute regulatory regimes of identity, reproduction, and family formation; developing doctrinal alternatives to bend antidiscrimination law to accommodate claims of compound discrimination; and revealing processes by which grassroots organizations shape advocacy strategies into concrete agendas that transcend traditional single axis horizons.²²

The cases I identified in the NAACP archives located at the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C., and the group whose experiences I examined were black women service recipients of the NAACP between the years of 1945 and 1995. I argue that intersectionality with specific regard to racism and sexism can be read, observed, and analyzed in the social advocacy efforts of the NAACP during the period from 1945 to 1995. I discuss *intersectionality* throughout the dissertation but use it specifically to think about issues that emerged from the NAACP archives. In this section, I introduce the theoretical framework of intersectionality and I discuss how I use intersectionality in the literature review and in the analysis of findings in the later chapters of this dissertation.

In the literature review portion of this dissertation, I establish a textual understanding of the theoretical framework of intersectionality and how it is used to better understand the social experiences of black women. In addition, the literature review section is used to present uses and limitations of the theoretical framework of intersectionality in practical improvements to the lives of black women. Presenting these uses and limitations is necessary because my research

²¹ Sumi Cho, Kimberlé Crenshaw, and Leslie McCall, “Toward a Field of Intersectionality Studies: Theory, Applications, and Praxis,” *Signs* 38, no. 4 (2013): 785–810.

²² Cho, Crenshaw, McCall, “Toward A Field of Intersectionality Studies.” p.785

contributes to an aspect of intersectionality in practice and how actual social advocacy issues can be defined as intersectional. For the black women at the center of my dissertation, racism and sexism were operating simultaneously in such a way that the experiences of these black women were distinctly racialized, gendered, and classed.

In the first findings chapter, I discuss the issue of housing discrimination during the period following World War II and argue that it was a racialized and gendered phenomenon. Specifically, I describe the general reality of housing discrimination for black Americans, and I then discuss how the gendered reality of black women during this time impacted how they experienced their racial reality. In other words, their lived experiences were deeply intersectional, and they could not be understood otherwise. I end this chapter with a presentation of NAACP cases that articulate the organization's impact and supports my argument that, especially for black women who sought help from the NAACP in the post-World War II period, housing discrimination was an intersectional issue.

The second findings chapter discusses the NAACP's efforts to address police brutality against black Americans after World War II, another phenomenon that impacted black women in distinctly racialized and gendered ways. In this chapter, I define the general reality of police violence for black Americans and situate it as a racial issue. Following this general discussion, I present how the gendered reality and specifically sexism can change the racial reality for black women, arguing police brutality should be framed as an intersectional issue. Finally, I present NAACP cases and argue that details from these cases provide evidence for my argument of police brutality as an intersectional social issue. As I argue for an intersectional analysis of police violence, I also provide evidence of the NAACP impact in the lives of black women.

The third findings chapter discusses the topic of employment discrimination—also an intersectional concern for black women—as addressed by the NAACP during the period following World War II. Notably, employment discrimination constituted the most prevalent issue with cases emerging throughout the entire period from 1945 to 1995. In this chapter, I define the racial aspect of discrimination with regard to employment for the general black American population following the end of World War II. I further define how the history of gender discrimination for black women changes the racial reality, creating an intersectional social experience. Following these discussions, I provide evidence from the NAACP archives that supports my argument of the intersectional social experiences of black women. In analyzing these archival documents, I also make the case for the NAACP impact on black women’s lives when it came to the issue of employment discrimination.

Positionality: Personal and Ideological Lenses

Intersectionality and black feminism both consider the positionality of those conducting research on black women. Before discussing the details of my research, it is important to acknowledge the ways that my social reality and perception of knowledge may have impacted my research process and address potential biases.²³ In order to do this, I will examine the personal fixed characteristics that situate me as an insider, as well as unfixed philosophical assumptions and theoretical characteristics that may position me as an outsider in relation to my research.

As a black woman, I am positioned partially within the demographic highlighted in my research inquiry. My racial and gender identity subjected me to certain instances throughout my

²³ Robin Throne, Brian Bourke, Linda Bowlin, and Vahick Yedgarian, *Insider/Outsider, Betwixt and Between: Post-Doc Perspectives of Researcher Positionality After Dissertation Research*, poster session, 2nd Annual Conference on Academic Research in Education, Las Vegas, NV, 2018; David Takacs, “Positionality, Epistemology, and Social Justice in the Classroom.” *Social Justice* 29, no. 4 (2002): 168–81.

experience with the non-profit sector. For two years after I completed my first degree, I worked for one of the largest philanthropic organizations in Wisconsin, building relationships with non-profits throughout the city. My identity as a black woman in many of these spaces subjected me to overtly racist and sexist interactions. Though black people make up 40 percent of Milwaukee, the city consistently ranks as America's worst place for black people. In addition, I was in spaces and attended meetings where decisions about programming for the city were being made by people who did not reflect the majority of the city. Many of these programming decisions targeted racial equity alone, and were made at the discretion of the donors, who were predominantly elite whites. In this way, whites made decisions that had an impact on black women constituents of the organization; however, these white decision-makers were unwilling to listen to the voices of black women, even as they made decisions that would directly impact black women.

While my identity as a black woman allows knowledge about how racism and sexism work in my personal life, the time period of my experience is different from the period of my study. Because I have this insider perspective, I risk maintaining objectivity with regard to analysis. Throughout my research process, it is critical that I maintain objectivity when analyzing archival material. Certain expectations that I hold as an insider may lead me to assume an unfair standard for how well the NAACP performed for this population. This assumption can lead to unnecessary criticism, which is enhanced by my ideological positioning. As aforementioned, my ideological positioning is outside of the time period and historical context of this research inquiry. The unfair criticism aforementioned is enhanced because I am positioned outside of what is expected, or possible during that period. To clarify, the historical time period or context, has a different standard relative to the social progress made up to 1945. Potential assumptions

come from holding standards relative to social progress made up to 2018. The risk here is that I produce a social narrative of NAACP work between 1945 and 1995, relative to the social progress made up to 2018. In order to minimize potential bias, I have developed a methodology, with specific procedures for content analysis, that will help minimize potential bias from underlying assumptions.

Organization of Dissertation Chapters

In this section, I offer an outline of the organization of the dissertation, briefly describing the content and goals of each chapter.

Chapter Two, “Historical Context,” offers a literature review and the historical context within which my dissertation is situated. This contextualization is defined by explaining black liberation and women’s suffrage in the early part of the twentieth century. There is also an examination of scholarship focused on gender and marginalization in black communities. This discussion is important as it highlights how black women’s issues were discussed rather than only having a “race only” approach. This chapter concludes with the relevant literature on the NAACP. In mapping out the scholarship, this chapter clarifies this dissertation’s contribution: its focus on how black women’s cases of discrimination were pursued offers a different lens—one focused on black women as constituents of advocacy who sought change through the NAACP’s advocacy efforts.

Chapter Three, “Methodology,” introduces my methodological approach. This chapter presents the theoretical framework of intersectionality and how I applied it throughout my research process. This chapter also outlines my primary and secondary research questions, the content analysis procedures for archival research as well as the rationale for selecting the

specified qualitative method. In this chapter, I also spend time discussing how this research inquiry is critical for the discipline of African and African Diaspora Studies itself or Black Studies, as well as black feminist scholarship. In addition, I present the location for primary data collection, timeline and limitation imposed by the location.

The next three chapters—Chapters Four, Five, and Six—present the findings of my archival research. In Chapter Four, “The Fight Against Housing Discrimination,” I examine the history of housing discrimination in the United States against Black Americans. Then, I discuss how the history of gender discrimination against black women can create a heightened sense of discrimination in the area of housing. This context is important, as I will present NAACP cases of defense in the area of housing discrimination for black women.

In Chapter Five, “The Fight Against Police Brutality,” I discuss the history of police brutality in black communities in the United States in the late nineteenth and the twentieth century leading up to the period of research. Then, similar to the first findings chapter, I discuss how black women experience gendered discrimination in the area of police brutality. These layered discussions are important as I present cases of NAACP defending black women against police violence and argue impact in the area.

In Chapter Six, “The Fight Against Employment Discrimination,” I discuss the history of labor and labor exploitation in the United States for Black Americans. Like the previous findings chapters, I discuss how gender discrimination within the issue creates a distinct form of discrimination for black women. Specifically, labor exploitation and systemic restriction to domestic labor. Following these discussions, I present NAACP cases of defense between 1945-1995, in the area of employment or labor exploitation.

In the final chapter, “Conclusion, Limitations, and Implications for Future Research,” I discuss the platform the NAACP defined for its twenty-first century advocacy for black Americans, and how the findings of my dissertation can inform this work. I also discuss the relevance of the framework of intersectionality in their work, and I evaluate the current state of their actions in the lives of not only black women but also black girls.

CHAPTER TWO

Historical Context

This dissertation intervenes in the existing scholarship on social movements, black feminism, and the NAACP by examining how the civil rights organization specifically addressed black women's grievances of employment discrimination, housing discrimination, and police violence in the second half of the twentieth century. In this chapter, I first provide a historiography of black social movements in the United States and then examine the scholarship on the role of black women in social movements in order to situate this dissertation's specific contribution to and intervention within these fields of scholarship. Collectively, this scholarship offers the historical context for the particular time period with which my dissertation is concerned. In considering the scholarship on black social movements as well as black women and black feminism, I map out the broad contours of the scholarly conversations and subfields within which this dissertation is situated. Lastly, I examine the existing scholarship on the NAACP as a specific organization to make clear this dissertation's contribution to the historiography of the organization.

This dissertation sits at the nexus of this research on black social movements, black feminisms, and the NAACP. Departing from existing (and important) narratives of women as workers within the ranks of the NAACP, this dissertation adds to the scholarly conversations outlined in this chapter by centering the stories, experiences, and voices of the black women who sought assistance from the NAACP in response to their experiences with police violence, housing discrimination, and employment discrimination. The NAACP played an important role in providing assistance to these middle-class and low-income black women. In contrast to a larger theme of advocacy issues being considered one dimensionally and often not based on all of the needs of a distinct population, I argue that black women constituted a distinct,

heterogeneous group of constituents and therefore highlight a need to think about race, gender, and class *together and simultaneously*. The remaining chapters of this dissertation take up this argument and intersectional framework in more archival detail and historical texture.

Black Liberation and Women's Liberation

This section examines the significant body of existing literature that engages the relationship between black liberation movements and women's liberation movements, especially but not necessarily limited to the context of the social movements of the 1960s and 1970s. Many historians discuss similarities between them, and others argue that there are various conflicts, and inconsistencies between their ideologies. Because this dissertation considers the role of black women as constituents of advocacy vis-à-vis the NAACP, understanding the intersections of race and gender—and the historical relationships between black freedom struggles and women's rights movements—is crucial for situating the black women's voices at the heart of my dissertation. Specifically, this dissertation analyzes the tensions, contradictions, and convergences between black liberation and women's rights—race and gender, in other words—as a particular black advocacy organization (the NAACP) worked to address the lives of black women. Understanding black women's role as constituents of NAACP advocacy through an intersectional lens not only expands our understanding of black liberation and women's rights to be more multidimensional and nuanced, but it also responds to the claims made by some historians that both black liberation and women's rights movements have historically overlooked the experiences of black women. By centering the lives and voices of black women engaged with the NAACP, this dissertation is adding to the growing historical scholarship that seeks to recuperate the voices of black women from the archives and bring them to light.

Historians have long debated the idea that black liberation movements have not recognized the importance of the women's rights movement to black women, and the idea that women's rights movements have not recognized the importance of the black liberation movement.²⁴ The scholars included here help contextualize my research by presenting broader relationships between black liberation and advocacy against gendered discrimination or women's rights. Though the scope of this scholarship extends beyond the specific population and time period that I focus on in this dissertation, my work fits into a long genealogy and tradition of historical research on social movements and black women's important role in them.

During the Black Power era, which is typically periodized from the mid-1960s through the late 1970s, black people sought empowerment through embracing blackness and black culture. Blacks were dedicated to creating and sustaining their institutions. During the 1960s, there were both black liberation movements and women's rights movements. Some scholars have argued that, during this period, activists in women's movements appropriated and adapted strategies from black movements to fit their own agendas. Specifically, Shirley Weber (1981) and Jackie Huggins (1987) both argue that women's movements built on and drew upon the tactics and strategies of other social movements.²⁵

In her article, "Black Power in the 1960s: A Study of Its Impact on Women's Liberation," Shirley Weber argues that "Blacks heightened women's awareness of their condition and greatly influenced the direction of the Women's Movement,"²⁶ making clear that

²⁴ Weber, "Black Power in the 1960s"; Huggins, "Black Women and Women's Liberation"; Hartmann, 2002; Stratton, 2005; Gordon, 1997; Valethia Watkins, "Votes for Women: Race, Gender and W.E.B. Du Bois' Advocacy for Women's Suffrage," *Phylon* 53, no. 2 (2017): 3–19; Rosalyn Terborg-Penn, *African American Women in the Struggle for the Vote, 1850–1920* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998); M. Rivka Polatnick, "Diversity in Women's Liberation Ideology: How a Black and a White Group of the 1960s Viewed Motherhood," *Signs* 21, no. 3 (1996): 679–706; Valerie Amos and Pratibha Parmar, "Challenging Imperial Feminism," *Feminist Review* 17 (1984): 3–19.

²⁵ Weber, "Black Power in the 1960s"; Huggins, "Black Women and Women's Liberation."

²⁶ Weber, "Black Power in the 1960s," 497.

the women's movement that coalesced in 1969 borrowed directly from the Black Power movement that emerged a few years earlier. Specifically, Weber claims that white feminists involved in the women's suffrage movement in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries often borrowed issues, strategies, and language (with slight adaptations) from black social movements, sometimes even likening their gendered social position to the racialized position of enslaved black people in the United States.²⁷ Weber cites several parallels and overlaps between significant thrusts in black liberation movements (from Garveyism and the Harlem Renaissance in the early part of the twentieth century and the Civil Rights and the Black Power movements in the mid-twentieth century) and women's rights movements as evidence that the latter borrowed issues, strategies, and language from the former. In one instance that demonstrates how early white women activists articulated their liberation in relation to abolition, Weber notes an 1863 resolution passed by the Women's National Loyal League that states that equality can only be truly found when black people and women are free in the United States.²⁸ In addition, Weber argues that black liberation and black activists' conceptualization of oppression became the very basis on which white feminists in the 1960s understood their own structural oppression. In essence, black liberation have historically shaped how white women defined their specific oppression.²⁹

Other scholars have compared women's liberation movements to black liberation movements in order to highlight a specific neglect of the experiences of black women. In her piece, "Black Women and Women's Liberation," Jackie Huggins (1987) makes a similar argument to Weber in that she argues that the women's liberation movement drew from black

²⁷ Weber, "Black Power in the 1960s."

²⁸ Weber, "Black Power in the 1960s."

²⁹ Weber, "Black Power in the 1960s."

movements. Huggins goes further, arguing that women's movements existed beyond the influence of black liberation movements in the United States. Specifically, Huggins points out how the women's movements found influence from aboriginal movements in Australia in the early nineteenth century.³⁰ Huggins, while presenting the latter distinction, still ties it to the relationship between women's rights and black liberation in the United States. She connects the women's movement to other global liberation movements, including black liberation, but she criticizes the limited focus of the women's movement when it came to the experiences of black women. In other words, while Black women have made up a significant part of the black liberation movement and were simultaneously impacted by the women's liberation movement, their voices have been systematically omitted.³¹ The omission of the experiences of black women from women suffrage can be attributed to white feminists failure to recognize how sexism uniquely influenced the already marginalized social position of black women.³² In addition, black women could not identify themselves in the demographic because of its white, middle-class characteristics.³³ Huggins points to another aspect of the relationship between the black liberation and women's liberation movement: women's liberation alone does not recognize the racialized reality of black women.³⁴

Susan Hartmann (2002) adds to Huggins' work by detailing the importance of focusing on the experiences of black women in the relationship between black liberation and women's suffrage. In her article, "Pauli Murray and the 'Juncture of Women's Liberation and Black Liberation,'" Hartmann centers Pauli Murray's direct involvement in both the women's rights

³⁰ Huggins, "Black Women and Women's Liberation."

³¹ Huggins, "Black Women and Women's Liberation."

³² Huggins, "Black Women and Women's Liberation."

³³ Huggins, "Black Women and Women's Liberation."

³⁴ Huggins, "Black Women and Women's Liberation."

and civil rights movements to argue that black women make unique political contributions drawing on their *intersectional* experiences with racism and sexism. As noted by Hartmann in the text, Pauli Murray experienced sex-based discrimination in the 1940s at Howard University, as well as in subsequent employment.³⁵ Because of her experiences, she began advocacy for sex-based discrimination to be added to Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Hartmann's study of Murray's activism underscores the importance of an intersectional framework to understand how black women experience intersecting systems of oppression. It also their perspectives present the full dynamic of oppression often overlooked.

Hartmann goes further to present how ignoring the unique experiences of black women through gendered and racial marginalization, promotes an incorrect historical image of advocacy. Specifically, how historians create a marginalizing lens by examining early feminism through white middle class organizations that were often inaccessible to black women.³⁶ She argues that the focus of feminist movements from the perspective of white feminist organizations paints an incorrect picture. Hartmann points out that studies of feminism must include black women by focusing on how their feminism existed outside of mainstream organizations; in their personal lives, employment, black liberation organizations (e.g. NAACP), and white male dominated liberal organizations. According to Hartmann, it is necessary that any study of the contributions of black women to feminism or black feminism, look outside of the mainstream as defined by racism and patriarchy. In presenting the life of Pauli Murray, Hartmann highlights that the traditional women's liberation platforms of the women's liberation movement omit important contributions by omitting the experiences of black women.³⁷

³⁵ Hartmann, "Pauli Murray."

³⁶ Hartmann, "Pauli Murray."

³⁷ Hartmann, "Pauli Murray."

Historian Rivka Polatnick, visits this necessary subjectiveness presented by scholars like Hartmann in her work, “Diversity in Women’s Liberation Ideology: How a black and a white group in the 1960s viewed Motherhood.” In this piece, Polatnick presents the diversity within the women’s liberation movement by comparing the ideologies of mainstream white feminist middle class organizations and less recognized, working class groups of black women. Polatnick examines how the white middle class organization, New York Radical Women, and two groups of working-class black women from Mount Vernon and New Rochelle, define the importance of motherhood related to their cultural contexts.³⁸ The Mount Vernon and New Rochelle groups look at motherhood as a mechanism for shaping the type of community they want, and also as a way of staying connected to the world around them.³⁹ The black women, when confronted with criticism from black men for their support of Planned Parenthood under claims of racial genocide, advocated for themselves arguing that birth control enabled them to maintain the growth and quality of their own communities.⁴⁰ On the opposite end of the spectrum, the middle-class white women of NYRW viewed motherhood as a weak, repressive, limiting position instituted by white patriarchy.

This author examines an important aspect of subjectivity related to liberation of black women connected to women’s liberation. Specifically, Polatnick presents how motherhood can be conceptualized as a mechanism of activism and dignity for black women. Classic white feminism, as also presented by Hartmann, does not recognize this important aspect of black women's liberation because of how it defines women's suffrage in the purview of the experiences and desires of white women.⁴¹ These scholars contribute to an understanding of how the

³⁸ Polatnick, “Diversity in Women's Liberation Ideology.”

³⁹ Polatnick, “Diversity in Women's Liberation Ideology.”

⁴⁰ Polatnick, “Diversity in Women's Liberation Ideology.”

⁴¹ Hartmann, “Pauli Murray”; Polatnick, “Diversity in Women's Liberation Ideology.”

traditional women's liberation purview does not acknowledge black women or their contributions.

In her article, "Votes for Women: Race, Gender and W.E.B. Du Bois's Advocacy for Women's Suffrage," Valetia Watkins presents a perspective that also challenges existing inconsistencies in the historical literature documenting the relationship between women's suffrage and black liberation.⁴² Watkins argues against a claim of black liberation movements not recognizing the importance of women's rights. She does so, by presenting the advocacy work of WEB Dubois as it related to the women's suffrage movement. Dubois, wrote over twenty essays and editorials on the importance of women's suffrage, and also dedicated several articles in the NAACP magazine, the *Crisis*, to discussions of women's rights and specifically voting rights during the early twentieth century.⁴³ Watkins also highlights how the work of Frederick Douglass, another prominent figure of early black liberation, focused on the rights of women. She uses the work of these two black men to emphasize how proponents of black liberation have been supportive of women's rights, while simultaneously presenting how the relationship is not reciprocal. Specifically, Watkins presents how white feminists did not recognize the humanity of black people and black women in particular.

White women were highly offended that racism would be addressed before gender discrimination. White women believed that, if the nation were only willing to address one form of discrimination at a time, they should push for white women as a class of citizens to be granted the vote before anyone else.⁴⁴

Watkins' work is an example of the complexity of women's suffrage movements. While there were black leaders—that is, black men and women fighting for black liberation and women's

⁴² Watkins, "Votes for Women."

⁴³ Watkins, "Votes for Women."

⁴⁴ Watkins, "Votes for Women," 6.

rights—white women activists rarely integrated a black rights agenda.⁴⁵ Natalie Thomlinson (2012) proposes that historians are too quick to dismiss white feminists of the era as racist and ignorant of the role white supremacy has in the lives of black women and women of color. Instead, she argues that it is important to investigate why white feminists did not recognize race. Thomlinson emphasizes this point by looking at the connections of white feminists to black liberation and black nationalists in Britain in the late twentieth century.⁴⁶ Thomlinson presents this point in an argument defending feminists in the United States, using evidence outside of the specific historical context of the United States. Because of this, here I also present the work of Christensen (1997) who provides evidence from the second wave feminism in the United States denoting the 1960s and later.

Kimberly Christensen (1997) presents her theory behind why white feminists propagate attitudes of racism and omit the experiences of black women as connected to their social positioning.⁴⁷ Christensen’s theory about racism in white feminism ties together a defense of white feminists with the necessary subjectivity associated with focusing on the lived experiences of black women and people of color. Specifically, white women align with white supremacy in that they always carry the position of the oppressor. She argues that it is impossible for them to articulate or empathize with the experiences of black women and people of color. She makes this point through making a parallel with how patriarchy operates in spaces attempting to address gender inclusivity. Christensen states:

White women’s consciousness raising cannot form the basis for liberatory knowledge about racism...only the experiences of those oppressed by racism—women and men of color—can form the basis for liberatory knowledge of racism. White feminists need to be

⁴⁵ Natalie Thomlinson, “The Colour of Feminism: White Feminists and Race in the Women’s Liberation Movement.” *History* 97, no. 327 (2012): 453–75; Kimberly Christensen, “ ‘With Whom Do You Believe Your Lot is Cast? White Feminists and Racism,” *Signs* 22, no. 3 (1997): 617–648.

⁴⁶ Thomlinson, “The Colour of Feminism.”

⁴⁷ Christensen, “With Whom Do You Believe Your Lot is Cast.”

coming to terms with the personal, historical, and theoretical works by people of color. An informed understanding of their diverse political, economic and social histories, and of their efforts to end their oppression, is a necessary condition for respectful interaction.⁴⁸

What Christensen presents in her analysis is the necessary subjectivity when considering the lives of those oppressed by racism. According to how she lays out her argument white feminists need to be intentional about addressing racism and understand that removed from all intent, their very existence is built on an identity that propagates white supremacy. The embodiment of racism within the white feminist movement present further contingencies in the relationship between women's suffrage and black liberation. Scholars in other works present examples of this analysis laid out by Christensen as it emerged in white feminist organizations in the second half of the twentieth century.

In the critical work of Carrie Sampson, "So It 'Became White Activists Fighting for Integration,'" Sampson presents the work of the Las Vegas League of Women Voters, who were a group of white, middle class women focusing on community building efforts beginning in 1968.⁴⁹ This organization, whose membership body was 99 percent white women, had many assumptions embedded in their work as they worked towards systemic change. This group defined racism and their work towards racial equity in terms that appealed to the dominant white narrative.⁵⁰

Their approach to activism work, was the idea that racism had an impact on non-white, and white people in the same way.⁵¹ The League created "white racism-black power" workshops

⁴⁸ Christensen, "With Whom Do You Believe Your Lot is Cast," 620.

⁴⁹ Carrie R. Sampson, "So It 'Became White Activists Fighting for Integration?' Community Organizations, Intersectional Identities, and Education Reform" *Urban Review: Issues and Ideas in Public Education* 49, no. 1 (2017): 72–95.

⁵⁰ Sampson, "So It 'Became White Activists Fighting for Integration?'" ; Kolchin, "Whiteness Studies."

⁵¹ Sampson, "So It 'Became White Activists Fighting for Integration?'"

that encouraged groups to step back and understand how white racism harms black people and how Black Power harms white people. The entire philosophy was problematic, and, in response, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) held animosity for the group. In addition, the League was aware of their mostly white membership and knew it could cause problems as they worked in black communities. To address this potential shortfall, the organization employed black women, thinking that would alleviate some of the barriers they would encounter. However, in public settings, white members asserted their leadership by advocating for the black women, speaking on their intellect and background and using themselves as a way of legitimizing the black women they hired.⁵²

Historians present how the women's movement used black activism as the groundwork for their own strategies. In addition, historians have highlighted how within the women's suffrage movement the focus has been primarily on white women with the omission of or misappropriation of black women. Lastly, black liberation has historically supported women's suffrage and women's rights. While prominent Black figures including Frederick Douglass and W. E. B. Du Bois have championed women's social movements, white feminists (including those of the women's suffrage movement) have for the most part ignored the humanity of black people and specifically black women. And as Valetia Watkins points out, part of the omission of the humanity of black people generally, and black women specifically, by white feminists was rooted in (1) a fear that black civil rights would come before the rights of white women and (2) the fact that race did not figure prominently in white feminists' worldviews.⁵³

My work is situated within these themes but also contributes a distinct understanding of the relationship between black liberation and women's liberation. It contributes to the narrative

⁵² Sampson 2017; Collins, 1986; Crenshaw, 1989.

⁵³ Watkins, "Votes for Women."

of the way black liberation within the NAACP recognized the experiences of black women. My work does this by focusing on the NAACP after World War II and what issue areas emerged related to the NAACP direct services and the lives of black women during this era. This work while recognizing the lives of black women through racial advocacy, does so without disconnected the issues of women's suffrage particularly for black women. My research contributes to dialogue emphasizing the connection between black liberation and women's liberation and more specifically, the liberation of black women. This research corrects misinformation on the unilateral relationship between black liberation and women's liberation, by contributing how this black liberation organization may have focused on the goals of the women's suffrage movement through what I will discuss, a recognition of black women's experiences. This research also minimizes dialogue regarding white supremacy within white feminists organizations that focus on women's liberation, by centering an organization that for much of its history has been critical of the role of whiteness. The aforementioned contributions are made possible in the historical narrative that I produce from the primary research done in the NAACP archives located at the Library of Congress, with specific regard to black women in employment, advocacy, housing, economics and social welfare.

Gendered Marginalization within Black Communities

Insofar as my dissertation considers the interaction of race and gender in the lives of black women who sought out the NAACP as constituents of advocacy, this section focuses on gender marginalization within black communities in the latter half of the twentieth century to contextualize the social position of black women in black communities. The breadth of the literature discussed in this section engages ideas that black sexism or gendered marginalization

in black communities persisted despite broader goals of black liberation. Recognizing the following claims presented by various scholars contrasts the goal of my research which will present activism for black women in an organization largely focused black liberation, The NAACP.⁵⁴ In the following pages I present examples from their overall arguments that contrasts the goals of my research. This body of historical scholarship contributes to the context of my research by focusing on how gender discrimination and gender advocacy takes place in black communities. The scholars here, who my research is in conversation with, present black liberation strategies that may benefit from a sustained engagement with the needs, lives, and experiences of black women. This context offers the opportunity for my dissertation to intervene and contribute by writing black women at the center of these conversations. My dissertation adds to the conversation among these historians and their scholarship by arguing that there exist intersectional patterns within racial advocacy groups—in this particular case, the NAACP—and that these intersectional phenomena must be studied more carefully if we are to move toward black freedom.

Though racial advocacy or racial liberation in the history of the United States is commonly tied to black identity in the United States, in some cases, the same cannot be said for gender advocacy for black women in particular. Furthermore, some historians have pointed out that rather than producing gender advocacy for black women, many black networks reproduce the oppressive system of sexism itself. The following scholars are examples of the latter. Austin presents the perspectives and contributions of many black feminists scholars that have defined the trend of what they call black sexism, and also contributes his own perspective. Austin argues

⁵⁴ Smith and Seltzer, *Race, Class, and Culture*; Austin, “Theorizing Difference within Black Feminist Thought”; Brown, *Upbuilding Black Durham*.

that black sexism has always been a part of black liberation in the United States.⁵⁵ Austin examines the works of black feminist scholars, presenting how they have addressed or created dialogues of black sexism within black communities:

Sexism is present among blacks, just as it is among other groups in the United States. Sexism and misogyny were found in slave communities. The black church from the nineteenth century to the present has discriminated against black women...blacks tend to be somewhat conservative or traditional in attitudes, disapproving of women in politics or of married women with children working outside the home.⁵⁶

Austin also argues that these conservative or traditional views emerging from how black women are viewed within black communities, are more related to class than an element of black culture. Austin traces these arguments through the works of what he classifies as black feminist writers including Patricia Hill Collins (1990), Kimberlé Crenshaw (1991), Toni Morrison (1970), Angela Davis (1988), June Jordan (1981), Hazel Carby (1987) and Katie Cannon (1988), presenting how they have addressed or created dialogues of black sexism within black communities. Going beyond the analysis Austin provides of Patricia Hill Collins with other black scholars, Collins provides significant insight on how Black male scholars respond to the intellectual outputs of black women.

In addition to her presentation of the intersectional epistemology in her book, “Black Feminist Thought,” Collins examines how black sexism emerges in black communities by way of referencing how black male scholars responded to literature produced by black women, that discuss the experiences of black women. She highlights both the textual responses by black male scholars in addition to the press experiences of black feminist productions. In addition, Collins

⁵⁵ Austin, “Theorizing Difference within Black Feminist Thought.”

⁵⁶ Austin, “Theorizing Difference within Black Feminist Thought.” 53

examines how the trend within black advocacy of presuming that focus on black women detracts overall black progress and liberation.⁵⁷

Robert Staples's analysis of Ntozake Shange's choropoem, [*For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide*] and Michele Wallace's controversial volume [*Black Macho and the Myth of the Superwoman*] illustrates the difficulty of challenging the masculinist bias in black social and political thought. Alice Walker encountered similar hostile reactions to her publication [*The Color Purple*].⁵⁸

The literary trend of discussing the unique gender marginalization within black communities can be traced as far back as the enslavement of black people in the United States. The marginalization associated with the period of enslavement emerges politically, but also in the assumption that women experience social oppression in the same way as black men.⁵⁹ bell hooks (1981) traces this marginalization to the enslavement of Africans in the United States in her text

Ain't I a Woman:

Marginalization of Black women goes back to slavery. Even black men were able to maintain some sense of masculinity. However, the claim that black male slaves were emasculated created a dismissal of focus on black women's issues. Underlying assumption that the experiences of black men were more important than black women.⁶⁰

In addition to discussing the marginalization of black women's issues, hooks presents that black men used patriarchy in a way to assert their humanity at the expense of black women. This assertion of patriarchy occurred in the home and in activism efforts dominated with male leadership. hooks notes that many black women who were activists were criticized and minimized by their husbands from the fear that they were challenging the feminine and submissive role in their homes. In addition, black men strived to claim patriarchy as a mechanism to attain the same power they criticized in white men. As bell hooks writes, "Their

⁵⁷ Collins, *Black Feminist Thought*.

⁵⁸ Collins, *Black Feminist Thought*, 7.

⁵⁹ hooks, *Ain't I a Woman*.

⁶⁰ hooks, *Ain't I a Woman* 81

[black men's] expressions of rage and anger are less a critique of the white male patriarchal social order, and more a reaction against the fact that they have not been allowed full participation in the power game."⁶¹ In the following excerpt, hooks is referring to the experiences of Mary Church Terrell and Margaret Murray:

Terrell's husband used his patriarchal status to sabotage her political work. His fear was that her femininity would be tarnished by too many encounters with the world outside the home. The marriage of Booker T. Washington and his third wife, Margaret Murray, was fraught with similar conflict. Margaret wanted to assume a more active role in the black political movement but was encouraged to confine herself to the domestic sphere.⁶²

Moving further into the twentieth century, during the years of Jim Crow, predominantly black communities, had a deeply entrenched form of gender discrimination and invisibility. Jim Crow specifically, refers to series of laws in the United States between 1880 and 1960 that shaped racial history and restricted the parameters of black life in southern United States.⁶³

Leslie Brown recognizing gendered marginalization in southern black communities during this in her analysis of an all-Black community emerging in Durham North Carolina.⁶⁴ Black women in this community were subjected to the same exploitative conditions from before emancipation. Black men in this community replicated the characteristics of white patriarchy, and restricted black women to domestic and industrial labor.⁶⁵ Brown examines that though activism in response to Jim Crow emerged to address the issues experienced by both black men and women, men in Durham possessed most of the economic and political control. In addition, black women made up the largest percentage of people living in poverty in Durham.⁶⁶

⁶¹ hooks, *Ain't I a Woman*, 94.

⁶² hooks, *Ain't I a Woman*, 90.

⁶³ Kamalu, "Jim Crow."

⁶⁴ Brown, *Upbuilding Black Durham*.

⁶⁵ Brown, *Upbuilding Black Durham*.

⁶⁶ Brown, *Upbuilding Black Durham*.

During the era of Jim Crow, many black women utilized the social and economic marginalization they experience as a way to redefine black womanhood. This is where the idea of “New Negro Women” first emerged; a derivative of the New Negro.⁶⁷ This idea was used to classify the work of women as they define their social identities outside of being a wife and a mother. Brown argues that the black women in Durham followed the collective trend of black women historically; personal autonomy and the advancement of the black race. However, similar to the black women that attained roles with the NAACP, this activism was reserved for the middle class and the economically elite of the community. Women that enjoyed an economic benefit, were able to access the spaces to cultivate activism and this was often rooted in the interests of the middle and upper class.⁶⁸ The majority of black women in the working and lower class had less access to these spaces, and fewer opportunities to participate in focused feminist activism. It is important to point out here how literature that focuses on the experiences of black women, recognizes they are faced with intersectional issues. Specifically, black women experiencing racism, gendered discrimination and in this example, class-based marginalization simultaneously.

The scholarship presented here collectively argue for the different ways in which sexism emerges within black communities, though this dissertation attempts to depart from the focus of these perspectives on the gendered marginalization of black women. In this dissertation, I argue that black women who advocated for themselves through the NAACP constituted a mode of black activism distinct to their gendered and racialized social location as black women. This particular focus complicates narratives that represent black activism and advocacy, or black social movements, as movements that embody sexism and marginalize the unique experiences of

⁶⁷ Brown, *Upbuilding Black Durham*.

⁶⁸ Brown, *Upbuilding Black Durham*.

black women. While gendered marginalization exists in these movements, black women and their engagement with the NAACP as constituents of advocacy Part of this contrast is also related to the next theme, the dominance of black women in leadership and agency positions historically in the NAACP. This representation as an underlying variable, influences the patterns of advocacy impacting the lives of black women minimizing the potential for marginalizing their specific experiences.

NAACP Historical Literature

In this section, I specify the area of historical literature to which my research contributes. Since my research focuses on the work of the NAACP during the period of the twentieth century following World War II, this section discusses existing themes in the historical narratives around the NAACP and its work during the twentieth century. In particular, this section examines the contributions of black women to the NAACP during the twentieth century and analyzes the scholarship that documents the role of black women in the NAACP. This section names and elaborates on five main themes: (1) a focus on black women as agents of change; (2) arguments that black women constituted the groundwork of the NAACP as leaders and administrators; (3) the scholarship of historians and black feminist scholars writing about how the contributions of black women to the NAACP are minimized; (4) historical literature on the NAACP's focus on unique service populations (often omitting black women); and (5) the ways in which the existing scholarship overlooks the impact of advocacy on the lives of black women as service recipients. Understanding these themes is important to tracking the various narratives that currently make up the historiography of the NAACP and identifying opportunities build on the historiography by

writing into scholarship the lives of black women engaged with the NAACP as constituents of advocacy. This is the work of my dissertation.

Dorothy Salem argues that the necessity of black women was critical to the work of the NAACP as well as the larger context of black liberation movements dominated by black female leaders. According to Salem (1995), activism embodies the social systems of oppression it seeks to eradicate by way of leaders and organizers that propagate classism, sexism or racism. Black women with social positioning at the intersection of racism, sexism and in many cases classism, carry a unique perspective in their leadership that brings attention to these systems in all advocacy efforts. Her contribution also presents an argument for studying how black women being a part of organizations like the NAACP promoted policies that impacted their population by increasing the likelihood of investigations on race, class, and gendered based discrimination.

Most of these social reformers carried some prevailing racial, class and gender attitudes into their mission to help African Americans. The presence of black women in social reform organizations during this period depicted the complex interrelationships of race, class, and gender.⁶⁹

Salem also notes that black women made up a significant portion of the NAACP during this era and also made up a significant portion of leaders in surrounding advocacy movements as a way of showing the important contributions of women to social movements that emerged in the postwar period. Black women became significant contributors to the NAACP because of the criticism of the white reform origins of its initial founding in 1909. Further emphasizing the point of black women being significant in promoting policies to address all systems of oppression, being less likely to propagate them in advocacy organizations because of their identities. Salem's work helps contribute a perspective theorized on black women being a part of

⁶⁹ Salem, 1995, p. 54

the leadership of an organization leading to policies that recognize the complexities of oppression.

Black women played a significant role in the emergence of the NAACP, as well as its social advocacy efforts during the second half of the twentieth century. In her article, “Women and the Emergence of the NAACP,” Linda Moore highlights how women contributed to the development of the NAACP and how their contributions are ignored in mainstream historical texts. She presents her evidence through a model called “interorganizational capital” (Moore, 2013 p 477). Specifically, the emergence of the NAACP depended on the networks created by the alliances of black and white women social workers during the progressive era 1880-1990 (Moore, 2013).

Social Movements that involve civil rights often lack access to resources enjoyed by mainstream organizations...Civil Rights leaders or organizers may seek allies to help them bypass traditional routes to introduce their agenda to the larger society.

Moore (2013) studied how the nascent NAACP depended on the network created by black and white women during the Progressive Era (1890s–1920s). She states that 20 black and white women worked to raise money, educate civil rights leaders, and increase awareness to the issue areas of the NAACP in those early years. Black women specifically developed block clubs towards educating NAACP leaders about organizing, raised money, and provided administrative staff to the NAACP (Moore, 2013). The black women integral to this process included Ida B. Wells and Mary Church Terrell. The women-led organizations that played key roles in establishing the NAACP included the Women’s Trade Union League, the Consumers’ League, and the Equality League of Self-Supporting Women (Moore, 2013).

NAACP development was spearheaded by black women. This organization began to develop best practices, and mechanisms for improving the lives of Black Americans especially

during the post-World War II era, the focus of this inquiry. Specifically, early administrators within the organization focused on cultivating black political support through anti-lynching campaigns and towards attaining influence in the judicial and executive tangents of government (Francis, 2014). During the early years of the NAACP, its leaders refined its political tangent by successfully getting Presidents Woodrow Wilson and Warren G. Harding to support the anti-lynching campaign and publicly scrutinize mob violence (Francis, 2014). Wilson particularly became favorable to the demands of the NAACP in the latter portion of his term in office. The NAACPs' pursuit of political and social influence eventually gave way to its legal mechanism. This advocacy shift led to a series of successful landmark cases (Francis, 2014; Kruse & Tuck, 2012).

Later in the twentieth century and in more recent years, the NAACP has included black women and girls in activism and advocacy efforts, particularly around *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) as well as in desegregation of public schools before and after the *Brown* decision. Historians have argued that the NAACP recognized the ways in which black women leaders within the NAACP, including Nettle Hunt and Sarah Roberts, contributed to the organization's success in advocacy and organizing efforts. While literature of the NAACPs' work in more recent years has highlighted the unique social realities of black women and girls, there are still opportunities to add to the historiography in refreshing, new ways. For example, recently the NAACP has produced literature that examines how black girls experience discrimination from both sexism and racism in the classroom with unfair disciplinary practices (NAACP Annual Report, 2014). Members of the NAACP have advocated on behalf of young black girls by presenting the disproportionate way black girls are disciplined in school and provide scholarships to increase the number of black girls interested in science, math,

technology, and engineering (STEM) fields. NAACP literature on the era that I am interested in, in the latter half of the twentieth century, disproportionately presents the experiences of black women as agents of the NAACP rather than recipients of service—and, as I have phrased it earlier, as constituents of advocacy. In addition, this literature traditionally focuses on the leadership of men and youth activism that is typically gendered through the lens of men. This is another important contribution of my dissertation, which highlights how the NAACP improved life for black women who sought out their advocacy support during that era.

Despite the important role of black women in the emergence, evolution, and leadership development of the NAACP, the literature does not reflect this trend. Traditionally, the historical narrative of black liberation or black activism, has either been diluted in mainstream texts—with a focus on the dominant white patriarchal narrative (Alexander Floyd, 2012; Crenshaw, 1989)—or limited to examining more often than not, the narratives of black men (Brown-Marshall, 2016; Robinson, 1987; Wyatt, 2000; Sartin, 2007). Historians that produce work that presents the contributions of the NAACP after World War II focus largely on male leadership as well as the national and international work of the organization. The topics that frequently emerge in Post-World War II literature include the NAACP relative to communism, colonialism, The Civil Rights Movement, United States racism, voting rights, political reform and its most popular tangent, The NAACP Legal Defense and Education Fund (Bynum, 2013; Sullivan, 2009; Brown-Marshall, 2016; Woodley, 2014; Anderson, 2015). This is not to say that all of literature is produced from the latter list, because many historians have also focused on specific subgroups impacted through NAACP work.

Attention has been given to the work of youth organizers within the NAACP as well as CORE and SNCC. The following historian makes a point similar to the one made in this

dissertation, with focusing on the contributions of youth during the Post World War II freedom movements including The Civil Rights Movement and Black Power Era. Thomas Bynum (2013) highlights some of the gaps that exist in his book, *NAACP Youth and the Fight for Black Freedom*. Bynum discusses that much of the historical literature on the NAACP focuses largely on national campaigns and the work of the NAACP Legal Defense and Education fund. He presents the importance of focusing on the role of youth within the NAACP and the contributions of individual youth activists towards addressing their issues.⁷⁰ Bynum's work is important to highlight here because he presents both the limitations of literature on NAACP work, and also highlights a population within the NAACP that goes unobserved.

It is also important to note, that literature that discusses legal strategies highlight race with limited recognition of gender as part of those strategies. Specifically, strategies broadly focus on the racial experiences of black Americans. NAACP strategies were tied to constitutional rights, campaigns and criticism of the U.S. Supreme Court ignoring the degrading racial reality for Black Americans.⁷¹ Alternatively, an examination of legal strategies of Anti-Lynching Campaign, and *Brown v. Board (LDF)* do not outline gender and race explicitly but because black women were among those lynched, and were 70% of the teachers in southern states; these legal campaigns may have impacted their lives though gender isn't outlined in the strategies.⁷²

There also exist trends in this historical literature that focus more on black women as agents within the NAACP, marginalizing how they benefited from policies and advocacy efforts. Historians focus on how black women led the emergence of the NAACP, promoted the Anti-Lynching Bill, and worked as field organizers and administrators within the NAACP.⁷³ In

⁷⁰ Bynum, *NAACP Youth*.

⁷¹ Hine, 1979; Klarman, 2004; Jonas, 2005

⁷² Kluger, 1976; Zangrando, 1980

⁷³ Starla, 2002; Mungarro, 2002; Trigg and Bernstein, 2016.

response to the dominant narrative that often marginalizes black women, many have captured their experiences through their memoirs. Activists such as Ida Mae Holland (1986), Anne Moody (1970), Septima Clark (1962) and Melba Beal (1994) in their memoirs discuss their significant contributions to planning and executing the Montgomery Bus Boycott. Beale points out in her memoir, how much of the work of the women in the months leading up to the Montgomery Bus Boycott, which was a year-long strike against racial segregation on public transportation, goes unrecognized because they do not fit into the traditional, middle class feminine narrative propagated by many social justice organizations during the period.⁷⁴ Jo Ann Gibson Robinson (1987), highlights in her memoir, how black women laid the foundation for the Montgomery Bus Boycott nine years before it began.⁷⁵ The organization “The Women’s Political Council” established three branches throughout Alabama leading up to the start of the Montgomery bus boycott. Many of the black women that started the organization, heard the poor treatment their families would receive on a daily basis. The black women largely behind the Montgomery Bus Boycott, and the marginalization they experienced that resulted in many of them producing literature as a means of self-advocacy, speaks to the necessity of intersectionality as an approach to historical analysis.

Black women in their work have given more detailed accounts of their experiences, however what I have observed is limited attention to how this work improved their lives on a daily basis. Similar to the way these woman discuss themselves as key agents in their memoirs, black historians have also discussed their work as agents of change, rather than constituents, who are often guided by their own leadership and activism.

⁷⁴ Sartain, *Invisible Activists*.

⁷⁵ Robinson, *Montgomery Bus Boycott and the Women Who Started It*.

For example, Joy James, a black women scholar, revisits W.E.B. Du Bois's concept of the Talented Tenth to argue, in part, how traditional historical narratives ignore the work and contributions of black women. This invisibility results in a distortion of social advocacy, and the complex functions of effective social progress.

That Ella Baker could have lived the life she did and remain so little known even among the political knowledgeable is important in itself. It reminds us once more of how much our collective past has been distorted and distorted in disempowering ways. Part of that distortion stems from which actors are privileged in political memory. Reflecting that the conservative or liberal bias that privileges men, whites and the affluent and contemporary historians emphasize the role of African American Women.⁷⁶

Within my dissertation project, I am thinking about two questions. First, how do NAACP historical narratives limitedly focus on broad issues? Second, how does literature produced by black feminist scholars focus on themselves as workers and contributors rather than service recipients? This work will contribute to moving historical narratives beyond seeing black women simply as laborers towards change and improve how nonprofits work with marginalized communities.

Racism, Sexism and The Theoretical Framework of Intersectionality

In the final section, I discuss literature themes on the theoretical framework of intersectionality. This section helps contextualize my research because it presents existing dialogues of the framework. Here, I present literary criticisms, topics that dominate discussion of the framework, and theoretical and practical suggestions for its use. By presenting these; I also present a gap for my own research to contribute to. Specifically, the gap being an analysis of

⁷⁶ Joy James, *Transcending the Talented Tenth: Black Leaders and American Intellectuals* (New York, NY: Routledge, 1997).

general social advocacy outcomes, as intersectional. This placement of this section is critical as it helps lay the foundation for what will be discussed in the research approach and methodology chapter that follows.

The emergence of Black Feminism and Black Feminist Theory strived, in part, to address how the social experiences of black women are often characterized by compound systems of oppression; specifically, racism, sexism, and in many cases classism Crenshaw.⁷⁷ Kimberlé Crenshaw coined the concept of intersectionality as a succinct way to describe the reality of black women within these intersecting systems. Kimberlé Crenshaw's work helps with conceptualizing the framework of intersectionality as a legitimate empirical theory and more importantly, its role in practice. Patricia Hill Collins in excerpts from her work, presents the dilemma faced by proponents of intersectionality in defining the parameters of its use. Collins highlights how the framework is employed in various functions of society.

Variations of intersectional practice can be found within and outside of the academy. Teachers, social workers, parents, policy advocacy, university support staff, community organizers, clergy, lawyers, graduate students, nurses and other practitioners find themselves upholding and challenging social inequities.⁷⁸

Collins outlines the way intersectionality has a definitional fluidity; this is a particularly important theme that emerges in discussions of intersectionality in practice. Much of the literature discusses the framework's theoretical parameters emerge from its use in the lives of black women. While my research inquiry for this dissertation employs intersectionality in social advocacy efforts for black women in particular, it contributes a definitional qualifier for understanding its use in practice, in the area of social advocacy in particular. It would contribute to perspectives of intersectionality in practice, like those expressed by Kimberle Crenshaw.

⁷⁷ Collins, "Learning from the Outsider Within"; Collins, *Black Feminist Thought*; Cho, Crenshaw, and McCall, "Toward a Field of Intersectionality Studies."

⁷⁸ Collins, *Black Feminist Thought*.

Much of the existing literature discussing the role of intersectionality emphasizes its use in theorizing about the lived experiences of black women and women of color at the intersection of sexism and racism and in many cases classism. In an article Crenshaw helped produce, one of the approaches she recommends for its practice ties intersectionality to teaching and research projects. This approach suggests that intersectionality, be used to develop policies to assist antidiscrimination doctrines in cases of “compound oppression.”⁷⁹ Crenshaw also suggests the framework be used by grassroots organizations in progressive advocacy campaigns that surpass “single speared” issues.⁸⁰ Black feminism and the larger framework of intersectionality introduces an alternative to the dominate narrative that disregards the very unique experiences of black women and girls. Again, while the core argument in the article is intersectionality developing into an empirical process, the emphasis is still on the lives of black women and girls specifically.

Crenshaw's definition of intersectionality also emerges from her work, “Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex” (1989) and “Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics and Violence against Women of Color”(1991). In the former, Crenshaw analyzes the book, “All the Women are White, All the Blacks are Men, But Some of Us Are Brave” (Hull, Smith and Bell-Scott,1982) to tie her discussion together, speaking of the unique and often ignored experiences of black women. Specifically, she discusses how development efforts have a limited, single sphere scope when it comes to the lives of black women (1989). She argues that black women are excluded when development efforts only focus on racism. Crenshaw discusses how this is a reality considering issues around rape, female led households, employment and

⁷⁹ Cho, Crenshaw and McCall, “Toward a Field of Intersectionality Studies.”

⁸⁰ Cho, Crenshaw and McCall, “Toward a Field of Intersectionality Studies.”

social justice (1989). One of the examples that she presents highlights a case brought against General Motors by four black women, for hiring practices that discriminated against black women.

Plaintiffs have failed to cite any decisions which have stated that black women are a special class to be protected from discrimination. The courts own research has failed to disclose such a decision. The plaintiff is clearly entitled to a remedy if they have been discriminated against. However, they should not be allowed to combine statutory remedies to create a new super remedy which would give them relief beyond what the drafters of the relevant statutes intended. Thus, this lawsuit must be examined to see if it states a cause of action for race discrimination, sex discrimination, or alternatively either, but not a combination of both.

The employment discrimination case that Crenshaw highlights is an excellent example of the real implications of systemic oppression, and denial of the unique reality of black women as impacted by both sexism and racism. In this case the court denied sex discrimination, and suggest the women make another case specifically on the basis of race discrimination, not both (Crenshaw, 1989). In the second article, Crenshaw expands the definition of intersectionality, by emphasizing research and advocacy move beyond restrictive identity politics. Specifically, she expands the definition of intersectionality to include women of color and examines how their identities are inextricably linked to their economic, social and political realities (1991).

Crenshaw highlights issues including rape, domestic violence, racist politics, social services and education.

Many scholars have taken Crenshaw's original definition of intersectionality as a theory and disjointed it from its black feminist origins. Additionally, there are scholars that come to the defense of this framework, and argue it is appropriate only for the study in the lives of black women, by black women. This concept has been carefully presented and examined by other scholars like Patricia Hill Collins (2000), whose articulation of Black feminism focuses on the specific ways black women experience domination. Collins also discusses self-empowerment

and liberation in her book, *Black Feminist Thought* (2000). Collins carefully examines how the social identities of black women historically have existed within both a sexist and racist system of discrimination and marginalization. Collins highlights the use of stereotypical images used to suppress black women for social and economic purposes. Furthermore, other scholars—including Crenshaw (2013), Cho and McCall (2013), Anner (1996) and Wilson (2013)—have argued for the importance of this framework towards thoroughly addressing disenfranchisement from racism and classism.

Nikol Alexander-Floyd helps further develop the framework, but also argues that it has been co-opted into other disciplines in academia. She expands on the framework by discussing the role of narrative analysis as a foundation for intersectionality and as a Black Feminist frame of reference. This form of analysis holds the experiences of black women primary, and also references them as the only credible source to study these experiences.⁸¹ Alexander-Floyd argues how the theory has been adopted and removes black women from its purview.⁸² According to Alexander-Floyd, this process occurs when Crenshaw's original concept of intersectionality is expanded into the multi-faceted complexity of identity politics.⁸³ Scholars dismiss it as a framework inextricably linked to the experiences of black women and women of color. Hancock (2016) makes a similar argument claiming that intersectionality has transcended beyond its' use as a method for explicitly examining the experiences of black women.⁸⁴

Since the emergence of black feminism over three decades ago, there has been a commodification of the framework of intersectionality, as scholars continue to define its use. In

⁸¹ Nikol Alexander-Floyd, "(Inter)Disciplinary Trouble: Intersectionality, Narrative Analysis, and the Making of a New Political Science," *Politics & Gender* 9, no. 4 (2013): 470–74.

⁸² Alexander-Floyd, "(Inter)Disciplinary Trouble."

⁸³ Nikol Alexander-Floyd, "Disappearing Acts: Reclaiming Intersectionality in the Social Sciences in a Post-Black Feminist Era," *Feminist Formations* 24, no. 1 (2012): 1–25.

⁸⁴ Ange-Marie Hancock, *Intersectionality: An Intellectual History* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2016).

her essay, “The Occult of True Black Womanhood,” Ann duCille (1994) examines this flock towards the study of black feminism by white and black male scholars. This process discredits the work of black feminists that pioneered the field as a criticism of white feminism in the 1970s.⁸⁵ Alexander-Floyd also draws connections from duCille to her own work, making the argument that the same commodification occurs with the theoretical framework of intersectionality, a mechanism of black feminism.⁸⁶ She discusses that the residual impact of confronting white femininity, coupled with contemporary ideas around universal equality, led many scholars into commodifying the framework of intersectionality (Alexander-Floyd 2012;2013). Evidence of this commodification can be found in the work of scholars like Susanne Hochreiter (2011). Her article “Race, Class, Gender? Intersectionality Troubles” discusses the foundation of intersectionality being rooted in the work of black feminists. In the article, she argues that the framework has been adopted as a general system of identity politics. The way that intersectionality has been taken up to recognize identities within European, and LGBT studies, she argues, adopts the racial hierarchies that black feminists worked to challenge in the first place.⁸⁷ Leslie McCall (2005), another scholar who is critiqued for her use of the framework, appeals to a wider range of social science scholars by enabling their use of intersectionality. Specifically, McCall places emphasis on the complexity of intersectionality in order to focus more on human identity being broader than gender and race. McCall uses intersectionality to delegitimize categorical approach to research as basic analysis of social constructions.⁸⁸

⁸⁵ Ann duCille, “The Occult of True Black Womanhood: Critical Demeanor and Black Feminist Studies,” *Signs* 19, no. 3 (1994): 591–629.

⁸⁶ Alexander-Floyd, “Disappearing Acts.”

⁸⁷ Susanne Hochreiter, “Race, Class, Gender? Intersectionality Troubles,” *Journal of Research in Gender Studies* 1, no. 2 (2011): 49–56.

⁸⁸ Leslie McCall, “The Complexity of Intersectionality,” *Signs* 30, no. 3 (2005): 1771–800; Hochreiter, “Race, Class, Gender.”

Many scholars have also criticized the framework of intersectionality in practice. It is important to note that many of these criticisms emerge as the framework moves away from being used to analyze the lives and experiences of black women. Scholars Richard Delgado (2011), Jane Ward and Rachel Luft (2009), present specific barriers to the incorporation of the framework of intersectionality in practice.

Richard Delgado (2011) presents the argument that intersectionality, in practice, is underdeveloped and leaves out certain identities such as those identifying within LGBT or those battling institutional barriers as immigrants or refugees.⁸⁹ He also highlights how intersectionality aligns with essentialism in a way that undercuts broader, more general social justice movements. Delgado claims that, “focusing on subgroup identities weakens movements such as those focusing on workers’ rights.”⁹⁰ In contrast, Luft and Ward argue that these larger social justice movements are incapable of properly acknowledging the various intersectional identities that exist among marginalized groups.⁹¹ In addition, Luft and Ward (2009) make several claims against the practicality of the framework: first, practitioners may confuse intersectionality as the purview of gender studies and feminism; second, it leads to confusion of the difference between diversity and intersectionality; third, intersectionality can be misinterpreted as a form of multiple jeopardy; and fourth, organizers may be unable to acknowledge that studying intersections of oppression also means dealing with appropriate analysis of intersecting systems of power and privilege.⁹² Further arguments against the framework of intersectionality highlight it as a system based on racial politics that may not be

⁸⁹ Delgado, “Rodrigo’s Reconsideration.”

⁹⁰ Delgado, “Rodrigo’s Reconsideration.”

⁹¹ Rachel Luft and Jane Ward, “Toward an Intersectionality Just Out of Reach: Confronting Challenges to Intersectional Practice.” *Advances in Gender Research* 13 (2009): 9–37.

⁹² Luft and Ward, “Toward an Intersectionality Just Out of Reach.”

relevant for contemporary social justice movements moving forward. In various cases, the framework is argued as presenting a barrier when it comes to building alliances across all marginalized groups. By focusing explicitly on the experience of black women, it is argued that other marginalized groups will become unwelcomed as they attempt to organize and build with this community. For example, the case study produced by Suyemoto and Fox Tree (an Asian American woman and a Native American woman) examines barriers to teaching black educators at an organization focused on antiracism and cultural sensitivity. The barriers encountered were related to different experiences across communities of color and different ways these communities relate to the white power structure.⁹³ They also highlight what psychologists claim is a common barrier for activists and organizers across communities, which is discussing diversity within non-white communities and potentially sacrificing solidarity.⁹⁴

It is critical to note that all of the criticisms that emerge in debates about the use of the theoretical framework of intersectionality, are tied to its use with populations it was not created to serve. Crenshaw coined this concept specifically to offer a more effective way to examine the lives of black women, impacted by both sexism and racism. Examining another population using this theory, defeats the very purpose of its establishment.

In this dissertation, I study black women who appear in the archival records of the NAACP during the period 1945 to 1995. As this literature review shows, analyzing the experiences of black women necessitates a Black Feminist framework. Specifically, the theoretical framework of intersectionality—an apparatus of Black Feminism—prioritizes narrative analysis which is a system of analysis that disrupts traditional systems that can be

⁹³ Karen L. Suyemoto and Claudia A. Fox Tree, “Building Bridges Across Differences to Meet Social Action Goals: Being and Creating Allies among People of Color,” *American Journal of Community Psychology* 37, nos. 3–4 (2006): 333–40.

⁹⁴ Suyemoto and Fox Tree, “Building Bridges Across Differences.”

rooted in racism and sexism, by localizing knowledge in mostly subjective experiences.⁹⁵ The theoretical framework of intersectionality helps us understand the issues of the black women in the following chapters as intersectional, in the sense that these black women were confronting multiple interlocking systems of oppression in their day-to-day lives. Though this theoretical framework did not guide the collection of archival data, it can be used to analyze findings in regard to the selected population and the subject areas that emerged. Furthermore, the focus of this research is historical, with an emphasis on the lives of black women in the social advocacy sector. The historical records of the NAACP were the most immediate source of primary data on activities that potentially impact this population. Black women's lives, which this dissertation is especially interested in, are profoundly intersectional; therefore, the analyses that the following chapters take up embrace intersectionality in order to reveal the entanglements of race, gender, and class that made up their realities.

⁹⁵ Alexander-Floyd, "(Inter)Disciplinary Trouble."

CHAPTER THREE

Black Women at the Center: Toward A Black Studies and Black Feminist Methodology

This dissertation draws on qualitative research methods—specifically, archival research—that center the experiences of black women who are constituents and recipients of NAACP advocacy. Broadly speaking, qualitative research methods examine and analyze social phenomena through the experiences and voices of individuals that are the focus of any given study.⁹⁶ Furthermore, qualitative methods enables examination of social impact and can provide human insight into areas not recognized in data collection associated with quantitative methods.⁹⁷

The logic behind the specific archival approach in this dissertation lies in both the discipline of African and African Diaspora Studies (Black Studies) itself as well as Black Feminist scholarship. In this chapter, I examine the fields of Black Studies and Black Feminist Studies to map out the contours of a methodological approach that grounds itself in the positionality and subjectivity of black women. In doing so, this chapter (1) establishes an understanding of the importance and impact of qualitative research, and (2) contextualizes my own qualitative research in this dissertation. In addition, I will briefly define the history of the movements that brought Black Studies and Black Feminist Studies into institutional being, as a basic understanding of them contextualizes the importance of the research.

My dissertation directly engages the commitments, investments, and conversations that have characterized Black Studies and Black Feminist Studies. The qualitative research in this dissertation brings attention to the experiences of black women through examining their lives

⁹⁶ Melinda M. Leko and Audrey A. Trainor, “The Value of Qualitative Methods in Social Validity Research.” *Remedial and Special Education* 35, no. 5 (2014): 275–86; Michael Quinn Patton, *Qualitative Research and Evaluation Methods: Integrating Theory and Practice*, 3rd ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2002).

⁹⁷ Patton, *Qualitative Research and Evaluation Methods*.

during the twentieth century. As stated earlier, qualitative research examines social phenomena through the voices and experiences of individuals who are the focus of the study. In centering the voices and lived experiences of the black women in the NAACP archives, I am aligning my qualitative research with the commitments and investments of Black Studies and Black Feminist Studies. Specifically, through this work, I focus on the experiences of black women; in doing so, I advance an argument that takes up the call of Black Studies to broaden the complexity, nuance, and texture of the narratives of African American communities. Importantly, I focus on the direct experiences of African American women who came into contact with the NAACP between 1945 and 1995. This research examines their experiences with racism and sexism in specific issue areas through their voices as recorded in the NAACP archives. In considering the ways in which racism and sexism converged in the lives of the black women in this dissertation, I am engaging in the long scholarly and profoundly political conversation around intersectionality and its significance in Black Feminist Studies.

Black Studies

My dissertation draws from Black Studies' commitment to challenging Eurocentric narratives that misrepresent black communities and recuperating the complexity and visibility of black life. Black Studies challenges dominant narratives that often reduce Blackness to a pathology. Black Studies centers black life, black thought, and black communities in their full complexities. African and African Diaspora Studies, a derivative of Black Studies, has emerged as an interdisciplinary body of research characterized by history, ethnography, anthropology, sociology, political science, and global studies, among other areas. The history of the institutionalization of the discipline itself was defined by a need to extend the goals of Civil

Rights and the Black Power Movements. This need entailed converting goals into an institutionalized ideology capable of humanizing black reality beyond what had been marginalized and dehumanized through racism and Eurocentricity.⁹⁸ Early advocates fighting for the initial institutionalization of Black Studies in colleges and universities saw it as a necessary next step towards dignifying the complete reality of Africa and African descendants throughout the world. Black Studies advocates critiqued dominant narratives rooted in white supremacy, white patriarchy, and the normalization of European perspectives.⁹⁹ Foundational literature by a breadth of thinkers, activists, and scholars—including W. E. B. Du Bois (1903), Walter Rodney (1981), Eric Williams (1966), Patricia Hill Collins (2000) and Kimberlé Crenshaw (1991), Peter Kolchin (2002), and Audre Lorde (1984)—have helped introduce foundational ideas and concepts that articulate the experiences ignored by this dominant narrative.¹⁰⁰ For example, in his book, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*, Guyanese historian Walter Rodney (1981) provides an alternative perspective to the Eurocentric perspective offered by many historians preceding him that have reported on Africa’s development and European colonialism.

Black Studies research typically addresses the goal of the institutionalization of Black Studies in three ways: description, prescription, and correction. Black Studies research has been descriptive, prescriptive, and corrective in its attempt to capture the complex realities that, in many conventional and disciplinary research narratives, have been reduced to a monolith through

⁹⁸ Martha Biondi, *Black Revolution on Campus* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012); Manning Marable, “Beyond Brown: The Revolution in Black Studies,” *Black Scholar* 35, no. 2 (2005): 11–21.

⁹⁹ Biondi, *Black Revolution on Campus*.

¹⁰⁰ W. E. B. Du Bois, *Souls of Black Folk* (Chicago, IL: A. C. McClurg & Co., 1903); Walter Rodney, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* (Washington, DC: Howard University Press, 1981), originally published 1972; Eric Williams, *Capitalism and Slavery* (New York: Capricorn Books, 1966); Patricia Hill Collins, *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Power, and Consciousness* (New York: Routledge, 2000); Kimberlé Crenshaw, “Mapping the Margins”; Peter Kolchin, “Whiteness Studies: The New History of Race in America,” *Journal of American History* 89, no. 1 (2002): 154–73; and Audre Lorde *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches* (Trumansburg, NY: Crossing Press, 1984).

racialized marginalization and dehumanization. Black Studies describes these complex realities in ways that militate against one-dimensional representations of black communities, prescribes alternative ways of understanding and interpreting social phenomena that are grounded in black life, and corrects the misguided narratives that freely circulate in the popular social imaginations of the country. A distinct Black Studies approach to research, then, entails that many scholars look at black life through a lens not distorted by racism. In addition, it requires in part that scholars study these communities by prioritizing black perspectives, ways of life, and epistemologies. Robin D. G. Kelley exhibits this characteristic of black scholarship in his book, *Yo' Mama's Disfunktional: Fighting the Culture Wars in Urban America* (1997). In this piece, Kelley prioritizes the perspective of black Americans living in urban areas as a way of countering Eurocentric sociology models that pathologize black culture. Specifically, he presents and then argues against the trend of these racist models towards blaming the behaviors of black urban dwellers as the cause of the deplorable economic conditions in many American cities.¹⁰¹ One of the arguments he presents to counter this tradition of sociology models, is centering the perspective that Black Americans exist in conditions created by their systematic marginalization, and the subsequent coping mechanisms and strategies to survive systemic constraints.

Kelley presents how institutions and public policy that led to the development of inner-city ghettos, engaged a response from the population seeking to survive in the conditions they had no part in creating.¹⁰² For example, the economic shift gave rise to unemployment in a system with already few employment opportunities for black residents. Unemployment coupled

¹⁰¹ Robin D. G. Kelley, *Yo' Mama's Disfunktional: Fighting the Culture Wars in Urban America* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1997).

¹⁰² Kelley, *Yo' Mama's Disfunktional*.

with the influx of unskilled low wage jobs gave rise to an “underground economy” as well as a cultural response that sought to cope with these economic conditions:

Economic restructuring leading to permanent unemployment; the shrinking of city services; the rising number of abandoned buildings; the militarization of inner-city streets; and the decline of parks, youth programs, and public schools altered the terrain of play and creative expression of black youth.¹⁰³

Kelley presents that black youth response to these systems should not be pathologized but rather viewed as a creative adjustment to conditions created by institutional changes. For example, he references how black youth merge play with the need to produce income by becoming street performers or making music through homemade instruments. What Kelley claims is that youth are criticized through a pathologizing and often classist lens that professionalizes music and art in the technological, post-industrial era.¹⁰⁴ Kelley’s argument emerges in Black Studies as a criticism to traditional sociology models that would have instead pathologized the behavior of black youth as inhibiting their own economic success. Kelley elaborates by explaining that scholars that analyze black culture as a behavior inextricably tied to African or Slave Tradition tend to pathologize black people through black culture.¹⁰⁵ What Kelley highlights is the trend that black studies scholars confront: the othering of African descendants by disconnecting them from what is normalized as whiteness or Eurocentricity. Kelley, like many black scholars, examines black communities without distancing them from an alleged racial norm.

Many black scholars have also produced research that confronts this trend by examining black communities through ethnographic approaches that expands them beyond traditionally reductive narratives that represent black communities as monolithic. These reductive narratives that are characteristic of traditionally Eurocentric studies dehumanize black communities by

¹⁰³ Kelley, *Yo’ Mama’s Disfunktional*, 46.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

considering them noncomplex or multifaceted. An example of this is in the work produced by Michael Dawson on the history of the political characteristics of Black Americans in the United States.¹⁰⁶ In *Blacks In and Out of the Left*, Michael Dawson discusses the complexity of the Black Radical Tradition—specifically, how the radical activism characterizing black history in the U.S. is defined through a range of different political ideologies including Communism, Liberalism, Black Radical Nationalism, and Socialism.¹⁰⁷ He emphasizes that while the political left has proven successful in engaging black populations, it is still not completely inclusive of the social issues concerning black activism. For example, he highlights how, in the 1930s, communism found support among Black Americans as they led a campaign advocating for the Scottsboro Boys, who were falsely convicted of the rape of two white women in Alabama.¹⁰⁸ While it engaged black communities, the Communist Party of the United States of America (CPUSA) intentionally moved away from engaging black activists due to concerns that the organization would be perceived as “too black.”¹⁰⁹ In addition, Dawson’s rationale for his argument is rooted in challenging dominant dialogues around the political nature of black communities for their exclusion of the multi-faceted concerns of black populations—specifically, Black Nationalism, racial violence, racism within the working class [excluded in socialist movements], and the minimization of the contribution of black female and male scholars.¹¹⁰

Specifically, Dawson writes:

...this is a phenomenon most acutely observed in relation to black women activists in the United States and elsewhere in the Diaspora. It is also a phenomenon observable in relation to many black male radicals as well. Harry Haywood and Cyril Briggs are two examples of figures who were important in their time but are now at best footnotes in the

¹⁰⁶ Dawson, *Blacks In and Out of the Left*.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

historiography of American radicalism...the history of the American left is grossly distorted due to this erasure.¹¹¹

My dissertation challenges various erasures of black women in the narratives that circulate in society and in the academy. To this end, I draw on Black Studies' investments in offering counter-representations that re-write Black life in all its complexity, nuance, and fullness.

Black Feminism

Black Feminist Studies, too, informs how I approach this study. Black Feminist research has highlighted the unique experiences of black women who are traditionally marginalized in narratives rooted in white supremacy and white feminism. Within the history of Black Feminism, scholars including Kimberlé Crenshaw, Jackie Huggins (1987), Leslie McCall (2016), Richard Delgado (2011), Ann duCille (1994), and Patricia Bell-Scott, Gloria Hull, and Barbara Smith (1982) have argued that intersectionality—the understanding that race, gender, class, and other modes of oppression often converge and work simultaneously in distinct ways—provides a way to more deeply examine social processes beyond data associated with quantitative methods.¹¹² In other words, an intersectional analysis captures something that the numbers cannot. Patricia Hill Collins advocates for the experiences and contributions of black women in various fields. Collins, Crenshaw and other scholars highlight how social marginalization requires an intersectional form of analysis. As I presented in the literature review, the experiences of black women are often marginalized in mainstream white, patriarchal, heteronormative historical

¹¹¹ Ibid., 17.

¹¹² Crenshaw, "Mapping the Margins,"; Huggins, "Black Women and Women's Liberation"; Leslie McCall (2016); Richard Delgado, "Rodrigo's Reconsideration: Intersectionality and the Future of Critical Race Theory," *Iowa Law Review* 96, no. 4 (2011): 1247–88; Ann duCille, "The Occult of True Black Womanhood"; Akasha (Gloria T.) Hull, Patricia Bell Scott, and Barbara Smith, eds., *All the Women are White, all the Blacks are Men, but Some of Us are Brave: Black Women's Studies* (Old Westbury, NY: Feminist Press, 1982).

narratives.¹¹³ Crenshaw makes this point in her work, emphasizing that black women are at the intersection of racism and gender discrimination; their experiences are a combination of both sexism and racism. The outcome of intersectional research in focusing on the voiced experiences of a population, illuminating a more complete impact of social systems.

Scholars whose research emerges from the framework of intersectionality, often focus on the localizing systems of racism and sexism in the lives of black women. This work also highlights how the lives of black women have contributed historically to public policy, social progress and the inclusivity of those marginalized according to their social identities. The life of activist Pauli Murray is an excellent example of intersectional work fulfilling this purpose. In her book, Rosenberg presents the life of Pauli Murray leading up to her work as a little-known activist helping to build the foundation for the Civil Rights Act of 1964.¹¹⁴ Murray would advocate for the discriminatory experiences of women, and particularly black women to be recognized through this law. Murray experienced intersectional discrimination throughout her adult life and even through her education at Howard University. It was this localized experience, that Rosenberg is able to examine the role of the lives and experiences of black women in contributing to social progress, and in this particular example the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

Other examples of scholars that produce research from the framework of intersectionality. Examine its relevance over a broad range of interdisciplinary topics such as social movements, in American history, empirical analysis as well as gender and sexuality studies.¹¹⁵ Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham presents intersectionality research through looking at how racism structures other systems of oppression. She does this as a way of understanding

¹¹³ Alexander-Floyd, 2012; Alexander-Floyd, 2013; Crenshaw, 1989; Collins, 2000.

¹¹⁴ Rosenberg, 2017.

¹¹⁵ Faulkner and Parker, 2012; Trigg and Bernstein, 2016; Hancock, 2007.

racism as a metalanguage, that forms distinct understandings of class, gender and sexuality.¹¹⁶ Higginbotham specifically argues for gender as a necessary lens when studying American history. Higginbotham argues that the simultaneous workings of race and gender created distinct historical realities for black women. She looks at how race is a qualifier for sexuality throughout American history as well. Racial attitudes towards blacks between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries argues that black women's bodies epitomized century-long European perceptions of Africans as primitive, animal-like and savage."¹¹⁷

Ange-Marie Hancock (2007) provides yet another empirical understanding of research produced through intersectionality. Hancock argues that one of the challenges facing intersectionality as a practical research framework is that it comes into contact with early theories of social categories being static.¹¹⁸ Hancock argues that, as a research paradigm, intersectionality should be used to navigate intergroup realities. She also argues that the history of strict social categorization in the United States (1) assumes that these categories do not interact or change and (2) recognizes policies and policy solutions that only address gender, race, or sex-based discrimination.¹¹⁹ Together, the work of Hancock and Higginbotham help set the parameters of my research and the motivation behind the theoretical framework of intersectionality that I used in analyzing the NAACP advocacy cases in the following chapters. Specifically, Higginbotham defines that applying the framework entails looking at how gendered patterns emerge within the metalanguage of racism, effectively providing a framework for me to argue that the social issues black women in the postwar period confronted were ostensibly intersectional. Similarly, Hancock presents how using intersectionality as an empirical

¹¹⁶ Higginbotham, 1992.

¹¹⁷ Higginbotham, 1992.

¹¹⁸ Hancock, 2007.

¹¹⁹ Hancock, 2007.

framework entails recognizing how social systems of oppression interact with one another. The black women who sought support from the NAACP in their confrontations with oppression were not facing single-issue oppression (because they did not live single-issue lives, to borrow Audre Lorde's famous words); instead, they confronted particular issues that were produced through overlapping, interlocking modes of oppression.

Research Location, Parameters of Study

The NAACP National archives are located at the Library of Congress and are organized into nine parts. Parts I-VI are organized chronologically covering the period from 1919 to 1978, and the remaining three parts cover 1979-2003. For the purpose of this research, the bulk of my data came from parts 2-8, which corresponds with the years 1945-1995. In addition, within these parts file types are organized alphabetically. These file types include branch files, NAACP affiliated organizations, and personnel files. These file types contained speeches, correspondence and biographical sketches of specific individuals. Additional information was organized into chronological order and included newspaper clippings, internal correspondence, speeches, annual reports, annual conventions, court transcripts and case dockets. The following topics within the file types are organized in first chronological order then alphabetical order if containing a named individual or location: lynching, discrimination, police brutality, racial mob violence, armed services, public accommodation, housing, education, employment, Civil Rights Act of 1964 and discrimination.

The timeline for this research inquiry was the period following World War II. More specifically, I focus on the latter half of the twentieth century, in the years from 1945 to 1995. The NAACP gives open access to documents for the years 1945 through 1988 and requires

written permission for files more than thirty years from the current year. In order to get access to files between the years 1988 through 1995, I was required to have a written request approved from the national office of the NAACP currently located in New York. The NAACP approved my written request to access these specific records on February 13, 2019, and the approval is valid beyond the initial research period. Research continued for the years prior to 1988 during the request approval process.

Archive Content Analysis Procedures and Research Questions

The primary goal of archival research is not to identify the relationship one variable has to another, but to instead identify how multiple variables tell part of a larger story. The content analysis procedures emerge from this goal. Content analysis is a form of qualitative data analysis. It is defined by Charles Smith (2000) as:

A technique used to extract desired information from a body of material by systematically and objectively identifying specified characteristics of the material. The impartial and consistent application to all selected material of explicitly defined procedures of analysis is intended to be objective in the sense of yielding unbiased results that can be reproduced by other qualified investigators.¹²⁰

The history of the archiving process has been criticized for how it is capable of holding up privileged voices, and reproducing racist and sexist power dynamics.¹²¹ Specifically, because the foundation of archival science holds the state at the center of analysis, the impact of social problems propagated by the state such as classism, racism and sexism are ignored. Critiques of archival science recommend that in order to address this issue in archival science, bottom up analysis of archives is necessary. Merwe (2002) argues in favor of a “focus on the complex

¹²⁰ Smith 2000 p. 314

¹²¹ Merwe 2017; McKemmish, 1993.

diversity of human experiences through recovering marginalized voices,”¹²² which includes focusing on working class, minority groups and women. The research contained in this dissertation accomplishes this goal. By taking the focus from the state, I examine the voices of black women from a variety of different social classes. I examine the impact of racism, sexism and in some cases classism.

Scholarly material on archival methods in qualitative research is predominantly practical rather than theoretical. Similar to Merwe’s assessment of archival research, historians including Melvina Young (1993) Saidiya Hartman (2008) Ula Taylor (2008) and Marisa Fuentes (2010) have all discussed the shortcomings and discriminatory patterns associated with how the voices of black women are maintained in archives. These scholars help problematize the use of archival data by explaining that the process has perpetually minimized the experiences of black women because of the racist and sexist nature of the dominate narrative. Archives have not valued black women, similar to the way society perpetually degrades their identities. Historical documents attempting to narrate the lives of black women are often distorted, fragmented and silenced.¹²³ Ula Taylor pinpoints this in the piece, *Women in the Documents: Thoughts uncovering the Personal, Political and Professional* (2008):

individual and collective identities are difficult to summon when the material traces holding the clues to those past souls are limited, heavily tainted, or virtually nonexistent. And as legal scholar Cheryl Harris has pointed out, given the historical devaluation of black women, and political intervention was ‘subject to be overlooked, misheard, misinterpreted, misrepresented and misappropriated.’¹²⁴

With regard to practical aspects of archival research there is detailed information on accessing archives, reading and contextualizing the types of documents in archives, time

¹²² Van Der 2019, 239.

¹²³ Fuentes, 2010

¹²⁴ Taylor, Ula 2008 p. 188

commitment of analogue versus digital archives, determining the best source for primary data, and understanding and utilizing finding aids.¹²⁵ Many of these practical guides change depending on the size and nature of the research inquiry. The research inquiry contained in this dissertation required a collection of archival data determined by the research questions outlined in the following pages. In addition, in the following pages there is a discussion of empirical strategies emerged during the initial process of primary archive collection.

The practical steps for analyzing the primary research contained in this dissertation occurred in two waves. The first is outlined by general knowledge that was acquired about the nature of the NAACP work during the period from 1945 to 1995. Specifically, in historical narratives in the literature review portion of this dissertation the NAACP focused its activities around anti-discrimination public policy changes during the period following World War II. In addition, the NAACP activities, as noted earlier, align with specific federal policy changes for issues impacting the lived experiences of Black Americans such as education, housing, social welfare, employment and racial violence. This knowledge led to a focus on the social, political, and legal outputs of the NAACP for the selected era. In addition, the questions outlined in the next pages streamlined the first wave of research by reducing focus on administrative, annual convention, or internal affairs related material. The three research questions outlined here helped lay the groundwork and also highlighted significant areas of relevant data for the broader research topic.

1. Who were the black women that were served by the NAACP during the post-World War II years (1945–1995)?
2. What were black women’s issues that the NAACP recognized in the postwar era?

¹²⁵ Yakel, 2010; Masters, 2010; Harnick, 2010; L’Eplattenier, 2009.

3. Were the social realities of black women recognized in the NAACP published literature? If so, how? If not, how were they overlooked?

In the sections that follow, I outline the goals, motivations, and processes behind each research question that led me to gather the specific archival evidence that I used to make the arguments in the following chapters.

Who were the black women that were served by the NAACP during the post-World War II years (1945–1995)?

The goal of the first question was to identify named individuals, specifically black women who came into contact with the NAACP during the period following World War II. Using the theoretical framework of intersectionality to prioritize the lives of black women, I was able to quantify which issue areas contained larger numbers of black women. Specifically, because issue areas for the NAACP included housing, education, employment, social welfare, racial violence and a variety of other issues tied to the United States Constitution, by identifying named black women in specific issue areas I was able to determine which issue areas appear to be the most recognized for black women. To clarify, housing advocacy, defense against police brutality, and prevention of employment discrimination showed significant numbers of named black women, with detailed cases. Moving further into the research process these were the issues that I choose to focus on, because of the number of black women appearing for each.

The theoretical framework of intersectionality, which takes into consideration the simultaneous impact of overlapping modes of oppression, highlights the experiences of black women who are often marginalized in racist, patriarchal historical narratives. This work is an accumulation of the experiences of black women who were the direct service recipients

(constituents of the advocacy) of NAACP activities in the period following World War II. The theoretical framework applied to this research question not only prioritized the experiences of black women but guided the analysis of the issues that emerged in the archives, as I will detail in the following pages. It helped me articulate issues emerging for black women as intersectional involving both racism and sexism.

The term list derived from this question included terms and concepts and campaigns related to the positions that women commonly held especially between the years from 1945 to 1980. This was done in order to identify areas of the archive where named black women may likely appear. For example, one of the largest campaigns that aligned with the desegregation of public schools was the equalization of teachers pay in southern states. Furthermore, black women made up more than 70 percent of the teachers in the southern states of Georgia, Mississippi, South Carolina, and Louisiana.¹²⁶ The campaign for equal teacher pay thus became an original part of the research criteria, though later it filtered out because the quantity of black women was not enough as was assumed. The theoretical framework helped adjust my term list for primary data by including, education, fair pay and teacher pay cases because they aligned with the positions women were theoretically relegated to. Other terms, pinpointing the labor of black women during the period- as denoted by intersectionality and literature on intersectionality- included domestic labor, which proved to be a more useful search criteria. In addition, the following list of topics includes the NAACP largest, most publicized campaigns in the United States.

Figure 3.1. Refined Research Criteria.



¹²⁶ Baker, *Opportunity Denied*.

Police Brutality
Education
Housing Equality
Employment (Including cases of discrimination, fair pay, hospitals, schools and hospitality services
Lynching and Anti-Lynching
Annual Reports, National, Regional and Local

What issues relevant to black women did the NAACP recognize in the period from 1945 to 1995?

This question should be viewed as a follow up to the first research question. Specifically, the NAACP archives largely document activities where issues were related to national campaigns and public policy goals or the daily lives of African Americans. With this question, I sought to inquire where the NAACP placed the reality of black women in their activities. I sought to examine if and how often the activities of the NAACP highlighted racism and if and how often those activities highlighted sexism in the lives of black women.

This question has also emerged as an analysis of the larger campaigns the NAACP pursued in the latter half of the twentieth century. Specifically, it provides a direct inquiry into the most well-known aspects of the NAACP's work after World War II, as a means of identifying how this work impacted black women. This was an important question because it help streamline research by increasing the likelihood of identifying relevant cases by focusing on where NAACP activities were the most concentrated during the era. Furthermore, this question inquiries about the specific issues within these larger campaigns that emerged relative to the lives of black women. The search criteria for this question, became terms related to the campaigns listed below.

Figure 3.2. List of NAACP Campaigns.

NAACP Campaigns
Housing Equality
Fair Employment
Desegregation of Public School and Brown Implementation
Desegregation of Public Space and Implementation
Implementation of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964

Were the social realities of black women discussed in the NAACP-published literature? If so, how? If not, how were they overlooked?

This question inquires how the unique issues of black women were discussed in public discourse and literature produced by the NAACP. This question is relevant because it seeks to interpret the social context in which the NAACP recognized black women in their activities. To clarify, this question seeks to inquire about the historical context of NAACP work, and what was relevant for social change for the era itself. This question emerged as a way to eliminate possible research bias by investigating the organization against the ideological backdrop of the era itself. One potential bias would be the NAACP's discourse of the era, compared to contemporary ideologies of social change. A secondary contribution of information gathered from this question contributes information on the advocacy ideologies propagated by the NAACP and the overall impact be it negative or positive, on black women.

Within this question is an examination and final analysis of NAACP public discourse. Specifically, I analyzed material produced by the NAACP, media discussion of NAACP work, correspondence among personnel, and interactions with the federal government. What this

question seeks to address is the social reality of black women and/or issues pertaining to black women as recognized by the NAACP. The latter, is the criteria determined by the theoretical framework of intersectionality. In addition, I am seeking to define the areas where the realities of black women were overlooked in public discourse. The topics that emerge in the NAACP archives relative to public discourse include the following:

Figure 3.3. Public Discourse Criteria.

Public Discourse Criteria
The Crisis Magazine
Newspaper Clippings
Case Transcripts
NAACP Guidelines for reporting complaints of Discrimination

These research questions and the subject lists derived from them were an initial strategy used to approach the NAACP archives. Using the finding aid for the collection, I began by going through parts in sequential order pulling boxes with information that related the closest to the research question and subject list.¹²⁷ From these questions, the list of boxes in the following table were identified and reviewed. The boxes in this table came from the NAACP nine-part collection in addition to the Legal Defense and Education Fund records (LDF). LDF is considered a separate organization since its formal split from the NAACP in 1954. The boxes discussed in this collection from LDF include those from the years 1945-1954 before the split.

¹²⁷ The finding aid used for this collection is a 1400-page PDF document containing the location and brief description of each box in the nine part collection. The document is publicly accessible through the Library of Congress Manuscript Division homepage. This chart contains boxes up to group four in which my research goes more narrowed based on recognized patterns.

Figure 3.4. Research Question and Term Box Locations.

Research Question	Search Term or topics (s)	Boxes fitting the criteria
Who were the black women served by the NAACP during the Post World War II Years?	Women, Discrimination, Domestic Labor, Police Brutality, Reports, Housing Equality, Employment, Teacher fair pay, criminal law	LDF: 1, 29, 46,55, 159, 160 , 245 Group 2: A40, A29, A149,A191, A220, A291, A306, A238,A408, A472, A440, A155, B124, B194 Group 3: A238, A243, A244, I21, I22, J4, J5 Group 4: J9, J10 Group 5: Box 11, 187, 201,204, 232, 564, 565, 202, 201, 200,195
What were the issues that the NAACP recognized for black women in the Post World War II era?	Newspaper clippings, Crisis Magazine, affiliated women organizations, labor, conferences	LDF 105, LDF 145, Group 2: A155,A113 A192, A204, B194 Group 3: A211, A213, I12, I13,I15,I16 Group 4: A18, A19, A20, A23 Part 4: A1, A7, A11, A25, A26, A27, A28 1966 Box A23 A53, A65, A66, A77, A83 J10, J9 , Part 5: 202 203, 204, 205, 206, 207 220, 226, 952, 1715, 1759,1912, 1913,1914, 1915, 2718, Part 6 : C37, C36, C35, C34 Part 6: C47, C49, C50, C52 C53, C54, C56, C58 Part 8 Box 318: Race and Sex Based Discrimination
Were the social realities of black women recognized in	Reports on public policy, Housing Act, Economy,	LDF:108 158, Group 3: A331, C174, C186, C230,

<p>the NAACP published Literature? If so, how? If not how?</p>	<p>Universities, cases involving domestic labor, and fair pay.</p>	<p>D36, H14, H30, H35, H49, Crisis Magazine issues: 1969 Part 6 A52 1971,1974 A53, A54, B4, B5 Annual Reports Part 6 Box A54 Annual Report 1968, Annual Report 1969 Annual Report 1970 Part 6: C26, C27, C28, C29 Report of Activities 1974-1978 C61, C64, C65, C68 Part 7 : 28, 29, 57, 75 Part 7 : 76, 79, 80, 81 Part 8 : 18, 19, 20, 89 Part 8 : 91, 92, 93, 96 97, 110, 104, 102 Housing Report 1977 Part 8 box 229 Box 359 NAACP Women's Conference 1980</p>
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Content Analysis Procedures: Data Modeling and Supplementary Research

The second part of content analysis occurred when I reached Part 3 of the NAACP National Archives through identifying material from the research questions previously outlined. This is where I also identified larger trends of advocacy against police brutality, employment discrimination and housing discrimination. These three topics emerged as trends from the number of cases emerging for each, as well as the NAACP at the national level acknowledging the significance of the issues in annual reports, and in strategic advocacy platforms which I will detail in the next chapter. These trends also guided research through the remaining five parts of the NAACP national archives using the search concepts: employment, unemployment, discrimination, violence, housing, racial violence, police brutality, Fair Housing Act, emergency

assistance, Civil Rights Act. In addition, after identifying the trends I focused on examining case dockets considering that employment and housing emerged largely as legal suits against private groups as well as federal jurisdiction including local housing authorities and the U.S. Public Housing Administration.

The research contained in this dissertation is historical. Accordingly, in order to contextualize the cases that emerged in each of these large trends, I draw on historical scholarship to inform my understanding and analysis of the broader historical moment. This contextualization serves two purposes, first, it allows me to examine the NAACP's advocacy in the area according to how police brutality, housing discrimination, and employment discrimination took shape in the United States during the twentieth century generally and at the specific times of each of the cases. Identifying the foundation of these issues, helps establish an understanding of the significant impact of them in the lives of Black Americans during the second half of the 20th century. Second, this historical supplementary literature provides the opportunity to interpret these issues as intersectional—thinking specifically about the interlocking and overlapping dynamics of racism and sexism as they converged in the lives of these black women—and examining the NAACP advocacy for black women. In the findings chapters that follow, I draw on the framework of intersectionality to define the issues of housing discrimination, advocacy against police brutality and employment discrimination to establish them as racialized issues, followed by a discussion of what can be considered the racialized, *gendered* experience of black women in relation to each of these issues. Specifically, I argue that incorporating the analytic of gender can change our understandings how black women experience the racialized nature of each issue. Next, I present specific NAACP cases for each issue, arguing how they support my interpretation of intersectionality in each chapter. In doing

so, I make the case that the organization's advocacy for black women in each area constituted an acknowledgement of the racialized and gendered nature of black women's lives.

The methodology for this dissertation is based on initial practical guidelines for approaching archival research. This process shifted after patterns began to emerge in the archives beyond what the finding aids for the collection suggested. The methodology was produced this way in order to make the most efficient use of time. In addition, my methodology outlines the goals of my research related to the literature of Black Feminism and African and African Diaspora Studies. The practical aspects of applying the theoretical framework to data analysis emerges in the finding chapters of this dissertation. In addition, the charts in this methodology include boxes that were viewed, but the location of cases actually discussed in findings chapters can be found in the appendix of this dissertation.

In the findings that follow in the next chapters, I discuss the impact of the NAACP in their cases involving black women. This is done because of the irregularity of archives in providing evidence of the outcome of various cases. For the purpose of consistency, I discuss details of the cases engaged in the advocacy efforts of the NAACP and what they reflect about the intersectional experiences of black women in housing, police brutality and employment discrimination.

CHAPTER FOUR

The Fight Against Housing Discrimination

The NAACP boasts a history of being the most active private organization working towards racial equity in housing. This campaign manifested itself in advocacy for policy change, building coalitions with government housing programs, conferences, discrimination suits, and funneling a significant portion of public and private housing complaints. In the second half of the twentieth century, the NAACP played a significant role in addressing large-scale discrimination cases involving multiple pursuants. During this period, the housing program of the NAACP engaged in three primary areas of work: (1) using resources through federal and private streams to encourage the development of low-income housing for underhoused groups; (2) developing programs in consultation with branches and state conferences of the NAACP to utilize programs and resources of the federal department of housing and urban development; and (3) establishing housing complaint bureaus to receive and investigate complaints of housing.

In this chapter, I locate various NAACP cases involving black women in an intersectional analysis to argue that housing and housing advocacy was a simultaneously gendered and racialized phenomenon for black women. Furthermore, black women who engaged in housing advocacy with the support of the NAACP benefited from and shaped the impact of the NAACP. First, I discuss the more general racialized reality of housing discrimination during the postwar period from 1945 to 1995. Second, I argue that black women's gendered racial position in the United States makes them vulnerable to distinct modes of gendered racial discrimination, likely enhanced by the rise of black women-led households during the second half of the twentieth century. I present how their gender experiences influence how they may have experienced the racialized reality of housing. I conclude the chapter with a discussion of specific NAACP cases involving black women engaged in housing struggles, in order to highlight the concrete ways in

which race, gender, and class were converging in black women's lives in the second half of the twentieth century.

The Racialized History of Housing Discrimination, 1945–1995

With the advent of the Fair Housing Act of 1968, NAACP advocacy reflected an increase in housing discrimination suits for black Americans. These cases reflected the de facto segregation held up by realtors, property owners, and mortgage companies. Many of these large-scale cases emerged in the latter half of the period for this research after the 1968 Housing Act. The NAACP focused on changing the dynamics of many neighborhoods that worked to explicitly bar Black Americans from taking up residence. The racial reality that the NAACP faced in regard to housing discrimination in the United States between the years of 1945 and 1995 were: redlining, evictions, access to low income housing and quality of housing or housing safety.

In the United States in the period following World War II many advocates including the NAACP that fought housing discrimination against black Americans came up against the racial covenant or contractual agreements used to maintain white supremacy and bar black residents from home ownership, especially in traditionally white neighborhoods.¹²⁸ In addition, these covenants according to Dorceta Taylor were “used by developers and individual property owners to control land use and occupancy.”¹²⁹ The racial covenant defined by this era, was a means of restricting access to homeownership for black Americans to maintain race separation and economic, social and political inferiority.¹³⁰ Also, as Taylor explains in *Toxic Communities*,

¹²⁸ Ocen, 2012; Kycheva and Sander, 2014; Calmore, 1995.

¹²⁹ Dorceta Taylor, *Toxic Communities*. 192

¹³⁰ Ocen, 2012; Kycheva and Sander, 2014; Calmore, 1995; Dorceta Taylor, *Toxic Communities*, 193.

The federal government encouraged the use of racially restrictive covenants to create and maintain racially homogeneous neighborhoods. The Federal housing administration produced an Underwriting Manual with guidelines for preserving property values and desirable community characteristics as it stated, ‘if a neighborhood is to retain stability, it is necessary that properties shall continue to be occupied by the same social and racial classes.’ Ergo, the Manual instructed appraisers to guard against the ‘infiltration’ of ‘inharmonious racial or nationality groups’ into neighborhoods.¹³¹

The racial covenant was especially prevalent during the 1940s and preceding years because of significant influx of black residents from the south to the north for increased access to economic opportunities.¹³² In 1948, the Supreme Court decision in *Shelley v. Kraemer* to restrict racial covenants against the black homebuyer, arguably led to a shift in accessibility for black residents.¹³³ While this case restricted racial covenants to bar black homebuyers from certain communities, it did not eliminate social and institutional practices towards limiting access as noted by Kycheva and Sander in, “The Misunderstood Consequences of *Shelley v. Kraemer*,” when they state,

Bankers agreed not to extend credit to blacks seeking to buy into established white neighborhoods. Real estate agents adopted professional ethnic codes prohibiting the introduction of undesirables. White community leaders sought to define clear white and black districts and organized improvement associations that discouraged new black households from moving in and encouraging exiting black households to move out.¹³⁴

In addition to these practices that existed after the *Shelley v. Kraemer* decision, black residents were barred entry to white communities through violence or threats of violence. Racial violence or potential violence proved to be the most effective in detouring black residents from home ownership in certain areas.¹³⁵ Black Americans were experiencing increased acts of violence fueled by racist beliefs to control where they could reside and build families. This

¹³¹ Dorceta Taylor, *Toxic Communities*. 193

¹³² Ocen, “The New Racially Restrictive Covenant.”

¹³³ Kycheva and Sander, “The Misunderstood Consequences of *Shelley v. Kraemer*.”

¹³⁴ Kycheva and Sander, “The Misunderstood Consequences of *Shelley v. Kraemer*,” 215.

¹³⁵ Kycheva and Sander, “The Misunderstood Consequences of *Shelley v. Kraemer*.”

violence was especially prevalent in northern cities during the second half of the twentieth century as Black Americans migrated north. As they moved into predominantly white neighborhoods, violence became a pattern as interracial friction, and white supremacist violence persisted.¹³⁶

Racial segregation maintained by both institutional and socially violent practices marginalized black residents from the political, economic and social benefits of home ownership. These mechanisms also helped to maintain segregation in areas of employment and education, especially with the quality of the latter being dependent on surrounding property values. Furthermore, racial discrimination manifested in housing helped to cultivate the racialization of space; enabling values, attitudes and behaviors to be attached to groups of people from the environments they lived in which was a result of systemic marginalization.¹³⁷ The racialization of space was also used to pathologize black populations living in certain areas and blame blacks for the conditions in which they lived. In other words, poverty, unemployment, and crime were viewed as a result of the behaviors and the cultural contexts of black residents living in segregated areas and not the systemic problems (e.g. residential segregation, employment discrimination, racial friction, racial violence).

The racialization of space can be tied to the history of housing discrimination in the United States, and can also be linked to criminalization of predominantly black areas with things such as over policing, police violence, mass incarceration, and social ailments such as low employment and poorly funded education.¹³⁸ In addition, a trend emerged of placing the blame

¹³⁶ Kycheva and Sander, “The Misunderstood Consequences of *Shelley v. Kraemer*.”

¹³⁷ Ocen, “The New Racially Restrictive Covenant.”

¹³⁸ See Calmore, “Racialized Space and the Culture of Segregation”; Ocen, “The New Racially Restrictive Covenant”; Alexander, *New Jim Crow*; Taylor, *From #BlackLivesMatter to Black Liberation*; and Omi and Winant, *Racial Formation in the United States*.

of such conditions on the residents that live in those areas. The latter is often labeled as trivializing black poverty and pathologizing people, culture, and also viewed as a way to detract the necessity of building equitable systemic solutions. Equitable solutions for impoverished black communities maintained through racial segregation and racializing space, is intensified through beliefs that racialize views of the black poor distinct from other poor populations.¹³⁹ John Calmore details this in the article, “Racialized Space and the Culture of Segregation.”

Society sees some as deserving and some not. The deserving poor would include the elderly, the disabled (if not due to drugs or alcohol) , two parent families with low wage earners, divorced or widowed female low wage earners, and the single male low wage earner. Whether retired, disabled or employed, we are sympathetic towards these groups because through no fault of their own, there is not enough money to meet the common necessities of food, clothing, health and shelter. In contrast the undeserving poor include jobless males, welfare mothers in female led households, school dropouts, alcoholics, drug addicts, violent felons and petty street criminals.¹⁴⁰

Black Americans’ relationship with housing can be characterized by racial discrimination or marginalization rooted in implicit racial bias. The latter can be considered a reality for the general black American population in the years following World War II. Because of the gender identity of black women, racism and sexism should be considered for how they interact historically in the lives of black women when considering this issue.

In the next section of this chapter, I explain how black women have been distanced historically from conceptions of womanhood through the use of misrepresentations of their race and gender. I will also discuss how these images may create a *gendered racial* discrimination in housing that distinctly shapes black women’s experiences with housing as a gendered racial phenomenon. Recognizing that black women’s experiences are gendered and racialized—and therefore must be understood intersectionally—is important for analyzing how black women

¹³⁹ Calmore, “Racialized Space and the Culture of Segregation,” 1247.

¹⁴⁰ Calmore, “Racialized Space and the Culture of Segregation,” 1247.

lived and navigated their housing realities in the latter half of the twentieth century as well as for understanding the specific impact of the NAACP's housing advocacy efforts in the lives of black women.

Controlling Images of Black Women and the Rise of Black Female Led Households

In order to understand the way patterns of racial discrimination can impact black women because of gender identity, I must define how the relationship between racism and sexism emerges for black women and can shape discrimination for them in the area of housing. In this section I will discuss stereotypes of representation and how they can be related to discrimination for black women through manipulated public perception. In addition, I will present evidence of the growth of black female led households during the Post World War II period. Presenting public perceptions of black women as produced through racialized and gendered constructions of their identities and the growth of female led households during the period will provide a foundation for analyzing NAACP cases of housing defense. Specifically, by proposing discrimination existed against the growth of black female led households, by way of negative stereotyping, I can argue that the NAACP had impact by defending groups of black women.

The reality of sexism and racism in the area of housing can both be characterized with pathology, trivializing black poverty and discrimination. In addition, because many of the racial biases causing disadvantage explained in previous pages come from historic and systemic perceptions of black populations, it should be examined how biases rooted in sexism for black women can affect public perceptions of them and create a bias that can impact their experiences with housing. I find what distinguishes black women's experiences from the experiences of blacks in general is that there are specific controlling or stereotypical images aligned with policy changes that impacted the particular experiences of black women. These policy changes also

align with the more general racial discrimination patterns experienced by black Americans. Two of the images discussed here are: The Welfare Queen and the Matriarch.¹⁴¹

Collins (2000) helps define the emergence of the controlling image of “Welfare Queen” as a direct response to the social struggle, and social progress immediately following World War II. African Americans during this period had struggled for and gained access to social support programs, unemployment benefits, affirmative action, financial access to higher education and were positioned with greater opportunities than the exploitative jobs offered to generations before them.¹⁴² Greater opportunities in other areas and the “shrinking industrial sector,” gave rise to the discriminatory need to manipulate public perception of these groups while simultaneously stabilizing economic and social status quo.¹⁴³ Collins argues, “The large numbers of undereducated, unemployed African Americans ghettoized in U.S. inner cities, most of whom were women and children, could not be forced to work. This surplus population no longer represented cheap labor but instead from the perspective of the elites, signified a costly threat to political and economic stability.”¹⁴⁴

As early as the 1930s, the image of the “Welfare Queen” was used as a mechanism, in part, to repress access to social support programs for black women. As scholars like Dorothy Roberts and Priscilla Ocen has written, there is a long history of these gendered racial representations of black women as “paradigmatic welfare recipients” who are often at the center of “negative stories about poverty.”¹⁴⁵ being mobilized to render black women vulnerable to state violence (in the form of policing and surveillance) and to exclude them from accessing social

¹⁴¹ Collins, 2000; Christian, 1985; Wallace, 1979, Wallace- Sanders, 2008.

¹⁴² Collins, 2000.

¹⁴³ Collins, *Black Feminist Thought*.

¹⁴⁴ Collins, *Black Feminist Thought*, 79.

¹⁴⁵ Priscilla A. Ocen, “The New Racially Restrictive Covenant: Race, Welfare, and the Policing of Black Women in Subsidized Housing,” *UCLA Law Review* 59 (2012): 1540–1582.

welfare: “Black women have long been constructed as the paradigmatic welfare recipient. Negative stories about poverty often feature black female faces.”¹⁴⁶ Black women are seen as overrun with pathologies and are situated as the source of black discontent and disenfranchisement.¹⁴⁷ It was similar in the way that it propagated the same cultural pathology tied to the earlier presentation of the racial covenant and the racialization of space associated with race based housing discrimination. This image targeted black women, distinct in how it stereotypes black women specifically and claims, “today’s welfare child, raised in hopelessness and dependency, becomes tomorrow welfare adult pauperized and helpless.”¹⁴⁸ This image was used to discriminate against black women’s access to adequate housing and other social assistance programs by negating their needs through the stereotype. In the passage below Premilla Nadasen claims that the stereotypes were tied to social welfare controversy, she states:

Increasingly, the politics of welfare converged on the stereotypical image of a black, unmarried, unworthy welfare mother. This image that interwove race, sex, and morality more than any other fed the fires of welfare controversy. So, the public opposed not just more families on welfare but also a greater number of black unmarried women receiving assistance.¹⁴⁹

This image, existing at the intersection of race and gender, was also used as a way to turn the fertility of black women, into a tool for their repression.¹⁵⁰ This image cultivated a public monitoring of the number of children single black women had, under claims that they were immoral, dependent, lazy, and exploitative of public generosity. In addition, this image, similar to others, propagated attitudes encouraging the control of the fertility of black women to prevent

¹⁴⁶ Collins, *Black Feminist Thought*; Christian, 1985; Wallace, 1979, Wallace- Sanders, 2008; Ocen, 2012 p.1558.

¹⁴⁷ Ricketts, 2007.

¹⁴⁸ Nadasen, “From Widow to Welfare Queen,” 58.

¹⁴⁹ Nadasen, “From Widow to Welfare Queen,” 58.

¹⁵⁰ Collins, *Black Feminist Thought*.

them from producing a population with inherited attributes. The idea was that these women aided in producing a black population void of morality and self-sufficiency.

The second image used here, that of “the matriarch,” operated towards a similar end. The controlling, stereotyped image of the “matriarch” was rooted in discriminating against black women heads of households under claims that individual black women were the cause of unemployment and poverty within the black family (Nadasen, 2007; Collins, 2000; Hooks, 1981). Propagated with the assistance of “The Moynihan Report,” Patrick Moynihan claimed, “at the heart of the deteriorating fabric of negro society is the deterioration of the Negro family. It is the fundamental source of the weakness of the Negro Family” He goes further stating, “the Negro Community has been forced into a matriarchal structure which, because it is out of line with the rest of American society, seriously retards the progress of the group as a whole.”¹⁵¹ In addition, Moynihan argued that the matriarchal family structure and the inability of black women to perform patriarchy correctly led to the dysfunction and poverty within the black household and by extension, black society.¹⁵² This image, like the image of the welfare mother, propagated social attitudes limiting black women’s access to social support programs and housing by pathologizing the population and trivializing their actual needs.¹⁵³

Strengthening age old debates about why poor single mothers should not get government assistance, the report cemented the issue of race to welfare and single parent families in a way that made it difficult to talk about one without the other. The ensuing debate centered on changing the “domineering” position of black women, bringing black men back into the household and ending the “cycle of poverty.”¹⁵⁴

The image of the matriarch, similar to the image of the welfare mother, according to Bell Hooks (1981 p.70), “was used to characterize black womanhood and have their roots in anti-

¹⁵¹ Moynihan, *The Negro Family*, 51.

¹⁵² Moynihan, *The Negro Family*; Nadasen, “From Widow to Welfare Queen”; Collins, *Black Feminist Thought*.

¹⁵³ Moynihan, *The Negro Family*.

¹⁵⁴ Nadasen, “From Widow to Welfare Queen,” 59.

woman mythology”. Yet they form the basis of most critical inquiry into the nature of the black female experience”. She also states that society “ has difficulty appreciating black women because of eagerness to impose an identity upon us based on a number of negative stereotypes.”¹⁵⁵ Because these and others stereotype images can be considered a popular basis for how black women are viewed in United States society, it can be argued that they limit perceptions of black women as they interact with the public, accessing products and services within their rights as citizens. bell hooks presents how these images are stereotypes but have a significant impact despite being rooted in fallacy in the following passage.¹⁵⁶

They labeled black women matriarchs, a title that in no way accurately described the social status of black women in America. No matriarchy has ever existed in the United States. At the time sociologists proclaimed the existence of a matriarchal order in the black family structure, black women represented one of the largest socially and economically deprived groups in America whose status in no way resembled that of a matriarch. The term matriarch implies the existence of a social order in which women exercise social and political power, a state which in no way resembles the condition of black women or all women in American society. The decisions that determine the way in which black women must live their lives are made by others, usually white men. If sociologists are to casually label black women matriarchs, they should also label female children playing house and acting out the role of mother matriarchs. For in both instances, no real effective power exists that allows the females in question control over their destiny.¹⁵⁷

Scholars have presented both of these images, and others, as the way society creates an othering of black women towards an end of negating their need of economic support and social dignity. These images not only had a direct impact on black women’s daily lives, it manipulated public perception of black women labeling them as “undeserving” and “devalued” as women and mothers.¹⁵⁸ Collins presents this image as being especially damaging during the late 20th century

¹⁵⁵ hooks, *Ain't I a Woman*, 73.

¹⁵⁶ hooks, *Ain't I a Woman*, 72.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.

¹⁵⁸ Ocen, “The New Racially Restrictive Covenant”; Collins, *Black Feminist Thought*; hooks, *Ain't I a Woman*; Dow, 2015.

with significant social and economic progress for black Americans. Similar to the earlier discussion in this chapter, of housing practices that trivialized black poverty by attaching racialized meaning to communities designed through segregation, Collins argues, “racialization involves attaching racial meanings to a previously racially unclassified relationship, social practice or group.”¹⁵⁹ According to Collins, the black matriarchy was a controlling image that made social insertion during a period of significant social change, while a significant percentage of black families were, “maintained by single mothers.”¹⁶⁰ The image of the black matriarch aided in propagating perceptions of black women and negative attitudes towards female, single headed households. Collins outlines that, “African American women who failed to fulfil their womanly duties contributed to social problems in black society.”¹⁶¹

In empirical terms, black female-led households after World War II in the United States appeared to grow expeditiously. Data exists on the increase of black female-led households, both for black women with children and without children from the period just before World War II, 1945, into the 1980s. To provide adequate evidence for this point, I present three sets of data analysis on the percentage of black female-led households from 1930 to 2000. The first data set comes from the U.S. Department of Commerce produced in 1993 for years 1950 to 1991. The percentage breakdowns of the black households headed by black women and those headed by black husband and wife can be viewed in Figure 4.1 below.

¹⁵⁹ Collins, *Black Feminist Thought*; Omi and Winant, *Racial Formation*.

¹⁶⁰ Collins, *Black Feminist Thought*. 84

¹⁶¹ Collins, *Black Feminist Thought*. 85

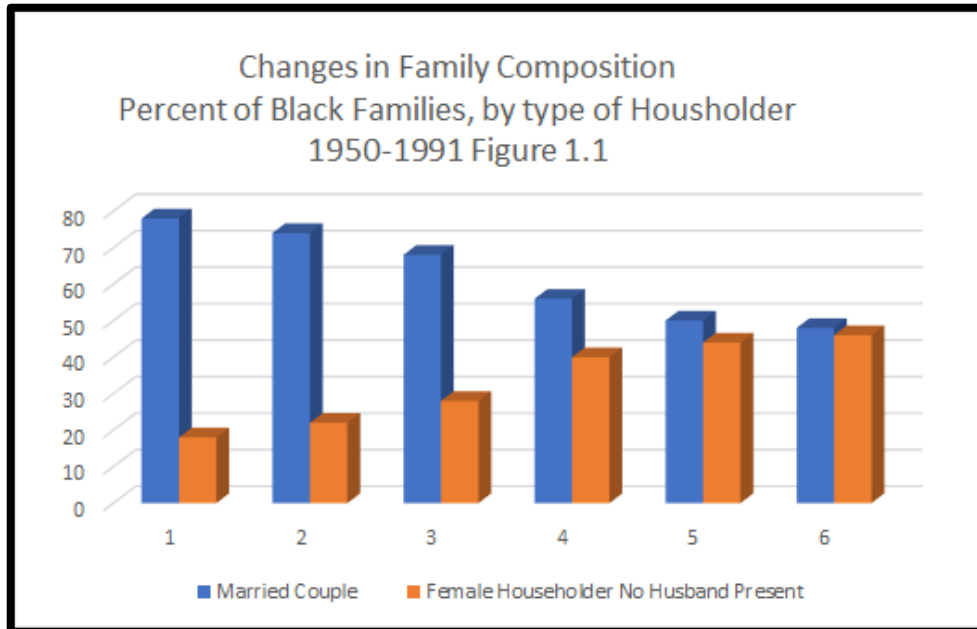


Figure 4.1. Changes in Family Composition, Percent of Black Families by Type of Householder, 1950–1991. Bar 1=1950, 2=1960, 3=1970, 4=1980, 5=1990, 6=1991. Source: U.S. Department of Commerce Economics and Statistics Administration, Bureau of the Census, 1993.

Data from the U.S. Department of Commerce shows that between 1950 and 1991 there was an average increase of 5.3% of households headed by unmarried black women per decade from 1950, to the beginning of the 1990s; With the largest increase in black female led households occurring between the 1970s and 1980s with a 16% increase.

A second analysis comes from sociologist Erol Ricketts (2007) who provides a comparison between the growth of families headed by white women and families headed by black women. Ricketts analyzes Black female led households as a percent of Black American households in rural and urban areas from 1930 until 1980. According to his analysis, there was an average increase of 5% of families headed by black women, as a fraction of the black American population for each decade between 1930 and 1980.¹⁶² A third example used to support the theory of an increase in black female led households in the years following World

¹⁶² Table 2, in Erol Ricketts, “The origin of black female headed families,” 34.

War II comes from the article, “The Growth of Families headed by Women: 1950-1980” from authors Roger Wojtkiewicz, Sara McLanahan, and Irwin Garfunkel (1990). Their data analysis, similar to Ricketts, comes from a comparison of changes in female led households according to race. What is different, is that they provide a clearer statistical breakdown of the numerical changes. Specifically, the number of households headed by black women grew by an average of 325,000 for each decade from 1950 until the beginning of the 1980s.

The information presented in the previous paragraphs shows that black female led households increased significantly between 1930 to the beginning of the 1990s. What is also discussed is public stereotypes of black women that attempted to degrade their experiences as mothers, and as recipients of social support. Third, it is important to reiterate that the NAACP during the period following World War II focused on enforcing federal policies to address housing related discrimination and marginalization, evident in their general focus on systemic enforcement and specifically enforcement of the Fair Housing Act of 1968 that was enacted during the same period. Considering the relationship between these three points, one could note that the NAACP increasing its advocacy in housing during the period also defended black women who may have been impacted by public stereotypes attempting to degrade their roles as mothers, and recipients of social support. This can be noted considering how housing and especially access to low income housing can relate to black women as head of households and as recipients of social support especially considering the increase of black women head of households during the same period. In the following pages, I will clarify how these three points frame my data analysis and examine housing cases involving black women from the NAACP archives.

NAACP Housing Advocacy Cases

In order to provide an analysis of NAACP cases of housing involving black women, it is important to have a clear understanding of the relationship between the three points highlighted in the previous passage. I clarify that relationship here. First, housing was an issue for the NAACP during this period because of the extent of racial discrimination in housing against a population the organization is historically associated with defending, Black Americans. The NAACP is known for their work towards enforcing federal public policies at national, regional and local levels. Because the Fair Housing Policy of the Civil Right Act was put into law in 1968, it can be argued that their work was towards enforcing this policy at national, regional and local levels. These factors help situate housing as a dominate issue during the period for the organization.

Next, public stereotypes of black women such as the *matriarch*, and *the welfare queen* have been used to degrade their roles as mothers, and recipients of social services. These stereotypes were facilitated during the period through social welfare propaganda and arguments from sociologist Daniel Moynihan. In fact, empirical studies such as Monahan, Shtrulis and Givens (2005) have shown in an experimental setting when people are exposed to stereotypes of black women then they are more likely to consistently associate them with stereotypes.¹⁶³ Hancock (2004) found that stereotypes of the welfare queen in news media had a negative impact on welfare legislation and Foster (2008) also finds that race, class and gender all impact legislation and Foster (2008) also finds that race, class and gender all impact support of social welfare, in other words research studies have shown that negative stereotypes of black women profoundly impact perspectives of them in relation to policies that could assist them. These

¹⁶³ Monahan, Shtrulis, and Givens, 2005.

stereotypes and the impact they have on the actual lives and experiences of black women helps to pinpoint what defense would look like in the area of housing for the population, which I will specify in the presentation of NAACP cases. The final point to set up the presentation of the cases is that there was an evident increase in black female led households during the period. The rise of black female led households can highlight housing and housing related issues as a significant area for black women.

What should be taken from this introduction to cases is that (1) NAACP advocacy towards enforcing federal antidiscrimination law and specifically the Fair Housing Act makes housing an important issue area for the period; (2) the propagated stereotypes of black women can help pinpoint what defense in this area would look like for the population; and (3) the rise of black female led households during the period pinpoint housing and issues related to housing as an important issue area for the demographic. These are the points that help to frame the following data analysis.

The cases taken from the NAACP archives reflecting housing advocacy efforts are organized into two primary groups. The first are cases involving the systemic practices of cities and regional areas towards restricting access to housing for black women. These cases involved groups of black women with shared characteristics being low income and single head of households. Second, housing advocacy is organized based on individual complaints from black women of circumstances including eviction, no or limited access to low income housing, emergency housing and poor housing quality. It is essential to note that the largest portion of black women included here from the NAACP archives reflected in the following chart are single, black women who experience discrimination or limited access to low income housing. For the purpose of clarity, the below chart provides a general breakdown of the cases discussed in this

chapter. The chart shows the name of the individual as documented in NAACP records, and a brief description of the case. For the purpose of centralizing common housing issues and NAACP advocacy, individuals are grouped together according to the details of the cases. These groupings include large scale district cases with individual cases. Following further analysis of the chart, I distinguish more clearly between those that are group cases, from those that are individual complaints filed with the NAACP.

Figure 4.2: Groupings of Housing Advocacy Patterns¹⁶⁴

Named Individuals	Housing Issue	Housing Advocacy Basis
Queen Cohen	Segregation in Savannah low income housing, unsafe housing conditions in low income housing	Unsafe housing conditions for women with minor children
Evelyn Davis Myrtle Brown Geraldine Brown Dorothy Reeves Isabel Reeves	Head of household, unable to obtain housing	Housing discrimination
Queen E Austin Linda Mobley Dorothy Suttle Alice Day Estella Sistrunk Willie Mae Peterson Mattie Mae Grant Sadie Mae Grant Laverne Smith Roberts	Access to low income housing /emergency housing assistance	Sudden loss of income from absent or deserted spouse Sense of urgency heightened because of minor children in the care of black women Minimum income and fewer childcare options Advocacy for social assistance related to housing

¹⁶⁴ The named individuals are grouped according to the nature of the cases, as defined in the third column. The named individuals are not necessarily in the same case, those that are, detailed in the following pages.

Dorothy Paul Patricia Link Mary Lee Cobb Mrs. Barnett *Unnamed Black Woman (1) Unnamed Black Woman (*Jane Doe*)		
Mary Grigsby Sandra K Gibbs	Racial violence from residing in predominantly white neighborhoods	Endangerment of children

Before going into the details of the cases in Figure 4.2 and distinguishing group cases from individual ones, I will discuss how this general breakdown fits into the analysis framed by the aforementioned points. The middle column shows segregation, racial violence, and housing access as broad topic areas for housing. These broad issue areas can be reminiscent of the NAACP’s efforts to enforce antidiscrimination policies, and specifically parts of the Fair Housing Act of 1968. Specifically, the portion of the Fair Housing Act prohibiting the restriction of access and discrimination, effects of segregation, on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, familial status or disability (“Fair Housing Act of 1968” 2012, p. 231). The middle column pinpoints enforcement of federal housing law as an important area and it shows in-part that the NAACP’s broad issue areas, connect to areas of the Fair Housing Act of 1968. The third column focuses further on the details of these cases involving black women. The issues in this column include income related topics as well as single household heads with and without children. This last column provides some connection to the actual experiences of marginalization related to propagated stereotypes. Specifically, defense appears to be pinpointed in areas where black women could have been discriminated against based on stereotypes degrading their roles

as mothers as well as their access to financial assistance. Specific details of particular cases show the latter points, but also largely represent the rise of black female head of households.

The first case examined here is one involving black women emerging out of the City of Norwalk, Ohio in 1987 (see Figure 4.3). The case involved four black women who were single, head of household and seeking low income housing. Evelyn Davis, Myrtle Preston, Geraldine Brown, and Dorothy Reeves were denied access to low income housing from the City of Norwalk and the NAACP pursued the case describing it as, “The class [action] consists of all minority and female head households of low income minority concentrations has been limited or denied by the defendant, City of Norwalk.”¹⁶⁵ Each of the women in this case are described in the archive as head of households and low income. These details and the fact that these cases occurred within the period where there was a rise in black female led households shows two important things. First, it begins to show how within the NAACP enforcing public housing policies, there was recognition of the impact of marginalization and the significance of housing in the lives of a growing population; single black women head of households. Second, the fact that these women were prevented from accessing low income housing specifically can relate to the impact of propagated stereotypes of black women, on their actual lives and needs. Specifically, black women being denied low income housing can be related to public stereotypes of them being undeserving of such forms of social assistance (propagated through the “Welfare Queen” stereotype). As explained in previous pages, stereotypes have historically informed public perceptions of black women, despite these stereotypes being false and rooted in racism and sexism. For the purpose of clarity, the below figure shows the details of the individuals from this case.

¹⁶⁵ *City of Norwalk Ohio vs. NAACP*, Part 5, Box 202, NAACP Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

Figure 4.3.

Evelyn Davis	Black, female, low income, head of household
Myrtle Preston	Black, female, low income, head of household
Geraldine Brown	Black, female, low income, head of household
Dorothy Reeves	Black, female, low income, head of household

In 1977 the NAACP pursued a case against the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development, addressing discrimination in the Boston Metropolitan area against the Commonwealth of Massachusetts specifically. Before going into details of the case it is important to briefly discuss the context of Boston Massachusetts during the period and the prevalence of racial discrimination during the 1970s. Racial discrimination in Boston during the second half of the twentieth century is largely associated with black activism as well as the busing crisis in 1974, just three years before this NAACP case. In the decades before 1974, “black Bostonians waged a variety of campaigns that confronted discrimination in areas of employment, education, housing, welfare and schooling.”¹⁶⁶ And in 1974, Boston Public Schools were ordered to provide busing for students between Roxbury and South Boston; predominantly black and white neighborhoods respectively.¹⁶⁷ This order resulted in violent protests targeted towards black youth bused in to attend historically white schools. Details about Boston provides context of the following case and clarifies why NAACP language about the case is tied to a larger goal of eliminated racial discrimination in Boston.

The Boston case engaged prosecution of administrators at HUD including Patricia Harris, Edward Pollock, and Edward Martin and their successors for systemic housing

¹⁶⁶ Zebulon V. Miletsky, “Before Busing: Boston's Long Movement for Civil Rights and the Legacy of Jim Crow in the ‘Cradle of Liberty,’ ” *Journal of Urban History* (2017), p. 205.

¹⁶⁷ Miletsky, “Before Busing.”

discrimination and specifically the failure to enforce The Fair Housing Act of 1968.¹⁶⁸ The case was built on the testimonies of ten individuals, eight out of the ten testimonies came from single black women. Four of these individuals represent black female head of households with low incomes. The individuals classified as low income of this group includes Mary Lee Cobb, Patricia Link, Dorothy Paul, and Laverne Roberts. The NAACP pursued a case for these individuals in order to show recognition of, and eliminate discrimination in the Boston Metropolitan area as part of a larger effort, “Working to eradicate racial discrimination in housing, employment and education affecting its members and other racial minorities in Boston metropolitan area, and therefore seeks to compel defendants to enforce the requirements of law.”¹⁶⁹

Included in this case, were individual members of the NAACP Doris Bunte, Robert Forts, and Melvin H. King, all of whom resided in a predominantly black neighborhood in a southern district of Massachusetts. According to NAACP records, these individuals had worked to form a black Caucus representing black residents bringing resources and activities to predominantly black areas of Massachusetts. The goal of these representatives was to improve the condition of all black residents residing in metropolitan areas of Boston Massachusetts (NAACP Part 2. NAACP vs Commonwealth of Massachusetts). Individuals representing the demographic of impacted black women, are included below from direct plaintiff descriptions in NAACP vs Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Plaintiff Kay Gibbs, is the first listed in the sample, who was denied equal benefits as well as access to white neighborhoods to investigate patterns of discrimination against black applicants.

¹⁶⁸ NAACP v. Commonwealth of Massachusetts Case Docket, Part 2, NAACP Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

¹⁶⁹ NAACP v. Commonwealth of Massachusetts Case Docket, Part 2, NAACP Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

The following descriptions of the plaintiffs from these cases are included below. As stated earlier, eight out of the ten plaintiffs defended by the NAACP in this case were black women. Half of the black women were low income and head of their households according to NAACP documents. The black women not included with these descriptions were NAACP staff, a black women married with children, and a black man. After these descriptions I will explain how they fit into the analysis.

Plaintiff Mary Lee Cobb, is a black citizen of the United States and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. She resides in a predominantly black apartment complex in Dorchester where she relocated after her former apartment leased by The Boston Housing Authority was damaged by fire. Plaintiff Cobbs was actively seeking low cost decent housing in an integrated neighborhood, but as a low income minority person she was denied equal access to said housing by the defendants whom are required to enforce fair housing requirements. Therefore, the defendant's failure to enforce the applicable civil rights statutory and regulatory provisions denies Cobb her right to equal access to the benefits of the CDBG program [Community Development Block Grant; a program of HUD to provide funding for low income housing]

Plaintiff Patricia Link is a black citizen of the United States of low income who resides in the predominantly black Franklin Field Housing Development which is operated by the Boston Housing Authority. Her apartment is in a substandard building located in a predominantly minority and badly deteriorated area. Over the past three years she has repeatedly attempted to transfer to a safe and decent leased housing located in a racially integrated area but has been unable to obtain access to such housing. Therefore, the defendants [sic] failure to enforce the applicable civil rights statutory and regulatory provisions denies plaintiff Link her right to equal access and benefits of the CDBG program.

Plaintiff Dorothy Paul is a black citizen of the United States and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. She resides in Mission Hill, a predominantly black substandard public housing project in Roxbury, Massachusetts owned and operated by the Boston Housing Authority and funded through HUD. Paul seeks to secure decent, low cost housing in an integrated neighborhood but as a low income minority person she is denied equal access to housing opportunities by the policies of the Boston Housing Authority which policies have approved and projects financed by HUD. Therefore, the defendants failure to enforce the applicable civil rights statutory and regulatory provisions denies plaintiff Paul her right to equal access to the benefits of the CDBG program.

Plaintiff Laverne Smith Roberts is a black female citizen of the United States, and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and resides in a predominantly black neighborhood in Mattapan Massachusetts. Plaintiff Roberts seeks to be able to secure decent, low cost

housing including public housing in an integrated safe and less overcrowded neighborhood in Boston. However, there are sections of the city, such as Charleston, East Boston and South Boston where even if there were apartments, she would be afraid to live, not only because of racial incidents reported in the media but because she was personally attacked by whites while driving her car through south Boston in the summer of 1975. Therefore, the failure of the defendants to enforce the applicable civil rights statutory and regulatory provisions denies plaintiff Roberts her right to equal access and benefits of the CDBG program.

Mary Lee Cobb, Patricia Link, Dorothy Paul, and Laverne Roberts are individuals who were denied access to low-income housing similar to those represented in the Ohio case. Also similar to the Ohio case, this case involved black female headed households, also occurred during the same period where there was a documented rise in black female led households. Evidence from this case supports the same points from as the previous one. The points are (1) recognition of the impact of marginalization and the significance of housing in the lives of a growing population; single black women head of households and (2) the fact that these women were prevented from accessing low income housing specifically can relate to the impact of propagated stereotypes of black women, on their actual lives and needs. In addition to denied access to low income housing the issues represented here are access to low income housing in predominantly white areas and violence in integrated public housing.

A similar case emerged out of New Haven Connecticut, where the local NAACP covered a case of housing discrimination for black women fitting the same demographic as the previous groups. The black women in this case were *Madeleine Hicks*, and another who was only referred to as *Jane Doe*. These individuals were described as single, black heads of household who were seeking low-income housing through a scattered housing site program in New Haven, Connecticut, that oversaw low-income housing throughout one specific jurisdiction. Descriptions of the plaintiffs in this case, are included here:

“Jane Doe” an African American resident of Milford who is eligible for the scattered site housing program. She and her family wish to remain in Milford and continue attending Milford Public Schools. Without the scattered site housing opportunity, she and her family may be forced to leave Milford and move to a more racially isolated community. Mrs. Doe seeks permission to prosecute this case using a fictitious name because of her well founded fears of racial harassment.

Madeline Hicks is a low income African American female resident of Bridgeport. She and her family are eligible for the proposed scattered site public housing units in Milford and would like to apply to live in these units. Mrs. Hicks seeks to live in a more racially integrated community and objects to the town of Milford’s policies and actions which have diminished her housing opportunities and effectively excluded her family from the community.¹⁷⁰

Jane Doe and Madeline Hicks were also discussed as being black female heads of household prevented from accessing a type of low income housing referred to in this case as the scattered site housing program in New Haven. The details of these women’s experiences with marginalization fit the same points highlighted in the previous two cases.

The following cases pursued by the NAACP in defense of black women with regard to housing discrimination highlight individual experiences while still providing evidence of the NAACP defending black female led households. These cases are not directly tied to larger federal suits, but reflect issues recognized by the NAACP impacting black women and provide evidence of attention to issues that may have impacted black women because of stereotypes and possible discrimination against the rise of black female led households during the period. The following cases show that the NAACP defended black women on the basis of housing related issues such as eviction, increased rent, or inability to pay back rent because of changes in income resulting from no spousal support and limited employment opportunities. In most of the cases presented here, black single women heads of low-income households were a population significantly impacted by housing discrimination especially in the years surrounding the passing

¹⁷⁰ New Haven Branch Case Docket, NAACP Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

of the Fair Housing Act of 1968. In these cases, the NAACP not only advocated on behalf of housing but also issues related to housing such as emergency assistance, and access to food stamps.

The following set of cases represent the NAACP actions on behalf of black women placing individual complaints of instances of alleged housing discrimination. The individuals represent branches in cities in Georgia, Texas, and Alabama.

Ms. Isabell Larry from Tuskegee, Alabama, is the first black woman to be discussed here. Ms. Larry approached the NAACP for assistance with housing and emergency assistance for herself and her family after being deserted by her husband. A description of her case is included below:

Mrs. Isabell Larry of Tuskegee came by the state office and requested assistance in getting for herself and three children housing and possible assistance from the emergency relief program. Mrs. Larry has no income and cannot locate her husband. She is presently living with her sister. Contact was made with the housing authority, but little could be done since Mrs. Larry has no income. However, she has made an application with the department of pensions and security for assistance. In another effort to secure funds for Mrs. Larry so she could afford a housing unit contract was made with Mr. Butch Jones at the relocation office. Again, no funds were available. After taking an application from Mrs. Larry for the emergency relief fund she was informed that his office would continue to seek help in order to provide her family with housing.

Mrs. Larry is a single black woman who became the head of her household after being deserted by her husband. Being a single black woman and attempting to access state financial support are details that tie her to the previous cases discussed in this chapter. Details from this case in particular shows the NAACP addressing the immediate needs of a black woman head of household, this case the organizations seem to be repeatedly attempting to help Ms. Larry with getting low income housing and emergency funding because of her sudden head of household status.

The case of Ms. Queen E Austin is similar, with the NAACP attempting to get her emergency access to low income housing and some form of supplemented income.

Mrs. Queen E Austin of Davisville Community, Macon County, came to the state office and requested assistance in finding housing. She moved from one location where she shared cropped for over ten years. And is presently renting a house for 40 dollars a month [sic]. However, she only makes 49 dollars per month from ADC [Aid to Dependent Children]and is under medical care. Contact was made with the Macon county community action agency and the case discussed. Mrs. R. Price, Director of Neighborhood service system, said she would send a worker out to see Mrs. Austin and see if they could help her find another house for less rent or get the present rent lowered. They will also explore other means of increasing Mrs. Austin's income. No further information as of this report date.

This brief description contextualizes the difficulty black women may have faced in various parts of the country. However, the amount of money she received was not enough to afford food, housing and other living expenses. Although these women lived in precarious situations they filed complaints with the NAACP with the hope that the NAACP could aid them in winning their cases. The final two cases detailed in this chapter involve two women impacted by similar issues and defended by the NAACP according to these issues. Mrs. Linda Mobley and Dorothy Subtle both engaged the NAACP on issues of accessing financial support as well as access to low income housing in Alabama. Details from the Mobley case reveal that she was attempting to receive financial assistance from the Tuskegee branch of the NAACP after a recent divorce and being indebted to the local housing authority. Further details from the investigation conducted by the local NAACP and the outcome is included below.

Mrs. Linda Mobley of Tuskegee came into the state office and asked the field director to assist her in either locating housing or a means of paying back rent to the Tuskegee Housing Authority in the amount of 125 Mrs. Mobley has recently gotten a divorce and has no income. According to Mrs. Mobley, she was asked to vacate the unit she now lives in. He also stated that she attends Southern Vocational College and was supposed to receive a check for attending. An investigation revealed that Mrs. Mobley would not receive a check because there was no such summer program. It was also revealed that no letter to vacate had been issued. Contact was made with the housing authority to see what could be worked out for Mrs. Mobley . The director informed us that he would take a 50

dollar payment and work out an installment plan. She got a job and was told to contact the department to work out a payment arrangement to catch up on back rent.

The final case is that of Dorothy Suttle also emerged from Alabama, but from the city of Talladega. Mrs. Suttle came to the NAACP with a claim that she was being evicted because she was unable to pay her rent and her utility bill. The local NAACP investigated the claim, and also the circumstances of her eviction. The details of Ms. Suttle's case, as well as what the NAACP was able to provide for her are included in the below excerpt.

The Childersburg Alabama Branch filed suit against the Talladega Housing Authority for allegedly evicting a tenant. Mrs. Dorothy Suttle was evicted because she was unable to pay her rent and excess utility bill simultaneously. The lease states that in the event rent is not paid by the sixth day of the month, a late charge of ten dollars will be added to the tenants [sic]account as part of the charge owed. All charges for maintenance , repairs and replacements, and excess utility charges shall not come due and collectible prior to the first day of the second month following the month in which charges are incurred. The case was heard on October 7, 1977. It was argued by the NAACP retained attorney Robert Jones and the judge ruled in favor of Mrs. Suttle.

The cases discussed in the previous pages are included from the twenty cases emerging mostly from the period following the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Fair Housing provision in 1968. As stated earlier, most of these cases emerged as the NAACP sought to enforce anti-discrimination legislation in the area, and the core of my argument, a subsequent defense in the rise of black female led households during the period. Additional archive information for the period detailed that the organization worked to address significant cuts to low-income housing, as well as addressing broad scale discrimination in its local areas. For example, Between 1945 and 1948, the NAACP formed partnerships with the Women's Council to fight against cuts to low-income housing.¹⁷¹ The NAACP also campaigned during these years to stop the U.S. Public Housing Administration from making a 6.5 million dollar cut to low income housing. The organization arguing that a 6.5 million dollar cut would impact 60% Negroes including 85,000

¹⁷¹ LDF Box 291, NAACP Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

Negro families and 350,000 Negro workers. In addition, the NAACP national headquarters staff proposed that housing be at the forefront of issues emerging after 1950.¹⁷²

In summary, this chapter has shown that while the NAACP generally challenged lack of access to low income housing and advocated that cities comply with fair housing polices, the cases that black women filed offer insight into their experiences at the nexus of race, gender, and class in the twentieth century. Low-income black women faced particular challenges due to the intersection of race, class and gender. They made the effort to seek better housing in cities such as Boston and Connecticut. Nevertheless, racial violence and discrimination prevented them from securing the housing they sought for themselves and their families. Deteriorating housing stock in black communities and the hope that racially integrated neighborhoods led the women to seek housing outside of their communities. These cases offer a glimpse into the NAACP's defense of some of the most marginalized people during this time period: single black women who were the heads of their households. While respectability politics invaded many middle class, black organizations including the NAACP, these cases shed light on the lesser-known ways that the NAACP also sought to advocate for low-income black women. More importantly, we see that the intersection of racism, classism and sexism profoundly had a negative effect on low income black women they sought redress in their own way and did not simply acquiesce to their marginalization.

¹⁷² Part 2, A40, Folder 11, NAACP Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

CHAPTER FIVE

The Fight against Police Brutality

Police interaction in black communities in the United States is linked to racial suppression, intimidation, response to social progress, and dehumanization by way of criminalization. Grounded in the foundations of racial hierarchization in the United States, policing—a genealogical derivative of slave patrols—emerged and evolved as a mechanism used to control, degrade, and minimize the existence of Black Americans. In this chapter, I first present the racial and gender context of police interaction in black communities. Specifically, I discuss the history and role of police and define the pattern of racialization in policing practices. To convey the particular gendered historical context in which I locate my dissertation, I then discuss how gendered police violence targets black women and how stereotypes distort the relationship of black women with violence. Following this contextualization, I analyze archival evidence to argue that the specific police violence cases in which the NAACP interacted with black women require an intersectional analysis in order to articulate the racialized and gendered specificities of these black women’s experiences. More broadly, too, I argue that the NAACP understood that police violence itself must be understood as an intersectional issue; in doing so, the NAACP found ways to recognize and name the simultaneously racialized and gendered experiences of black women.

Campaign Against Police Brutality: The Reality for Black Americans

The foundation of policing in the United States, like many things, is tied to slavery and the need to maintain the racial hierarchy drawn from slavery.¹⁷³ Following the end of the Civil War, what originally existed as slave patrols were adapted into police departments used to

¹⁷³ Cooper, 2015; Collins, 2000; Alexander, 2010; Lecount, 2007; Marable, 2000; Spruill, 2016; Ritchie, 2017.

enforce Black Codes and Jim Crow laws with the end of maintaining racial hierarchization and white supremacy.¹⁷⁴ The connection between slave patrols and police departments can be traced to the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries; however, understanding this genealogy is foundational in conceptualizing the inherently racialized positioning of police departments.¹⁷⁵ As Cooper states,

Policing has been integral to the construction and maintenance of racial hierarchies, and that police forces themselves were originally established to enforce these hierarchies. Slave patrols were the first state-sponsored police forces. These patrols consisted of white property-owning men who were charged with preventing slave uprisings and escapes. Slave patrols were particularly vital to maintaining White control in areas where there were more slaves than Whites, and South Carolina, a state where Whites were outnumbered, became the first state to establish them in 1704. Slave patrols had broad authority and were permitted to enter slaves homes at will and punish fugitives.¹⁷⁶

The evolution of slave patrols into modern-day policing follows the changing social structures—and the changing regimes that worked to suppress and surveil black life—in the United States after emancipation and into the Reconstruction Era, through the Progressive Era of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in the United States, and into the current moment.¹⁷⁷ Historians like Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor have argued that policing during the Progressive Era was inherently racialized. Recognizing the nature of policing during the Progressive Era—typically periodized from 1890 to 1920—is significant because it helps establish how policing not only boasts a direct connection to slave patrols but also perpetuates a pattern of racial bias. This pattern of racial bias, which Taylor discusses below, can be considered as closely related to policing throughout the twentieth century.

After emancipation, the purpose of racism, like the purpose of the police, was transformed. Biologically inflected ideological explanations, no longer necessary to justify enslavement, were deployed instead to justify the surveillance and control of black

¹⁷⁴ Lecount, 2007; Marable, 2000; Taylor, 2016; Spruill, 2016; Hattery and Smith, 2018.

¹⁷⁵ Cooper 2015.

¹⁷⁶ Cooper 2015, 1189.

¹⁷⁷ Taylor, *From #BlackLivesMatter to Black Liberation*.

people, especially black workers. ‘Black Codes,’ a series of laws, rules, and restrictions imposed only on African Americans, criminalized poverty, movement and even leisure. Blacks could be arrested for vaguely worded or innocuous ‘crimes’ such as vagrancy and sentenced to ‘hard labor’ in slavery-like conditions as punishment. Law enforcement officials could also “hire out” black vagrants to white employers to ‘work off’ their sentences. African Americans had to produce labor contracts to prove they were not vagrants or be hurled back into conditions intimately resembling slavery. The police were deployed to enforce these codes, as agents of states still largely controlled by a white planter class that had been militarily defeated but not quite economically and politically destroyed. Racism and modern policing were thus mutually constitutive in reinforcing the subjugated status of blacks.¹⁷⁸

Following this foundation is a series of policy strategies to criminalize black communities especially towards the end of subjugation after World War II. The many factors emerging after World War II led to changes in the way black populations were criminalized in urban spaces. Black communities were increasingly policed and militarized during this era because of limited economic opportunities coupled with the more practical shortcomings of policy changes during this era and global factors emerging with World War II (Taylor, 2016; Alexander, 2010). In addition, mass migration to northern cities during this era led to an increase demand for housing, employment, and social programs for the changing population. Black communities organized their communities around demands for resources in the short term and what Robin D. G. Kelley has called freedom dreams in the long term:

The developing black militancy, fueled by political dynamics within the United States as well as the global uprisings of Black and Brown people against colonialism, set the US state on a collision course with its Black population. African Americans had certainly campaigned against racial injustice long before the civil rights era, but the confluence of several overlapping events brought Black grievances into sharper focus. (Taylor, 2016, p. 33)

The response of legislators to this increasingly radical Black American population was to use criminalizing rhetoric and police force to repress the population.¹⁷⁹ In her book on mass

¹⁷⁸ Taylor, *From #BlackLivesMatter to Black Liberation*, 108.

¹⁷⁹ Alexander, *The New Jim Crow*; Taylor, *From #BlackLivesMatter to Black Liberation*; Skolnick & Fyfe, *Above the Law: Police and the Use of Excessive Force*.

incarceration, *The New Jim Crow*, Michelle Alexander (2010) pinpoints this targeted method of policing:

The rhetoric of ‘law and order’ was first mobilized in the late 1950s as southern governors and law enforcement officials attempted to generate and mobilize white opposition to The Civil Rights Movement. In the years following *Brown vs Board of Education*, civil rights activists used direct-action tactics in an effort to force reluctant Southern states to desegregate public facilities. Southern governors and law enforcement officials often characterized these tactics as criminal and argued that the rise of the Civil Rights Movement was indicative of a breakdown of law and order. Support of Civil Rights legislation was derided by southern conservatives as merely ‘rewarding lawbreakers.’ For more than a decade, from the mid-1950s until the late 1960s, conservatives systematically linked opposition to the civil rights legislation to calls for law and order, arguing that Martin Luther King Jr.’s philosophy of civil disobedience was a leading cause of crime. Civil Rights protesters were frequently depicted as criminals rather than political in nature, and federal courts were accused of excessive “leniency” towards lawlessness, therefore contributing to the spread of crime. In the words of then vice president, Richard Nixon, the increasing crime rate, “ can be traced directly to the spread of the corrosive doctrine that every citizen possess an inherent right to decide for himself which laws to obey and when to disobey them.”¹⁸⁰

The rhetoric of law in order existed during the same period where the social support for the pathologizing doctrine from Daniel Moynihan. In his now well-known government report, *The Negro Family: A Case for National Action*, Moynihan attributed black rebellion in urban centers to black pathology and alleged behaviors and cultural characteristics of Black Americans.¹⁸¹ Rhetoric fueled this doctrine and public policy seeking to criminalize civil rights was adopted by both conservatives and many black activists seeking to connect poverty and crime to personal responsibility, “conservatives could point to black support for highly punitive approaches to dealing with the problems of the urban poor as proof that race had nothing to do with the law and order agenda.”¹⁸²

¹⁸⁰ Alexander, *The New Jim Crow*, 40.

¹⁸¹ Moynihan, “The Negro Family.”

¹⁸² Alexander, *The New Jim Crow*, 42.

Policing is racialized through its connection to the foundation of the American slavery in asserting white supremacy and has been reproduced through strategies to suppress radicalization and respond to social progress in the twentieth century. In addition, during the twentieth century, policing transformed as a mechanism of the elite to suppress the poor and working classes. The black population in the United States has disproportionately represented these groups from intentional, historically racist economic and social marginalization.¹⁸³ In essence, through the connection of American capitalism to American policing, the black population in the United States has historically been criminalized. Taylor (2016) highlights this criminalization as an tactic of racial capitalism: “the racism of the police, historically, has also overlapped with the economic needs of business and the state to create a racialized political economy that is particularly burdensome on black communities.”¹⁸⁴

Historians like Manning Marable (2000) and Allison and Burleigh Gardner (1941) have expanded on racial capitalism and its impact on black communities in the United States. In *How Capitalism Underdeveloped Black America*, Marable (2000) highlights the connection between American capitalist violence and the black population in the United States. He proposes three characteristics of the social and economic positioning of black people caused by American capitalism. Marable explains that the black community in the United States are particularly devastated by the ravage of capitalism for three reasons:

(1) it is concentrated in the lowest paid, blue collar, unskilled and service sectors of the labor force; (2) it comprises a substantial portion of the total U.S. reserve army of labor, the last hired and the first fired during periodic recessions; and (3) it is the historic target of brutality within a racist culture and society, occupying an inferior racial position which has remained unaffected since the demise of slavery.¹⁸⁵

¹⁸³ Alexander, *The New Jim Crow*; Taylor, *From #BlackLivesMatter to Black Liberation*; Marable, *How Capitalism Underdeveloped Black America*; Hattery & Smith, *The Social Dynamics of Family Violence*.

¹⁸⁴ Taylor, *From #BlackLivesMatter to Black Liberation*, 108.

¹⁸⁵ Marable, *How Capitalism Underdeveloped Black America*, 95.

While Marable argues the logic of American capitalism existing to the detriment of black people, Allison and Burleigh Gardner present how policing is used as a mechanism of the elite in American Capitalism, to suppress the working and poor class, which is disproportionately black (1941). This connection again propagates the notion that policing is also racialized through its capitalist counterpart.

The policemen themselves are drawn principally from the upper-lower class with a few from the lower middle class, and their behavior patterns are characteristic of these groups. In effect, the system of law enforcement places in a position of considerable authority some members of these classes subordinate in the white social structure, with the first stages of law enforcement almost entirely in their control. They not only are in a position to officially subordinate persons below them, but because of the sanctions of the law, may also arrest persons above them in social class. Yet except for periodic waves of enforcement of minor traffic regulations, the police seldom arrest upper-class or upper-middle class whites. It is recognized that these groups are generally immune from police control except in very flagrant violations of the laws under unusual circumstances. Thus, an upper-class individual may be drunk in the streets, and the police will either ignore him or escort him home. If an upper-class individual is drunk very frequently, the police may keep him in jail overnight, but only rarely is he booked and tried for the offense. (Davis, Gardner, and Gardner, 1941, p. 510)

In addition to the connection between race, class, and policing, the culture of law enforcement is inherently connected to the community.¹⁸⁶ Social scientists have studied this connection and as I will present later, the NAACP has also recognized this in their platform of addressing the dysfunctional relationship between police and black Americans in the 20th century. In “Violence and the Police,” William Westley provides a definition of the relationship police have to the community:

A police department is intimately related to the community in which it is located and in which it serves. The personnel of the department are drawn from the community and have a personal involvement in the life and values of the community. The men on the job are responsible for the public definitions of behavior. The nature of the community determines many of the problems that the police department must meet. The political structure of the community may have an important influence on the actions of the

¹⁸⁶ Skolnick & Fyfe, *Above the Law: Police and the Use of Excessive Force*; Westley, “Violence and the Police.”

department and the areas of law enforcement that it emphasizes. Therefore, it is important that a description of the community should preface one of the department itself.¹⁸⁷

In summary, police violence against black people has a long historical genealogy in black communities. Black people have historically been criminalized generally, and Black women experiences specifically have reflected race-based violence from police as well as gender-based violence.

Before I offer an in-depth analysis of the NAACP's cases of black women who experienced police brutality from 1945 to 1995, I discuss in the next section how black women have experienced police violence in distinct ways and particularly how black women are pushed into the discursive periphery of the issue through sexism. In other words, black women experience police violence in racialized and gendered ways; furthermore, these narratives of black women being targeted in racial, gendered ways by police violence are often overlooked (though recent movements like #SayHerName have been militating against that tendency).

Black Women's Invisibility and the Distortion of the Impact of Violence

In this section, I explore why and how the stories of black women targeted by police violence have been rendered less visible in popular, scholarly, and activist discourse. I examine, too, how even that process of making these narratives of black women less prominent than narratives of black men is a racial and gendered one. Specifically, I discuss the several aspects of race and gender-based marginalization for black women, and I argue that this marginalization results in a discursive invisibility around acts of violence and the impact of violence. This context of racialized, gendered (in)visibility will then be used to present my analysis of the NAACP cases of police brutality in defense of black women. In analyzing the NAACP cases in

¹⁸⁷ Westley, "Violence and the Police." 1970, 71

this chapter, I argue that recuperating and re-reading the NAACP's advocacy in concert with these black women constituents effectively militates against this legacy of black women's invisibility in the twentieth century archival records.

Throughout the second half of the twentieth century, discourse concerning state violence—violence that stems from a broad array of sources, including policies, practices, and ideologies that criminalize black populations—have focused on popularizing the subjectivity of black men (Ritchie, 2017). Black women are largely overlooked in the discourse of police violence in black communities, an argument that has been advanced by various thinkers like Kimberlé Crenshaw and Andrea Ritchie, among many others. This erasure of black women can be considered a form of gendered violence within a racial reality specific to black women, because it ignores the impact of violence on the basis of gender.¹⁸⁸ The legacy of this marginalization can be connected to how the public image of black women has been manipulated, and how that social manipulation impacts the way issues are viewed as impacting the population. Specifically, controlling images rooted in colonialization and slavery distort how public ills are viewed as impacting black women. These images distort the public's view of black women's labor, sexuality, anger and experiences with violence.

Historically, in the United States the social identities of black women have been situated in the social periphery through centuries of race and gender based discrimination and manipulation.¹⁸⁹ The identities of black women have been marginalized from the desire to objectify them for white and patriarchal economic and political domination (Collins 2000). Examples of this marginalization emerge in the images used to objectify black women,

¹⁸⁸ Ritchie, *Invisible No More*; West, *Violence in the Lives of Black Women*.

¹⁸⁹ Collins, *Black Feminist Thought*; hooks, *Ain't I a Woman*; Wallace, *Black Macho*; Ritchie, *Invisible No More*; Sartain, *Invisible Activists*.

dehumanizing them through racism, while denying them humanity by distancing them from white femininity. In the text *Black Feminist Criticism: Perspectives on Black Women Writers*, Barbara Christian (1985) highlights how the mammy image is a racialized image used to exploit the labor of black women during slavery even as it removes them from the humanizing quality of femininity:

The mammy figure, Aunt Jemima, the most prominent black female figure in southern white literature, is in direct contrast to the ideal white woman, though both images are dependent on each other for their effectiveness. Mammy is black in color, fat, nurturing, religious, kind, and above all strong, and as Faulkner would call ditzy, enduring. She relates to the world as an all-embracing figure, and she herself needs or demands little, her identity derived mainly from a nurturing service. She must be plump and have big breasts, and arms, she is the mammy in the unconsciousness of the South, desired and needed since ideal white women would have to debase themselves in order to be a mother. In contrast, the white woman was supposed to be frail, alabaster white, incapable of doing hard work, shimmering with the beauty of a frail crystal.¹⁹⁰

The image of the mammy showcases the alienation and marginalization of black women from humanity or humanhood. At the same time, this representation narrowly restricts black femininity to domestic economic exploitation, relegating black women to the role of “cook, housekeeper, nursemaid, seamstress” and the like.¹⁹¹ The ideas presented here become socially dominant through what Collins (2000) characterizes as a process of normalization: “Within U.S. culture, racist and sexist ideologies permeate the social structure to such a degree that they become hegemonic, namely seen as natural, normal, and inevitable.”¹⁹² The racist and sexist ideologies Collins highlights as hegemonic, also impact perception of black women in relation to violence and specifically how they are impacted by state violence.

¹⁹⁰ Barbara Christian, *Black Feminist Criticism: Perspectives of Black Women Writers* (New York: Pergamon Press, 1985), 2.

¹⁹¹ Collins, *Black Feminist Thought*, 5.

¹⁹² Collins, *Black Feminist Thought*, 5.

The mammy image shows only one of the many ways in which black women's identities have been reduced through the combination of racism and sexism. This specific example relates directly to the labor exploitation I discuss in greater detail in Chapter 6, which examines employment discrimination against black women. Other stereotypical images of black women include the jezebel, sapphire, welfare queen, and the matriarch. The jezebel represents a woman who is hypersexual. The welfare queen is viewed as someone who is lazy and dependent. The sapphire is viewed as a hot tempered woman with inappropriate anger. And the matriarch is viewed as a failed maternal figure blamed for black poverty. What these images represent individually is not as critical for my discussion as what their existence in general represents. Taken collectively as dominant representations of black women, these images—and the circulation of them in social narratives—represent how black women are “othered.” Specifically, these representations and controlling images deny black women access to humanity and femininity. As Barbara Christian states in reference to U.S. history, “the enslaved African woman became the basis for the definition of our society's other.”¹⁹³ As a result of “othering,” black women exist at the margins of society, and black women's identities become the very basis over and against which whiteness and masculinity construct themselves. In other words, whiteness (which is also gendered) and masculinity (which is also racialized) mobilize distorted narratives and images of black women as the other in order to reinforce racial gender hierarchies as they exist in society.

These racialized, gendered, and classed narratives of black women that circulate in society constitute the foundations of the racial gendered hierarchy in the United States. Patricia Collins (2000) articulates as, “society continues to view black women through a series of

¹⁹³ Christian, *Black Feminist Criticism*, 160.

controlling narratives constructed through slavery.”¹⁹⁴ bell hooks makes a similar argument in her book *Ain't I a Woman? Black Women and Feminism* (1981). hooks writes that “the success of sexist- racist conditioning of American people in regard to black women” and “devaluation of black womanhood occurred as a result of the sexual exploitation of black women during slavery that has not altered the course of hundreds of years.”¹⁹⁵ In essence, social conditioning through the historical distancing of black women as the other distorts how they are viewed, and how society ignores and neglects their actual needs. In order to articulate this point clearly, I will definitely expand on the controlling image of the “Jezebel” and the “Sapphire” because their interpretation relates to the secondary consequence stated here.

The image of the “Sapphire” and “Jezebel” are controlling images tied to historical exploitation of black women. Understanding how these images are used, and what specific aspect of exploitation they relate to, helps establish the argument of how the impact of violence is distorted in perceptions of black women through centuries of race and sex based marginalization. In *Ain't I a Woman*, bell hooks provides a definition and the historical context of the image of “Sapphire”:

The Sapphire image was popularized by the radio and television show Amos n Andy in which Sapphire is the nagging, shrewish wife of Kingfish. As the title indicates, the show focused on the black male characters. Sapphire’s shrewish personality was used primarily to create sympathy in viewers for the black male lot. The Sapphire identity has been projected onto any black woman who overtly expressed bitterness, anger, and rage about her lot.¹⁹⁶

The image of the “Sapphire” is used to distort perceptions of black women’s anger. Carolyn West argues that “societal expectations discourage displays of anger, and often appropriately

¹⁹⁴ Collins, *Black Feminist Thought*.

¹⁹⁵ hooks, *Ain't I a Woman*, 53.

¹⁹⁶ hooks, *Ain't I a Woman*, 85.

assertive behavior by underrepresented minorities.”¹⁹⁷ Historically black women have experienced injustices at the intersection of race, sex, and class, and as scholars have argued their anger and expressions of their anger is justified.¹⁹⁸ This image as it relates to the connection between historical manipulation of black women and public perceptions distorts how anger is viewed and addressed for black women. This stereotype controlling image has real world consequences for black women. As Carolyn West writes in her article, “Mammy, Sapphire, and Jezebel: Historical Images of Black Women and their implications for Psychotherapy,” these representations of black women have profound material consequences for black communities:

Mental health problems (e.g., psychosomatic conditions, depression, and low self-esteem) can develop among women when anger is unexpressed. For Blacks, chronic anger and stress, heightened with frequent encounters with discrimination, can potentially result in hypertension, particularly among darker skinned blacks of lower socioeconomic status (p.461).

Just as the image of the “Sapphire” distorts real-world perceptions of the anger of black women, the image of “Jezebel” distorts perceptions of the sexuality of black women. Collins (2000) defines the “Jezebel” as “a deviant Black female sexuality.” Collins also expands, providing historical positioning of the image.

The image of the Jezebel originated under slavery when black women were portrayed as being, to use Jewelle Gomez’s words, ‘sexually aggressive wet nurses.’ Jezebel’s function was to relegate all Black women to the category of sexually aggressive women, thus providing a powerful rationale for widespread sexual assaults by black men typically reported by Black slave women. Jezebel served yet another function. If Black slave women could be portrayed as having excessive sexual appetites, then increased fertility should be the expected outcome.¹⁹⁹

¹⁹⁷ West, “Mammy, Sapphire, and Jezebel,” 461.

¹⁹⁸ Lorde, *Sister Outsider*; West, “Mammy, Sapphire, and Jezebel”; Collins, *Black Feminist Thought*; hooks, *Ain’t I a Woman*.

¹⁹⁹ Collins, *Black Feminist Thought*, 89.

This image was used to normalize sexual violence for the purpose of “forced breeding” or rape during slavery.²⁰⁰ Though tied to the history of slavery, the image of “Jezebel” is relevant to how institutions respond to sexual violence in regard to black women well into the 20th century. Similar to the way the history of “Sapphire” distorts how anger and mental health is viewed in black women, the image of “Jezebel” distorts how sexual violence is viewed in black women because of the history of slavery in normalizing this violence. West states, “some mental health, legal and medical professionals continue to minimize the violence in black women's lives.”²⁰¹

Through the combination of sexism and racism—in other words, an *intersectional* convergence of systems of oppression—black women are pushed to the periphery of sexual violence through what has been defined as the “Jezebel” image. The erasure of this violence in the lives of black women is also connected to the history of medicine and experimentation on black women, within a similar purview. The founding figure of modern gynecology, James Marion Sims, experimented on the reproductive organs of black women, towards the end of scientific discovery. According to Harriet Washington, Sims justified his continued use of these barbaric methods on black women by invoking a racist rationale: “that blacks did not experience pain in the same way as whites” (Washington, 2006). This racist logic builds on a foundational assumption that black women are impervious to pain, and, even when the option of minimizing that pain was available, doctors denied access to black women. Washington explains this in

Medical Apartheid: The Dark History of Medical Experimentation:

Medical journals and professional word of mouth had detailed the inhalation of ether as anesthesia since the early 1840s, and Sims knew of this, but he flatly refused to administer anesthesia to the slave women and girls. He claimed that his procedures were, ‘not painful enough to justify the trouble and risk attending the administration,’ but this claim rings hollow when one learns that Sims always administered anesthesia when he

²⁰⁰ West, *Violence in the Lives of Black Women*; West, “Mammy, Sapphire, and Jezebel”; hooks, *Ain't I a Woman*; Collins, *Black Feminist Thought*; Wallace, *Black Macho*.

²⁰¹ West, *Violence in the Lives of Black Women*, 12.

performed the perfected surgery to repair the vaginas of white women in Montgomery a few years later.²⁰²

This example from Washington's book provides a brief episode in the long tradition of historical violence experienced by black women in the United States. The violence she is referring to specifically emerges from racist medical exploitation. The examples of historical negation of sexual violence as well as the latter collectively constitute a manifestation of a larger dialogue of the othering of black women, and social manipulation of their identities (e.g., controlling images), resulting in wide scale invisibility within issues such as violence. To reiterate a point from earlier in the chapter, the gender experience of black women pushes them into the periphery of an already racialized system of state violence. In the following section, I argue that the NAACP advocacy in defense of black women functioned to counter this social invisibility in the post-World War II era. Recuperating these narratives from the archive—with black women's lived experiences at the heart of them—in this dissertation offers a reminder of the work that the NAACP was doing in the later part of the twentieth century to acknowledge, write, and capture the experiences of black women into the archival record.

In Defense of Black Women: The NAACP Against Police Violence

The experiences of black women can be described by both the racialization of police violence in black communities, as well as gender stereotypes used to distort the impact of this violence in their lives. In order to discuss evidence of NAACP activities against police brutality in the years after World War II to support the latter, the following analysis is structured into three parts. First, I discuss factors that may have made advocacy against police brutality a significant topic for the NAACP during the early years of the research period (1945 to 1995). Second, I

²⁰² Washington, *Medical Apartheid*, 65.

introduce the NAACP's general approach against police brutality noted by the NAACP at the national level tied to racism and classism. Finally, I identify and analyze NAACP cases of defense against violent police interaction in the experiences of black women. I am making two arguments about the NAACP advocacy in these cases: first, I argue that NAACP interactions in the lives of black women in these police brutality cases reflected a mode of resistance to the marginalization of black women, and second, I argue that the NAACP militated against representations of black women that distort the public's perceptions of the impact of racialized patterns of police violence in their lives.

As mentioned in the previous section, the social identities of black women can be influenced by racial and gendered stereotypes. The result is that society does not articulate violence in the same way it does for individuals not impacted by both the racism and sexism of our society. In essence, through a combination of racism and sexism, black women can have a distorted, as well as marginalized experience with state violence. Andrea Ritchie notes this distinction in presenting her account of the House of Un-American Activities 1948 filing of a petition with the United Nations documenting all crimes, especially sexually violent crimes against black women at the hands of police.

The petition presented voluminous evidence of acts falling within the conventional definition of genocide, gleaned from newspaper articles in the Black press and from reports of civil rights groups, labor organizations, and occasional hearings by city, state and federal government agencies, The petition described in many cases, police officers abusing black women for failure to display what they considered appropriate deference.²⁰³

What Ritchie references here is intentional advocacy for black women victims of police violence (which she is arguing is genocidal), in various organizations and in various levels of government. She also appears to be noting that black women in these cases often encounter violence from

²⁰³ House of Un-American Activities 1948 filing of a petition with the United Nations, pp. 31–32.

police because of an alleged failure to show deference. Ritchie further acknowledges that black women have been omitted from these narratives through a “legacy of marginalization” defined by the tendency for the experiences of black women to be overlooked by racialized narratives of violence popularizing the subjectivities of black men.²⁰⁴ The root of Ritchie's point of the legacy of marginalization can be connected to the historical systems of racism and patriarchy that together situate the experiences of black women behind those of white women and black men.

In addition to the House of Un-American Activities Petition of 1948, the NAACP National Convention of 1953 likely contributed to increasing advocacy against police violence in the organization’s work in the decade following World War II. Part of what the NAACP referenced at the organization’s 44th national convention in 1953 was the connection between community prejudice and the prejudice of the police. Arthur L. Johnson, executive director of the Detroit Branch of the NAACP, stated at the national convention that “there is considerable evidence to indicate that police conduct in relation to Negroes, and even Whites, is motivated by fixed race and social class considerations and attitudes.”²⁰⁵ With this statement from the national convention, it can be argued that the NAACP had or was developing an essential awareness of racial bias in policing in the early years following World War II. Police brutality was an issue that was considered a form of discrimination and was a chronic daily form of repression.²⁰⁶ During the postwar era, the NAACP had employed this connection of police to the community in their platform explaining that police carry the same biases as the community they are inherently connected to. The NAACP also outlined in that 1953 convention the reality of police violence towards Black Americans and their more general strategies towards addressing this reality.

²⁰⁴ Ritchie, *Invisible No More*.

²⁰⁵ Arthur Johnson, 44th National Convention, NAACP Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

²⁰⁶ Arthur Johnson, 44th National Convention, NAACP Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

Johnson stated, “The prevailing anti Negro attitudes in the community and the continuing presumption of a ‘Negro Crime’ problem underly the pattern of police mistreatment of Negro Citizens.”²⁰⁷ From this specific national convention, a set of recommendations emerged for addressing the daily instances of police interaction in black communities. This set of recommendations were based on an examination of postwar racial realities in the United States, as well as expectations moving forward.²⁰⁸ The recommendations for the period beginning in 1953 in regard to police brutality were as follows:

1. Investigation of police brutality complaints by the police department itself is an inherently wrong procedure. A Citizen Review Board should be established for this purpose with authority and power to adjudicate complaints and to make binding recommendations to the head of the department. Any action on appeal from the board’s decision should rest with the Mayor.
2. The hiring, placement, and promotion policies and practices of the Police Department should be modified so as to eliminate race discrimination at all levels.
3. The in-service human relations training program of the department should be based on around democratic practices within the department itself and not mere teaching and instruction.
4. The working conditions of police personnel, including salaries, should be improved, and a higher level of training required for employment.
5. The major leadership of the community from the Mayor on down should speak more often, forcibly, and clearer in support of democratic practice and the great need to eliminate the problem of police brutality and all other forms of police mistreatment of Negro citizen.

The NAACP platform outlined the pervasiveness of police violence towards black Americans in the years following World War II. The demands indirectly reflect the conditions that structured black life and black communities in that particular historical moment. Notably, what is absent from this public platform is a specific recognition of how policing embodied gender and race based prejudices as a response to the discrimination black women can experience (Ritchie, 2017). In order to identify how the NAACP may have acknowledged the gender experience of

²⁰⁷ Arthur Johnson, 44th National Convention, NAACP Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

²⁰⁸ NAACP Figure, 5630, NAACP Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

black women, I examine the NAACP cases that follow and argue that, to the extent that the archival records of this prominent national civil rights organization can demonstrate, these cases embodied the historical reality for black women experiencing both racism and sexism. Though any explicit mention of the racial, gendered reality of black women did not make it into the recommendations that came out of the 1953 national convention, I argue that these racial, gendered realities did manifest in the case files for the black women who sought help from the NAACP in their particular situations.

This evidence will help illuminate areas not stated in their public platform (explicitly, racism and sexism). In the following analysis, I consider how the experiences of black women who came into contact with the NAACP between 1945 and 1965 reveal specific patterns of violence that the NAACP responded to in its organizational advocacy work. These women were impacted by a spectrum of issues highlighted by the NAACP platform including rape, homicide, assault and battery, and accusations of lewd behavior, perversion or public intoxication (see Figure 5.1).

Figure 5.1. Emerging Patterns in Police Brutality Advocacy Between , 1945-1960²⁰⁹

Named Individual	Issue	Gender-related Patterns
Joanne Grant Ruth Tinsley Dorothy Young *unnamed black woman	Arrested for loitering, alleged lewd behavior	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Denial of the autonomy of body : defending oneself against, molestation, physical assault
Beatrice Johnson Lorraine Battle (Pregnant) Mary Washington	Assault/Battery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Women were beaten or assaulted as they attempted to defend their husbands

²⁰⁹ Figure 5.1 represents cases included in this section. They are organized according to how they are described in the NAACP archives. Cases sharing similar details are grouped together and represent no other connections between individuals.

Dorothy Glenn Ruby Mischal Helen White Jane Phillips Ruth Loving Juanita Ford Mary Bailey Alice Coleman Helen White Adelaide Hudson Nora Green Adelaide Hudson		and children. • Women were beaten or assaulted under claims of intoxication and public intoxication or perversion
Willie Ruthe Williams Miss Simon	Homicide	• Denial of autonomy of body resulting in death
Gladys Green	Rape	• Sexual assault as a mechanism of state violence

Against Misrepresentations of Black Women

Many of these cases documented the assault experienced by black women at the hands of police being rationalized under the guise of the victim being intoxicated or having displaced aggression. These characteristics emerged in case reports and administrative documents regarding the cases, and accounts from the women themselves of what police told them they were being charged with. The label of intoxication, or displaced aggression can be tied to the negative stereotyping used to control representation and public perceptions of black women outlined in previous chapters (White, 2001). Much like images rooted in slavery, including that of the “Jezebel” and “Sapphire,” were used to misrepresent black women in reductive ways, in the years examined for police brutality, the label of *intoxication* or *displaced aggression* can be considered an attempt to distance black women from popularized concepts of morality, ethics,

cleanliness and dignity.²¹⁰ Women who were labeled *intoxicated* or *aggressive*, whether or not they really were, were cast as other, non-normative, undesirable targets for whom state violence—police violence in these specific instances—could more likely be justified. Furthermore, these and other images that sought to control representations of black women resulted from the sexism and racism characterizing the oppression they experienced.

What's more prevalent, as these cases reveal, is that the NAACP showed attention to the real violence this women experienced, in contrast to the claims of police attempting to degrade their existence. In other words, the NAACP's documentation of these black women's experiences functioned to write into the archive narratives that honored black women's lived realities. This acknowledgement implicit in these case files represents a kind of counter-narrative to the narratives of intoxication, lewdness, and aggression that likely circulate in the police reports and dominant accounts of black women at these historical moments. In the cases that follow, I argue that the NAACP's response in opposition to the discursive mobilization of labels like "intoxication" and "displaced aggression," which were used to rationalize some encounters black women had with police, was impactful. The NAACP response and counter-narrative constituted an organizational response to a pervasive tradition of social control and misrepresentations of black women. Specifically, research on the social perception and social impact of intoxication characterize it as being associated with violent crimes, sexual adventurousness, automobile accidents, increased aggression and weaken response inhibition.²¹¹ Many of these characteristics align with those imbedded in the images used to degrade the existence of black women. Specifically, the stereotype of the Jezebel could align with the social perception of intoxication relating to sexual adventurousness, and weaken response inhibition. In

²¹⁰ Collins, 2000; hooks, 1981; Wallace; Crenshaw, 1989; Barbara Smith.

²¹¹ Steele & Southwick, 1985; Pernanen, 1976; Steffen and Taylor, 1974; Washburne, 1956; Zeichner, 1980

addition, the stereotype of the *Sapphire* could align with the characteristic of increased aggression because of the anger associated with this stereotype. In the details of the following cases, the references to intoxication and aggression provide evidence to support the connections to these controlling images of black women. Furthermore, the NAACP response to these black women can reflect a response or counter-narrative to the violence they encountered, in the absence of the attempted distortion from stereotypes or rationale rooted in racism and sexism.

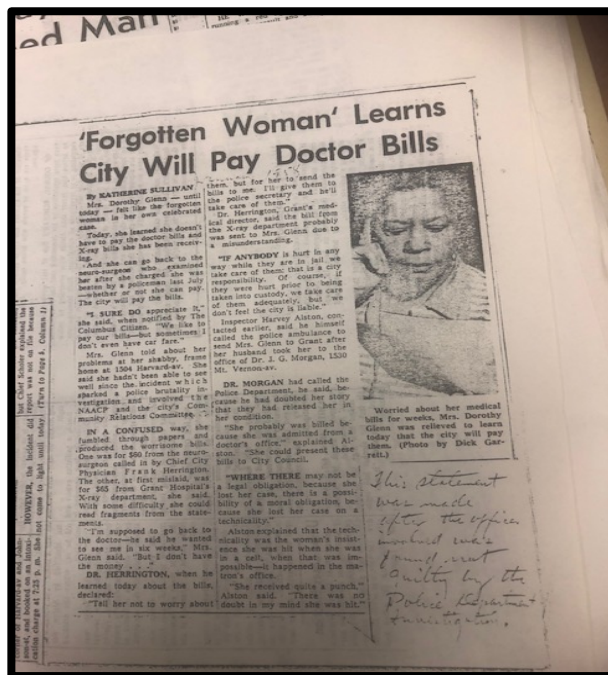


Figure 5.2. The Case of Mrs. Dorothy Glenn.
 “‘Forgotten Woman’ Learns City Will Pay Doctor Bills.”

In Defense of Black Women Against Claims of Intoxication and Aggression

The case of Dorothy Glenn (see Figure 5.2) appeared in the NAACP primary collection between the years of 1956 and 1965. The national branch noted that hers was a case emerging out of Columbus, GA. Dorothy Glenn was described as “a Columbus Ohio woman, arrested for

alleged intoxication and beaten while in police custody.”²¹² In this case, a black woman was arrested by the Columbus police department under claims of intoxication (see Figure 5.4 in the appendix). This case introduces a common characteristic from police to describe encounters with black women. Police often invoked the claim of intoxication in their accounts. The way in which police mobilized the language of intoxication to rationalize violence against black women can be considered a form of racial and gender bias because such language is fundamentally rooted in the use of controlling images to degrade the existence of black women and rationalize violence against them. The discursive power here lies in a racial gendered regime that polices black women by categorizing them as undesirable or problematic in a way that justifies state intervention to “fix” the said problem. If a black woman is categorized as intoxicated, the dominant discourse seems to say, then that (racial gendered) label offers a pretext that legitimizes state violence. Calling women intoxicated was not just a rhetorical act; it was a materially violent one through which black women were being rendered vulnerable to state-sanctioned violence and death. In addition, the claim of intoxication in the cases of black women goes beyond racist rationales because it can be tied to the historic negation of the femininity of black women through the use of these images. Ashlee Davis, Ronald F. Levant, and Shana Pryor have argued that, historically, black women have been prevented from accessing traditional conceptualizations of (white) femininity.²¹³ This has happened through controlling images “used to exercise power over a subordinate group” rooted in both race and gender bias.

The NAACP’s impact in this case, and others as I will show, reflects that they defended black women against the claim of intoxication, advocating for their rights against the race and

²¹² Part 3, Box A243, NAACP Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

²¹³ Davis, Levant, and Pryor, “Traditional Femininity Versus Strong Black Women Ideologies and Stress among Black Women.”

gender bias attempting to dismiss and marginalize them. In the Glenn case, the NAACP investigated the claim as well as the physical abuse Ms. Glenn sustained once in police custody. This specific investigation resulted in public recognition and city payment of Ms. Glenn's medical bills sustained from the incident; through the collaborative efforts of the NAACP and the Community Relations Committee.

Emerging in the same grouping between 1955 and 1965 was the case of Mary Stewart. As in the Glenn case, the NAACP defended Stewart against the label of intoxication. The case of Mary Stewart provides an even greater level of detail of the violence condemned by the NAACP, as law enforcement coated interactions with Black women with negative and stigmatizing imagery. The Mary Stewart case occurred in Detroit, Michigan, in 1957. Details of the case are in the below statement from the investigation conducted by the Detroit Branch of the NAACP.²¹⁴

While operating my automobile on 4-27-1957 about 9:30pm, with two other ladies in the car (Cecilia Lewis and Mary Washington) I was stopped by a police patrol car while traveling west on E. Jefferson. Three officers jumped out of the patrol car and one of them asked if I had a driver's license, I told him yes. He then asked whose car it was, and I told him it was mine. He then ordered me to get out of the car. I hesitated long enough to turn off the switch and apply my emergency brake, but before I could remove my key from the ignition this same officer snatched me from the car and struck me several times about the face and shoulders. The two other officers held my arms and held me by the hair while this officer continued to beat on me with his nightstick. After the beating, I was then thrown into the back seat of the patrol car and taken to McClellan Street Police Station. The Desk Sergeant suggested that they take me to a hospital. I was given an injection and three stitches were put in my lower lip. I was then taken to the women's division of the prison at 1300 Beaubien and was held until 4:00pm., Sunday April 28th on the charge of drinking and reckless driving.

Further analysis of this case by the NAACP notes suspension of charges against the victim in traffic court. This case provides another example of the characteristic of intoxication being used as an attempt to justify physically unnecessary and excessive force against black women in police encounters. The report of the case provides details of Stewart's encounter. It specifically

²¹⁴ Part 2, Box B124, NAACP Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

details how the police assaulted her, and recounts how they later charged her with intoxication and reckless driving. According to NAACP records, the charges of intoxication and reckless driving were dropped against Ms. Stewart. In this particular case, the NAACP provided Ms. Stewart the opportunity to speak on her own behalf and the details she provided contrasted those claims by officers by police. The NAACP, was impactful in this area by providing the space and opportunity for a black woman to defend herself. While this case relates to Glenn's case because of the characteristic of intoxication being used to justify violence, the outcome, or the nature of the impact was different. In the Glenn case, publicity was garnered around the case, and for the Stewart case, the alleged charges of intoxication were dropped. Both were the result of the NAACP being involved.

During this period and the years immediately following emerged similar cases in which the NAACP regional and local branches represented black women against claims of intoxication and failed deference with regard to assaults by police. Some of these women include Helen White, Jane Phillips, Juanita Ford, Mary Alice Coleman, and Willie Mae Frazier, who died as a result of police misconduct.²¹⁵ Mrs. Frazier was arrested under claims of intoxication, and arrested under a “drunk and disorderly conduct charge”. The article states, “Mrs. Frazier was taken to Dekalb County Jail after service station attendants reported a drunk woman in the station bathroom. Her husband posted bail 11 hours later and Mrs. Frazier was driven to Grady, where she died before surgery could be performed.”

²¹⁵ For more on Mary Alice Coleman, see Figure 4.2 in Appendix. Willie May Frazier is photographed in Figure 5.3.

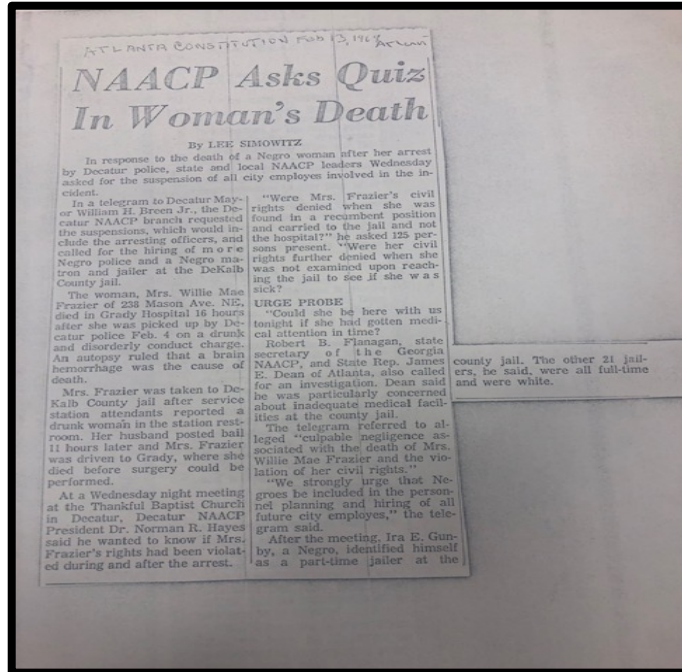


Figure 5.3.
Newspaper headline, “NAACP Asks Quiz In Woman’s Death.”

The NAACP branch investigating the department responsible for her death claims that, “her civil rights had been violated”, and stated, “she was found in a recumbent position and carried to prison instead of the hospital.”²¹⁶ In this particular case, a black woman was dismissed as being “drunk and disorderly” a description that connects her to the previous cases presented; but the fact that this dismissal resulted in her death reveals another point of NAACP advocacy. The NAACP is noted, as publicly examining the circumstances following Mrs. Frazier’s death. This case helps present advocacy in contrast to the negative image of intoxication, and further, reveals that the NAACP provided a narrative of Mrs. Frazier’s death, in contrast to the more degrading narrative based on intoxication.

The actions of the NAACP in this case, and those that follow reflect a parallel with other advocacy groups that confront negative narratives of black people in interaction with police as

²¹⁶ NAACP Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

well as attempts to criminalize their bodies after death. The NAACP can be considered impactful in this way, by humanizing black women, and interrupting negative imagery of this group. The NAACP's defense of black women resonates, in some ways, with how black mothers in Brazil have come to the aid of children in what Jaime Amparo Alves has called "a second death."²¹⁷ Specifically, Alves argues that, when black mothers lose their children to police violence, the police attempt to "kill their children a second time" by criminalizing their bodies after murder in an attempt to justify the violence. In addition, Alves describes how these mothers must defend their children even in death, in response to a narrative that denies humanity denied to black people in both life and death. Similarly, the cases of the NAACP during this period reflect an engaged mode of advocacy that humanizes black women, recognizing their civil rights in death, and across all forms of their interaction with police.

In Defense of Black Women Against Sexual Violence

The next set of cases embody attention to another stereotype which was popularized in the subjective identities of black women in the United States; the image of the hypersexual black woman or the "Jezebel" stereotype. The issue of sexual assault, and specifically, the negation of the impact of sexual assault, as I presented earlier, is historically tied to political and social manipulation of the sexuality of black women. As presented by scholars like bell hooks (1981) Patricia Hill Collins (2000), Michelle Wallace (1979) and Angela Davis (1981), the stereotype image of the hypersexual black woman is rooted in slavery and can be tied to the dismissal of the actual impact and role of sexual violence in their lives.²¹⁸

²¹⁷ Alves, *Anti-Black City*.

²¹⁸ hooks, *Ain't I a Woman*; Collins, *Black Feminist Thought*; Wallace, *Black Macho and the Myth of the Superwoman*; Angela Y. Davis, *Women, Race, and Class* (London: The Women's Press, 1981).

Between the years 1955 and 1965, the cases of Dorothy Yung, and Gladys Green emerged reflecting the NAACP confronting this negative imagery being associated with black women. These cases can also show how gender may have been considered an issue coupled with the racism and classism that the NAACP appeared to act in defense of between 1955 and 1965, following the presentation of the issue of police brutality at the National Convention of 1953. Both of these cases were arrests investigated by the NAACP, from which the organization found were sexual assault cases. Dorothy Yung was arrested and charged with physical assault and juvenile delinquency. Upon further investigation, the NAACP found that Ms. Yung was sexually assaulted by a white peer and acted out of her own self-defense. The NAACP notes that Ms. Yung had integrated a school where she was charged with delinquency and the local NAACP brought her charge against the local court who refused to dismiss the charge. Following this, the NAACP notes that they brought her case to the supreme court and had the charges dismissed.²¹⁹ In the case of Gladys Green, the NAACP described the victim as being “sexually assaulted by police officers, and arrested for claims of intoxication.”²²⁰ The NAACP, investigated these cases and advocated for Yung and Green against claims of intoxication, in going in contrast, the organization was able to uncover that they were victims of sexual violence, and defend them towards that end.

In Defense of Black Women Against Claims of Criminality

The next case reflects both the defense of black women against claims of criminality, as well as defending incarcerated black women related to the NAACP prison programs.²²¹ In the case of Dorothy Rose, the NAACP investigated her case after she was shot fatally in the stomach

²¹⁹ Part 4, Box A53 filed under Sylvester GA, NAACP Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

²²⁰ Part 2, Box B124, NAACP Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

²²¹ Part 7, Box 86, NAACP Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

by police who claimed she was “running away after being caught running away from a burglary” in Birmingham, Mississippi. This case emerged from an annual report on the activities of the Birmingham Branch of the NAACP. The branch states that “no evidence of her being armed or dangerous was disclosed. A law violator usually runs from rather than to a police officer making the shooting in the stomach highly improbable.”²²² The branch provides no further details of what was accomplished, other than recognizing the homicide as a wrongful death, and bringing attention to the case at the national level via annual reporting.

In Defense of Black Mothers

In other severe examples, the NAACP became involved in cases involving black women who were assaulted as they attempted to defend themselves and children in their care. The cases that follow particularly provide details of the organization coming to the defense of black women who were pregnant at the time of their assaults. In these cases, the women were pregnant and often acting in defense of children and elderly. In a 1956 case of in Jackson, Mississippi, police officers first assaulted and then threatened Beatrice Young and her unborn child if she spoke about the assault to the NAACP. During this period, the director of the NAACP Washington Bureau, Clarence Mitchell, brought further attention to this case as noted below.²²³

Mrs. Beatrice Young of Jackson, Miss., a housewife and expectant mother was dragged from her house on Nov. 26th, 1956 when she asked deputy sheriff Andy Hopkins whether he had a warrant to search her residence. The deputy had gained entrance by threatening to kick down the doors, he then struck Mrs. Young with a club and beat her with his fist. While Mrs. Young was in Jail she was hit on the head. When she was released from jail the following morning Mrs. Young was told by the jailer that he would kill her if she told of the mistreatment she received while there. Following the attack upon her, Mrs. Young was hospitalized and suffered a miscarriage. An affidavit describing the episode was submitted to Rep Emmanuel Celler, chairman of the House Judiciary Committee by Clarence Mitchell, director of the NAACP Washington Bureau, who described the attack

²²² Birmingham Branch papers, NAACP Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

²²³ Part 9, A54, NAACP Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

by the deputy sheriff and the jailor as something ‘as brutal as a Nazi and Soviet Prison torture.’

The rote documentation of facts and events as they happened in this case fall short of perhaps capturing the multiple traumas and violences that Beatrice Young—housewife and expectant mother—experienced. In this case, the resulting miscarriage constituted a secondary act of violence against Beatrice Young. Young’s unborn child was killed due to police violence. Beatrice Young’s social location as a black woman—limited to a brief representation as “housewife and expectant mother” in the archival records of the NAACP—raises the importance of understanding the racialized, gendered context that structured Beatrice Young’s life generally and this experience specifically.

The case of Lorraine Battle is a similar one. In 1956, the NAACP noted that Battle was a black woman who was pregnant at the time of her assault. Police in Jackson, Mississippi, stopped her son and shortly after they began physically assaulting him. Battle—who was 7 months pregnant at the time—came to the defense of her son, and, in turn, she was physically assaulted by the officers.

Battle is seven months pregnant at the time a cruiser stopped her son and began beating him. She ran to the corner without shoes and saw that the officer was hitting her son with a flashlight. She attempted to enter the car and one of the officers told her to get her black ass out of the car. One of the officers grabbed her by the collar from behind and hit her in the face and stomach and knocked her to the ground. One officer called for assistance and about five other cruisers answered.

Battle “ran to the corner without shoes.” Even in the archival indexing of the violence, it may be just as important to ask about what is not there in the archival record as what is documented. The NAACP records do not provide details of the results of Mrs. Battle’s case. However, the documentation of this case and the details of Mrs. Battle’s case is more evidence of black women’s distinct racialized, gendered experiences of police violence. While black men were also

assaulted, this police violence against black women was gendered in the sense that black women—who were often also mothers or mothers-to-be—were not the only people vulnerable; in these cases, police violence against black women could lead to the assaults and death of children.

The number of cases like that of Beatrice Young and Lorraine Battle, as well as others noted by this trend of police violence, in the archival records of the NAACP during the period from 1945 until 1960. Perhaps the decrease of direct cases of investigation of police violence relates to the rise of other organizations—with the exception of the Congress for Racial Equity (CORE, founded in 1942), which focused on similar efforts with the rise of the Civil Rights and Black Power Movements.²²⁴ As noted earlier in this chapter, organizations like the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC, founded 1960), the Southern Christian Leadership Council (SCLC, founded 1957), the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party (founded 1964) and the Black Panther Party (founded 1966) also emerged during the decades following World War II. While these cases were less frequent than housing cases and employment advocacy cases (as I will show in the next chapter), evidence from them still reveal elements of the approach to the issue, and the attention the organization brought to various black women. The NAACP in particular shared many direct action efforts with the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) beginning in 1960.²²⁵

While police brutality cases investigated by the NAACP shifted beginning in the 1960s, recognition of the unique pattern experienced by black women was directly added to National Literature in the later part of the period of investigation; which was July 1992.²²⁶ This document

²²⁴ Organizations, Part 5, NAACP Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

²²⁵ Kruse and Tuck, *Fog of War*.

²²⁶ NAACP Preliminary Report Police Conduct and Community Relations 1992, prepared by Harvard University.

it highlights the NAACP work, noting that “ minority women have felt the dual impact of race and gender bias at the hand of police officers.” This statement is presented related to a case of harassment by police officers of a minority woman. In the same document prepared by Harvard University in 1992, the NAACP recognized the broad impact of race and gender based police violence in poor communities, police conduct, the quality of police investigations and advocate towards a strategy of mending overall police and community relations towards the end of the researched period.

These cases highlighted the experiences of black women who brought their cases to the NAACP. These cases were violent. They demonstrate that mainstream notions of femininity were violent. They demonstrate that mainstream conceptualizations of femininity were did not include black women. In fact, even for black mothers, these bodies were brutalized, and their children were assaulted and, in the case of one unborn child, killed. Prevailing stereotypes of black women as people who do not feel pain and whose bodies are vulnerable to state violence further shape the material and discursive realities for black women who occupied a distinct position at the intersection of racism and sexism in the second half of the twentieth century. In the next chapter, I analyze the NAACP advocacy on behalf of women who were fighting employment discrimination in order to extend the discussion and analysis of black women’s lives as rich and textured sites for grasping intersectionality.

CHAPTER SIX

The Fight Against Employment Discrimination

During the second half of the twentieth century, the NAACP's primary focus in addressing employment discrimination and inequality was to ensure compliance with anti-discrimination in with the armed forces and the public and private sectors. The NAACP's direct actions in regard to employment during this period fell into two categories. First, the NAACP examined the administrative barriers that prevented the upward mobility of black Americans. Next, the NAACP addressed individual complaints of cases across the country from people facing some form of discrimination from their employers. These activities became more prevalent in the years following the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the NAACP's desire to ensure compliance with Title VII of the Civil Rights Act.²²⁷ The NAACP focused on employment discrimination as it regarded fair teacher pay, employment integration, affirmative action, gender discrimination, sexual harassment, and discriminatory hiring practices. The specific campaigns representing NAACP employment advocacy during this period include:

In this chapter, I analyze the cases in which the NAACP advocated on behalf of black women—particularly in employment discrimination cases—in order to argue for an intersectional understanding of these black women's experiences as both gendered and racialized. First, I discuss the reality of racial discrimination in employment and labor for black Americans in the period from 1945 to 1995 to understand the larger, more general reality of employment for black Americans. Next, I discuss how black women can experience employment discrimination in a distinct way due to their gendered experiences. Then, I analyze cases of employment discrimination against black women and how the NAACP responded to the realities

²²⁷ Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 addressed discrimination in employment on the bases of sex, race, religion, color and nation of origin.

present in their cases. The purpose of this chapter is to examine how black women filing cases of employment discrimination experienced discrimination related to their experiences with racism and sexism. Overall, I argue here that employment is yet another site of analysis and critique through which we might (1) better understand the distinct ways in which black women inhabited the nexus of race, class, and gender; and (2) understand how the NAACP worked alongside black women constituents to advocate for their employment rights.

Racial Discrimination in Employment After World War II

Historically, black Americans have suffered labor exploitation in the United States. Employment discrimination is rooted in labor exploitation spanning earlier than emancipation.²²⁸ While the point of this discussion is the way racial discrimination shaped Black Americans experiences with employment between 1945 and 1995, understanding the role of slavery and Jim Crow is fundamental to understand their disadvantage. The discrimination in this era is emphasized by significant landmark policy changes like Executive Order 9981 (1948), which desegregated the armed forces; Title VII of The Civil Rights Act of 1964, which prohibited employment discrimination on the basis of race, sex, and other categories; and Executive Order 11246 (1965), which established non-discrimination hiring practices in government. These policies were a response to economic displacement rooted in slavery and Jim Crow, and they came about as a result of persistent advocacy for fair employment during and after World War II because of such discriminatory conditions. In the following pages, there is a discussion of policies in response to slavery and the patterns of Jim Crow that followed it.²²⁹

²²⁸ Foner, *Organized Labor and the Black Worker, 1619–1981*; Weaver, *Negro Labor, a National Problem*; Katznelson, *When Affirmative Action Was White*.

²²⁹ Foner, *Organized Labor and the Black Worker*; Weaver, *Negro Labor, a National Problem*.

The landscape of employment immediately following World War II is rooted in the relegation of Black Americans to the sector of unskilled labor.²³⁰ This marginalization is tied to the nature of enslaved black labor before emancipation, as well as the discriminatory color caste inherited from the system. In his book *Capitalism and Slavery*, Eric Williams writes in reference to the foundation of black labor in the United States that “the reason was economic, not racial; it had to do not with the color of the laborer, but the cheapness of the labor...Negro slavery was eminently superior.”²³¹ The use of enslaved blacks to satisfy the agricultural labor demand outlined by Williams, also gave rise to a racial caste system in the United States to rationalize the dehumanizing conditions and exploit free labor as also noted by Williams, “The features of the man, his hair, his color, and dentifrice, his ‘subhuman’ characteristics so widely pleaded were only later rationalizations to justify a simple economic fact: that the colonies needed labor and resorted to Negro labor because it was the cheapest and best.”²³² This racial caste system, coupled with the foundation of relegation to agricultural unskilled labor, gave rise to a pattern of economic displacement. This connection is outlined in Juan Perea’s “The Echoes of Slavery: Recognizing the Racist Origins of the Agricultural and Domestic Worker Exclusion from the National Labor Relations Act” in specific reference to the southern economy in the United States.²³³

Since the time of slavery and up into the New Deal, plantation agriculture had been the most important feature of the southern economy and society. Just as the antebellum southern plantation system depended on the forced labor of black slaves, so the postbellum southern agriculture depended on exploitation and subordination of black labor. The formal abolition of slavery in the Constitution made little difference.

²³⁰ Weaver, *Negro Labor: A National Problem*.

²³¹ Williams, *Capitalism and Slavery*.

²³² Williams, *Capitalism and Slavery* p. 20

²³³ Perea, “The Echoes of Slavery: Recognizing the Racist Origins of the Agricultural and Domestic Worker Exclusion from the National Labor Relations Act”; Hill, “Racial Inequality in Employment: The Patterns of Discrimination.”

Agriculture, and the exploitation of black labor to support it, remained particularly and uniquely important to the South during the New Deal Era.²³⁴

Perea also discusses this displacement in connection to the New Deal period, and the systemic policies that emerged to solidify employment marginalization according to race. Perea argues that Congress, “²³⁵Accommodated and preserved this racism through systemic and intentional exclusion of blacks from all the major enactments of the New Deal (p. 104).” The economic acts of the New Deal period enabled patterns of racial discrimination preventing Black Americans from receiving fair wages and excluding agricultural and domestic workers-- who were disproportionately black-- from access to unemployment insurance.²³⁶

During World War II, this pattern of marginalization emerged as defense and trade or skill based jobs expanded. Racism relegated Blacks to unskilled labor created limited opportunities for Black Americans, as outlined by Robert Weaver in *Negro Labor: A National Problem*. In this text, Weaver presents the disadvantage produced from exploitative slave labor, in his examination of barriers for black Americans to enter trade jobs in the twentieth century.

The older skills which the Negro carpenter knew were supplanted by new methods employed in large scale construction. At the same time, plumbing, steamfitting, and electrical work became essential in many types of building. The Negro Slave was never taught these trades; the free Negro rarely had a chance to learn them. Labor unions placed their emphasis upon organizing workers who were in large scale construction. The black artisan, despite his early start in home construction, knew only the skills of small scale building and could maintain a favorable competitive position only in those of his inherited skills which carried over into the large scale building , such as the skills of the trowel trades in which the techniques remained substantially unchanged...this meant a continued displacement of Negro carpenters and monopoly of the mechanical building trades by white workers who were newcomers into the older building trades which the Negro once dominated in the south.²³⁷

²³⁴ Perea, “The Echoes of Slavery,” 100–101 2011.

²³⁵ The National Industrial Recovery Act, the Agricultural Adjustment Act, Social Security Act, The Fair Labor Standards Act; Perea, “The Echoes of Slavery.”

²³⁶ Perea, “The Echoes of Slavery.”

²³⁷ Robert Weaver, “Negro Labor: A National Problem.” 141

Black Americans were barred from getting access to training programs and were discriminated against in favor of the white labor force. This cycle is outlined by Phillip Foner in his discussion of the employment industry immediately following World War II. Specifically, Foner writes, “many labor unions in the defense industries would not admit Negroes. Management that had closed shop agreements with such unions would turn down black applicants for being non-union. Training schools would not accept Negro candidates either because they could not join labor unions or because they had no job offers.”²³⁸ Despite these practices relegating many Black Americans to unskilled positions, many were able to attain trade training but were still restricted through persistently racist practices restricting them to agricultural and domestic positions, “there was a serious waste of available Negro manpower and woman power. Much of it was due to underemployment. The limited number of Negro men who had been admitted to defense training courses were in janitorial or unskilled jobs. Negroes with mechanical experiences or aptitudes were driving delivery trucks or waiting tables or operating elevators. To an even greater extent, colored women were concentrated in non-essential service jobs.”²³⁹

This type of discrimination and marginalization occurred outside of skill or trade related employment as well. Specific patterns of discrimination against teachers was a formidable barrier and the NAACP’s employment advocacy efforts addressed these issues. In southern states, the “pressure from the NAACP and the courts did bring important accommodations, but [there was] significant, and still unexamined, ways the white south chose to resist. The most durable resistance to the challenges posed by the NAACP legal campaign came not in the courts or in politics, but within educational institutions.”²⁴⁰ The NAACP worked to address the 40%

²³⁸ Foner, *Organized Labor and the Black Worker*. 239

²³⁹ Weaver, *Negro Labor: A National Problem* p.141

²⁴⁰ Baker, “Testing Equality.” 49

wage gap between white and black teachers that was in most cases, 80% percent the result of racial discrimination.²⁴¹ The NAACP litigation towards equalizing teacher pay was met with southern backlash, and responses that sought to rationalize inequality based on alleged black ineptitude; reminiscent of the patterns before it sought to rationalize black relegation to oppressive labor. Most of these cases were to fight discrimination claims against National Teacher Exam (NTE) standardized tests proposed by Columbia professor, Ben Woods.²⁴²

The NTE offered a way out of the dilemmas posed by the salary campaign because it provided an ostensibly scientific and objective basis for claims that African American teachers were inferior to whites. The educational attainment of African American teachers increased significantly during the 1940s. As a result, southern school officials worried that if they created a single salary schedule for whites and blacks, which based pay on educational qualifications and teaching experience, as the NAACP urged, the salaries of black teachers might soon exceed those of whites. Southern educational leaders claimed that black teachers should be paid lower salaries because their training was inferior, but this contention made whites vulnerable to NAACP demands for educational equalization and desegregation. The NTE allowed educational authorities to avoid these problems. By judging white and black teachers against the same test norm and maintaining savage inequalities in education, white school officials ensured that most African Americans would earn lower salaries than whites. Rather than providing what Wood called an ‘impartial: means of determining pay, the NTE dressed up discrimination in a more legally defensible form and became an important means through which it was perpetuated.²⁴³

This system of using NTE to rationalize fair pay for Black teachers reflects similarities in the displacement of black that occurred in trade jobs. Using seemingly objective measures (e.g., Teacher Exams, Training Schools, Trade Unions) to critique the employability of black Americans was rooted in racial bias and systemic discrimination reminiscent of the racist rationale behind justifications for slavery and Jim Crow.²⁴⁴ The reality of marginalization according to race in employment formed the precursor for federal legislation in the 1960s

²⁴¹ Baker, “Testing Equality.”

²⁴² Baker, 1995, 55-56.

²⁴³ Baker, 1995, 55-56.

²⁴⁴ Weaver ,1946; Baker, 1995

addressing private and public employment discrimination. A number of different policies sought to eliminate race-based discrimination in various sectors. Executive Order 9981 (1948) under President Truman sought to eliminate discrimination on the basis of color in the United States Armed Forces. Eventually, Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Executive Order 11246 (1965) sought to eliminate employment discrimination in the public and private sectors.

Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which prohibited employment discrimination on the basis of categories including race and sex, contained two provisions that greatly shaped the activism efforts of the NAACP in the latter part of the 20th century. Specifically, Title VII contained two provisions that addressed the patterns of discrimination faced by Black Americans in the years prior to and immediately following World War II. The Act “prohibited discrimination by private employers, labor organizations, and employment agencies.”²⁴⁵ The first part of Title VII “prohibits discriminatory restrictions limiting access of minorities to firms and occupation” and the second part “declares illegal, pay differences based upon race.”²⁴⁶ While the NAACP’s advocacy in the area of employment preceded the passage of Title VII, their efforts also aligned with ensuring compliance with both provisions of the law. Specifically, they fought and won federal suits before and after the law, and encouraged the government to aggressively enforce the law.²⁴⁷ In many employment discrimination cases emerging after Title VII in 1965, the NAACP directly referenced how employers violated enforcement of the act in defense cases of black Americans. Title VII provided the NAACP with additional federal support in holding employers accountable for discriminatory patterns, such as a 1973 case emerging from NAACP National Headquarters in 1973 stating, “defendants have denied employment, and continue to

²⁴⁵ Pedriana and Stryker, “The Strength of a Weak Agency.” 709-710

²⁴⁶ Pedriana and Stryker p. 709

²⁴⁷ Victor Perlo, *Economics of Racism USA: Roots of Black Inequality* (New York: International Publishers, 1975).

deny employment to black applicants because of their race” and “defendants have discriminated, and continue to discriminate against black employees and black applicants for employment because of their race in direct violation of Title VII.”²⁴⁸

The NAACP enforcement of Title VII came with a necessary criticism of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) which was established shortly after the law. As noted by the *New York Times* in 1966, “attempts to end employment discrimination are being hampered by inadequate enforcement powers, meager budgets, and weak administrations.”²⁴⁹ The Commission initially struggled to gain the necessary administrative, financial, and judicial support necessary to ensure compliance with Title VII. The NAACP sought to bring further attention to these federal shortcomings, so they tested the capacity of the EEOC to address discrimination complaints. The necessary criticism that shaped NAACP employment advocacy after 1965 is outlined by Nicholas Pedriana and Robin Stryker in “The Strength of A Weak Agency.” As Pedriana and Stryker write,

Some civil rights groups decided to swamp the EEOC with complaints to illustrate the agency’s weakness. In conjunction with the Legal Defense Fund (LDF), the NAACP devised a ‘stunt; to file mass complaints soon after Title VII became effective. Jack Greenberg, director of the LDF told *The Wall Street Journal* ‘the best way to get it [Title VII] amended is to show it doesn't work. Through summer and fall 1965 the NAACP and LDF hit the EEOC with complaints in an ‘ unrelenting drive to enforce compliance with Title Vii’ . By mid-December they had filed nearly one-third of the 2000 complaints received. By the end of its first fiscal year, the EEOC had gotten 8800 complaints but a budget projected to handle 2000 ...the NAACP and LDF mobilized a mass complaint generating campaign that put enormous pressure on an infant agency to aggressively enforce the law.²⁵⁰

The pattern of race-based employment discrimination proceeding from World War II has been characterized by patterns of discrimination that attempt to rationalize black relegation to

²⁴⁸ *NAACP v. Prince George County*, Group 5, Box 226, NAACP Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

²⁴⁹ *New York Times*, May 16, 1966, p. A18

²⁵⁰ Pedriana and Stryker, “The Strength of a Weak Agency: Enforcement of Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act and the Expansion of State Capacity, 1965–1971,” 725.

unskilled labor, while systemic racism simultaneously maintains their displacement. The racial history outlined here also provides the broader context for understanding the nature of the NAACP's employment advocacy efforts, and part of the reality faced by black women during the period. In order to understand black women's experiences, it is important to understand within this racialized context, black women experienced discrimination distinct from their male counterparts. For black women, theirs were racialized, gendered experiences. The next part of this chapter explores the gendered reality of black women in employment.

At the Intersection of Race and Gender: The Experiences of Black Woman in Labor After 1945

The relationship between black women and labor exploitation in the United States is rooted in discrimination that questions their employability and restricted them to the domestic sector and labor exploitation. Reducing black women to domestic service is also reminiscent of earlier patterns that relegated the general black population to exploitative agricultural and other forms of unskilled labor. It is distinct as I will explain, because it can be connected to the use of stereotype images propagated of black women specifically. I seek to examine black women's employment discrimination experience. This will create a more complete worker experience. Wooten states, "men and women are racialized and gendered, and it is rarely, if ever, the case that one of these characteristics is salient while the other is unimportant. Rather both race and gender coalesce to shape the image of the worker".²⁵¹ In order to accomplish the latter, the next several pages present two major themes associated with the employment of black women following World War II. First, I discuss the historic restriction of black women specifically to domestic labor and

²⁵¹ Wooten, 2012.

how it resulted in a pattern of discrimination. And second, I discuss how the racial and gender based dehumanization of black women is different from white women's labor and experiences.

The gendered and racialized employment experiences of black women following World War II can be tied to stereotype images such as that of the mammy, used to exploit their labor during and immediately following slavery. Carolyn West characterizes the mammy image as "one of the most pervasive images of black women, originated during slavery. Her primary role was domestic service characterized by long hours of work with little or no financial compensation."²⁵² Patricia Hill Collins also provides some connection to the way labor exploitation of black women depended on the existence of the mammy image. Collins argues it was "created to justify the economic exploitation of house slaves and sustained to explain Black women's long standing restriction to domestic service."²⁵³ Scholar Kimberly Wallace-Sanders provides a vivid description of the image of *mammy* and helps establish an understanding of the stereotypes related to degradation of black women in the domestic sector. The below excerpt is from Wallace-Sanders' text, *Mammy*.

First as a slave, then as a free woman, the mammy is largely associated with the care of white children or depicted with noticeable attachment to white children. Her unprecedented devotion to her white family reflects her racial inferiority. Mammy is often both her title and the only name she has ever been given. She may also be a cook or personal maid to her mistress, a classic southern belle, whom she infantilizes. Her clothes are typical of a domestic: headscarf and apron, but she is especially attracted to brightly colored, elaborately tied scarves. Mammy speaks the ungrammatical 'plantation dialect' made famous in the 1890s by popular white southern authors like Joel Chandler Harris and by subsequent minstrel shows. Her own children are usually dirty and ill mannered, yet they serve as suitable playmates for her white charges.²⁵⁴

Stereotypical images, like that of the mammy, that tie black women to domestic servitude and are rooted in slavery can be considered a foundation for understanding patterns of discrimination

²⁵² West, "Mammy, Sapphire, and Jezebel," 459.

²⁵³ Collins, *Black Feminist Thought*, 80.

²⁵⁴ Wallace-Sanders, *Mammy*, 6.

emerging since emancipation. Historically, the image of the black woman has been manipulated to satisfy certain economic expectations resulting in actual degradation in employment experiences for the population. Enobong Branch presents this in her broad description of the actual reality of undervaluing the employability of black women, “they consistently held jobs that marked the bottom rung of the employment ladder. Employers almost universally saw black women as a last resort; this attitude ensured that they were perpetually underemployed or unemployed.”²⁵⁵ Scholar Trudier Harris, in the text, “From Mammies to Militants,” specifies this reality stating, “its integral place in black American experience suggests that the role or image of the black woman as a domestic is the basic historical conception from which other images and stereotypes have grown. Dependency on service pans, the name for leftover food domestic workers were given to take home to their families, foreshadows dependency on welfare, for certainly that paternalistic phenomenon influenced social expectations. Sexual exploitation of the maid by the employers husband, which is a direct extension of slavery perhaps contributed its share to the stereotyped images of the black woman as hot mamma or unwed mother.”²⁵⁶

The sexist and racist stereotypes connecting black women to the domestic sector and undervalued work is especially detrimental considering that black women in domestic work began to decrease at the start of World War II.²⁵⁷ Black women were barred from opportunities despite growing educational attainment in the broadening employment sector while stereotypes and public images of them continued to put them behind white men and women and black men. Specifically, they were marginalized because of social perceptions. Historian Karen Anderson

²⁵⁵ Branch, *Opportunity Denied*, 8.

²⁵⁶ Harris, “From Mammies to Militants.”

²⁵⁷ Branch, *Opportunity Denied*.

(1982) argues this in the excerpt below from “Last Hired, First Fired: Black Women Workers during World War II.”²⁵⁸

One of the most important and obdurate of the industries that fought the employment of black women during the war was the auto industry. Led by the negative example of the Ford Motor Company, which refused to hire nonwhite women except in token numbers, the auto companies persisted in rejecting trained black female applicants or in limiting their employment to a few work categories until very late in the war. When referred to the automakers by the United States Employment Services in response to calls for women workers, black women found that the white women accompanying them would be hired immediately while they would be told to await a later call, a call that would never come. When Samella Banks, along with five white women, applied to the Cadillac Motor Company in November 1942, she was told that there might be a janitress opening in a day or two while they were hired as welder trainees. As a result, much of the expansion of the female labor force in industrial work occurred before economic or political pressures necessitated the hiring of black women.

As Anderson notes, the marginalization of black women in the women's labor market forerunning federal antidiscrimination policies persisted well into World War II and into the 1960s when enforcement of those policies became more aggressive. Historian Laurie B. Green (2006) focuses on the labor marginalization black women experienced into the World War II period, through a case study of Altha Sims. Sims experienced discrimination within the defense industry of World War II despite the existence of Executive Order 8802, that prohibited racial discrimination in the Armed Forces. Sims was specifically told when attempting to apply for work in defense that “there is not defense work for Negro women.”²⁵⁹ In the various letters Sims sent to President Roosevelt, she outlined how black women during the war experienced discrimination that sought to limit them to the domestic image tied to slavery.²⁶⁰ Green notes:

As Altha Sim’s letters show, black women’s exclusion from industrial defense jobs associated with popular images of ‘war mothers’ and ‘Rosie the Riveters’ became a focal point for popular dissent during the war. Many women tenaciously strived to locate jobs outside private household work. Others already labored within workplaces that represented the public equivalents to domestic work, especially the city’s laundry and dry

²⁵⁸ Anderson, 1982, p. 85.

²⁵⁹ Green, “ ‘Where Would the Negro Women Apply for Work?’ 96”

²⁶⁰ Green, “ ‘Where Would the Negro Women Apply for Work,’ ” 97.

cleaning facilities, where African American women toiled in large numbers before the war. There, women battled racialized gradations of work that distinguished black and white women.²⁶¹

The authors referenced in the latter discussion also help propose distinctions within the women's labor force between black and white women. While the group itself experienced discrimination in favor of a male dominant industry, employment for black women looked different from white women because their racial identity pushed them into the periphery of this issue.²⁶² Black women experienced a form of discrimination related to historically dehumanizing distinctions made between themselves and white women. Specifically, black women have been removed from concepts of femininity, and general notions of what was classified as *womanhood* in the twentieth century.²⁶³ Scholars Patricia Hill Collins and bell hooks establish how black women have been distanced from traditional notions of (white) femininity.

In *Black Feminist Thought*, Collins argues that stereotypes of black women emerged, in part, as a way to distance them from "traditional" notions of femininity. Moreover, she states, "according to the cult of true womanhood that accompanied the traditional family ideal, 'true' women possessed four cardinal virtues: piety, purity submissiveness and domesticity. Propertied white women and those of the emerging middle class were encouraged to aspire to these virtues. African American women encountered a different set of controlling images," used to degrade and repress their social identities. She goes on to discuss several controlling images used to distance black women from the notion of *true womanhood*. These include the images of the mammy, matriarch, welfare mother and jezebel, which are all stereotypes that distort black

²⁶¹ Green, "Where Would the Negro Women Apply for Work" 97

²⁶² Branch, *Opportunity Denied*.

²⁶³ Wallace-Sanders, "Southern Memory, Southern Monuments, and the Subversive Black Mammy"; Collins, *Black Feminist Thought*; hooks, *Ain't I a Woman*.

women's relationship to motherhood and sexuality.²⁶⁴ Collins positions the image of the mammy as, "juxtaposed against images of white women, the mammy image as the *Other* symbolizes the oppositional difference of mind/body/culture/nature thought to distinguish black women from everyone else...a surrogate mother in blackface whose historical devotion to her white family...completely committed to her job."²⁶⁵ The welfare mother is a stereotype Collins describes as an attempt to distort the image of the black woman as a mother and control her fertility (Collins,2000). The welfare mother stereotype has been used to dehumanize black women as "lazy" and "bad mothers" who do not represent the values propped up by the white patriarchal society. The final image discussed by Collins is the jezebel. The Jezebel stereotype, the most sexually violent of these stereotypes, is used as another mechanism of white patriarchal society proposing that black women lack femininity, morality and sexual propriety towards an end of rationalizing widespread sexual assaults on black women during slavery and well after emancipation.

hooks helps establish the connection these images, rooted in slavery, have to the lives of black women well into the twentieth century. Her contribution in, *Ain't I a Woman* provides some insight into how these images shape public perceptions of women and are used to distance them from white women. Again, it is necessary to understand how stereotype definitions of black women impact how issues are addressed for them within the women's labor market. hooks describes that black women have been perpetually embedded in the American psyche as undervalued and are often placed behind the needs of white women and black men in a racist and patriarchal society. Furthermore, she claims white feminist sociologists ignore the unique needs

²⁶⁴ Wallace-Sanders, "Southern Memory, Southern Monuments, and the Subversive Black Mammy"; Collins, *Black Feminist Thought*; hooks, *Ain't I a Woman*.

²⁶⁵ Collins, *Black Feminist Thought*, 81.

of black women as marginalized by racism within social advocacy for women's rights (Hooks 1981).

The basis of what is discussed by both hooks and Collins is a worker reality that does not recognize that black women are a part of the black labor market and the women's labor market simultaneously. The pattern of dehumanization results in limited access with racial discrimination, as well as a denial of the unique needs of women within the women's labor market. This inability to see black women is particularly noted by historian Evelyn Nakano Glenn, in her description of white employers of domestic workers not recognizing the responsibilities black women as mothers during the 1960s.

White women were also not noted for asking about childcare arrangements. All whites, said one black woman, 'assume you have a mother, or an older daughter to keep your child, so it's alright to leave your kids.' Stories of white employers not believing the children of domestics were sick but hearing this as an excuse not to work was also common. Stories, too, of white women who did not inquire of a domestic family even when that domestic went on extended trips with the family were not uncommon. And work on Christmas morning and other holidays for black mothers was not considered by white employers as unfair. Indeed, work these days was seen as particularly important to the job.²⁶⁶

Being removed from notions of womanhood, relates to a black woman's worker identity because it can also put her at risk of not being offered the same protections associated with womanhood between 1945-1995 in an already patriarchal society (e.g., pregnancy, being responsible for children, sexual harassment in the workplace; sexual harassment particularly relates to the historical disregard for black women perpetually being victims of sexual assault; rationalized through the stereotype of the Jezebel). In the next pages, I discuss how the actions of the NAACP responded to this racist and sexist marginalization. This analysis has informed the reality outlined in the previous pages. These issues include restriction to domestic service,

²⁶⁶ Glenn, "From Servitude to Service Work," 18.

discrimination in the defense industries, discrimination against black pregnant women, and sexual harassment.

NAACP Employment Cases

Employment discrimination appeared as an important issue area during the period researched for this dissertation. A possible reason for the prominence of this issue can be associated both with the broad spectrum of discrimination in the area of employment, as well as the antidiscrimination policies passed during the period. As stated in the earlier parts of this chapter the following policies are associated with the period: Executive Order 9981 (1948), which desegregated the Armed Forces; Title VII of The Civil Rights Act of 1964, which prohibits employment discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, and national origin; and Executive Order 11246 (1965), which established non-discrimination practices in hiring for government positions. In addition, the NAACP worked in the early years of the EEOC (established in 1965) to expand its initial capacity towards addressing employment discrimination. The latter was discussed in the earlier section of this chapter. The majority of the cases presented in the following pages occurred before 1980. These cases are not exhaustive. They were selected because they fit the minimum search criteria of black and female service recipients in NAACP archives. The decline in these cases occurred during the same period of President Jimmy Carter's proposal to consolidate enforcement of fair employment laws to the power of the EEOC. Carter signed this legislation in 1978 as the Civil Service Reform Act of 1978.²⁶⁷ Considering the NAACP focus during the period was enforcement of federal antidiscrimination laws, this move may have impacted them. The NAACP had public complaints

²⁶⁷ Charles M. Lamb, "Equal Employment Opportunity and the Carter Administration: An Analysis of Reorganization Options," *Policy Studies Journal* 8, no. 3 (December 1979): 377-83.

about this executive move. In 1978, comments from the Washington Bureau of the NAACP were published in an issue of *Jet* magazine.

It appears that there is an unholy effort on the part of forces within the U.S. Civil Service Commission and some staff members of the Senate Committee on Governmental affairs to undermine the portion of your plan dealing with the transfer of federal civil rights enforcement from the Civil Service Commission to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission...under the Carter administration’s proposal, only three federal agencies would have exclusive equal employment opportunity responsibilities under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Over 15 million and 400 jobs positions are affected by the plan proposed by the White House.²⁶⁸

The employment cases discussed in this chapter are part of a collection of 45 employment cases identified from the initial research period following World War II. The NAACP addressed patterns of discrimination against black women in the armed forces as well as the public and private workforce sectors. The experiences of these black women often resulted in them being terminated from employment, denied promotion, denied access, and fair treatment on the job. The most offensive of these cases related to sexual manipulation, labor exploitation, restriction to the area of domestic service and degrading verbal abuse, which are discussed in detail in the following chapter. Table 6.1 shows the employment discrimination cases filed with the NAACP. The table below also shows the year, and the nature of the case as recorded in the NAACP archives. The location of the files in the archives can be found in the appendices.

Figure 6.1 Black Women’s Employment Discrimination Cases

Name	Year(s) on File	Incident
Mrs. Lester Jackson	1947	Discrimination at State Employment Agency

²⁶⁸ *Jet* magazine, March 1978, p. 8.

Mary Wright	1947	Peonage; Domestic
Gladys Fermon	1953	Discrimination in Defense Industries, Denied Promotion
Gladys Blackman, Naomi White	1944-1948	Verbal Abuse in Defense Industry
Leslie Perry	1944-1948	Discrimination in Defense Industries, Denied Privileges
Unnamed Black Female Teacher	1955	Wage discrimination
Katherine Thompson	1955	Denied employment to teach white pupils
Irene Morgan	1960	Wage discrimination
Catherine Davis and Pearline Newson	1962	Terminated for using sick leave
Wilma Hedrick	1962	Fired from Domestic
Ola Mae Lacy, Ida W. Boyd, Edythe Franks	1956-1965	Employment Discrimination
Annie Rankin	1965	Discrimination in hiring nurse practitioner
Betty Parker	1968-1969	Denied Contract Renewal
Doris Holmes	1969	Terminated from Hospital
Vernetta Harrison	1969	Harassment resulting in termination
Bertha Aycock	1969	Terminated

Deborah Renwick Ida Banks Gloria Whitaker	1969	Discrimination against black women in clerical positions, employment accessibility
Patricia B Allen	1972	Denied employment as secretary despite education and experience
Ardelia C. Harvey Carolyn King Annie D. Harvey	1972	Employment Discrimination in job accessibility
Linda Cruz	1973	Harassment and Intimidation
Catherine Balagune	1972--1973	Harassment and Unfair Treatment
Shirley Glenn	1972-1973	Harassment and Discrimination on Job
Lorraine Hawthorne	1979	Harassment and Intimidation resulting in termination
Irene Lo Re, Jacqueline Edwards, Jenny Green Lee	1977	Sex and Race based Class action suit <i>NAACP v. NY Clearing House Association</i>
Diane Gabrielle	1976	Fired for pregnancy
Sandra Williams Carolyn Morrison	1976	Fired for pregnancy
Dorothy Dowel	1976	Sexual harassment
Jeanie Temple	1979	Discrimination in Promotion

Glennie McKnight Emogene Stevenson Alfreda B Fannings Gloria B. Davis Susan Smith Hortentia D. Harrist Flodella Mitchell Lillie Brown	1979-1980	Discrimination in Employment
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The issues represented in this table reflect the NAACP’s attention to a spectrum of issues black women faced. Unlike the other areas of findings in this dissertation (police brutality and housing), employment cases appeared through most of the period between 1947 and 1980 and less frequently in the other years of the period of inquiry, 1945 to 1995. This drop off can possible be explained by the changes in federal policy around unemployment advocacy. The chart details the time range for issues of employment related discrimination. As stated earlier, the organization covered issues for black women in public and private industries including the armed forces. Of the 45 total cases, 10 cases document on site harassment; 2 cases document women losing positions related to pregnancy; 29 cases were black women who experienced job discrimination with regard to accessibility; 11 were cases of termination; 3 cases concerned wage-related discrimination; and 1 case involved three women listed in a sex, race and class-based lawsuit against the New York Clearing House in 1977.²⁶⁹ Before going into details provided from particular cases, it is important to consider what this breakdown can support about the NAACP defending black women.

²⁶⁹ For the court decision, see *NAACP v. New York Clearing House Association*, 431 F. Supp. 405 (SDNY 1977).

The majority of the cases in this table involve black women who were denied access to employment. Accessibility includes claims of discrimination because of race or being denied promotion or contract renewal. Accessibility relates more to the general pattern of race based discrimination experienced by black Americans during the period as highlighted in earlier parts of the chapter. The claims of termination because of racial discrimination also relates to this general reality, because of the tendency for employers to favor white applicants (highlighted in previous pages). The cases reflecting the general race based pattern of discrimination can also represent that in the NAACP's work there was a larger focus on the racial worker identity of black women; a consequence of the dominance of racial advocacy. However, in examining details of other cases, it becomes clearer that in the NAACP's work, there was a recognition of the racial and gender worker identities of black women, and the impact on them in the labor market.

The harassment cases of black women and job termination due to pregnancy were those the NAACP investigated that show the entire worker identity of black women. In 1976, the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Branch of the NAACP pursued a case on behalf of Diane Gabriel, Sandra Williams and Carolyn Morrison against David Wilson of the City National Bank in Charlotte, NC.²⁷⁰ These women claimed that they were barred from being employed in previous positions after taking agreed upon maternity leave. The manager at the City National Bank is documented by investigators of the NAACP as claiming their positions had been filled as they inquired about start dates at the end of their individual maternity leaves. The discrimination these women experienced was related directly to their identities as black women; it was both racialized and gendered. It is gender-related because their termination was tied to their maternity leave after

²⁷⁰ *NAACP v. City National Bank*, Class Action Suits, Box 1715, Part 5, NAACP Papers, Library of Congress Washington, DC.

giving birth, a right thwarted because of the historical denial of black women's womanhood. Details from cases of the NAACP involving black women in the defense industries, shows similar race and gender discrimination and a response to their complex worker identities. Specifically, I will examine cases of black women, in women's labor market of the defense industries.

Black women in the defense industry, documented in the NAACP archives, experienced discrimination in the women's labor market because of their racial identities. Specifically, black women were degraded verbally, and prevented from receiving the same privileges extended to white women. The verbal degradation as I will examine, relates to common stereotypes propagated about black women specifically. Here, I refer to the cases of Gladys Blackman, Naomi White, Leslie Perry, and Gladys Fermon. Gladys Blackman and Naomi White were black women employed in the U.S. Navy. According to the NAACP records, experienced verbally degrading language in reference to black women specifically. According to the NAACP record, these women were associated with descriptions such as, "sexually perverted, excess drunkenness, drug use, vile, and having filthy language." The NAACP brought a case against the Women's Auxiliary Corps, in defense of these women, with a goal of bringing charges against the division violating Executive Order 9981 that sought to prevent discrimination in the armed forces. The NAACP accused the division of violating the order that outlawed discrimination in the armed services. The NAACP maintaining specific details of the discrimination, and what those details represent, reflects an attention to the discrimination that takes shape for black women particularly. Like the police brutality cases, the descriptions give a glimpse into how whites viewed black women. Black women were described in both cases as drunk and sexually perverse. These descriptions speak to views of black women circulated in society.

In the case of Leslie Perry, the NAACP pursued an investigation into the U.S. Marine Corps from statements from Perry that the Marine Corps was, “limited in extending privileges to black women.” From this investigation the NAACP proceeded to collect data on the number of black women employed in the U.S. Marine Corps over time, arguing that percent increase of black women in the Marine Corps is not reflected in the percent change of privileges extended to black women in particular.²⁷¹ Claims from Perry led to a broader investigation and during the same period the case of Gladys Fermon was brought to attention because of similar circumstances. Gladys Fermon alleged that, according to white superior officers, she was not given a promotion because she made “false and malicious charges against her superior.” The NAACP investigated Fermon’s case and uncovered a pattern of behavior in the Auxiliary Corps, “denying rightful promotion to Negro Women.”²⁷² Fermon approached the National Branch claiming that her superior within the Women’s Auxiliary Corps of the U.S. Military denied her promotion. The NAACP’s personnel investigated this claim, and the below narrative provides an account of what the organization identified for Fermon.

[Fermon was] Removed from civil service on the charge that she made false and malicious charges against her superior. Investigation by the NAACP found that this claim was false. NAACP investigators found that her superior made charges against her because he did not want to see a Negro Woman Promoted.²⁷³

The NAACP investigated the case and identified that Fermon was denied promotion explicitly because her superior did not want to see a black woman promoted. Fermon’s case, provides an excellent example of the broader investigation the NAACP did during the same period into the U.S. Military for discrimination against black women, as noted from the Perry case. The cases presented so far have revealed two things about the organization recognizing the

²⁷¹ NAACP Papers, Part 1, Box 29, Folder 27, Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

²⁷² NAACP Papers, Part 1, Box 29, Folder 27, Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

²⁷³ LDF 1953, Box 29, Folder 7, NAACP Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

worker identities of black women. First the NAACP's actions shows recognition of what black women experienced related to the existence of stereotypes. And the actions also reveal recognition of the broader marginalization they experienced in the women's labor market. The next set of cases, show the NAACP's attention to how black women were exploited in the area of domestic service.

The next set of cases highlights the experiences of black women in the domestic service sector. Discussing the details of these cases is important because it shows how the NAACP addressed the lives of black women in relation to the domestic service sector. Considering domestic service is important, because as discussed earlier, it's history is rooted in racism and gendered exploitation related to work. I begin this discussion with presenting a case investigated by the NAACP on behalf of a black woman in New Jersey, of a white family exploiting her for free labor. This case labeled as peonage by the National Office, involved a woman who had been exploited by the family since the age of 14. Mary Wright worked for the Meirs family without pay since 1922 and the case was investigated by the NAACP beginning in 1947. Ms. Wright is described as being unable to read or write, and much of the information about her was provided by paid servants in the family's household.²⁷⁴ NAACP investigators describe Ms. Wright as speaking "timidly and...afraid of someone hearing her."²⁷⁵ In addition, investigators find out that the Meir's family rationalized not paying her by telling her that "banks aren't accepting money and the trains are not running for her to return home."²⁷⁶ The impact of the exploitation of this woman is noted by NAACP investigators in the excerpt below.

Ms. Meirs stated that Mary was too big to send to school when she came to New Jersey. She had little school when in Delaware and she had tried to teach her to read. 'Would you send a fourteen year old girl to school with five year old's?' I [NAACP Field

²⁷⁴ Mary Wright, Box 108, Part 1, NAACP Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

²⁷⁵ Mary Wright, Box 108, Part 1, NAACP Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

²⁷⁶ Mary Wright, Box 108, Part 1, NAACP Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

Investigator] replied yes, that I had taught school for six years and that it was not uncommon for overage children to just commence school. I then addressed Mary and asked if she wished to leave with us. Mary hesitated for some time and did not answer. In fact, during the entire time, Mary said very little. Mrs. Meirs asked if Mary said she wanted to leave the farm. I replied yes. Mrs. Meirs then turned to Mary and said 'I told you last summer you could pack your things and go, didn't I?' Mary replied, 'No.' During this conversation Mrs. Meirs was shouting at Mary. Mary seemed to be afraid of Mrs. Meirs, but she answered unhesitatingly.²⁷⁷

The NAACP investigator noted that attempts to remove Mary from the home were repeated, on one such occasion, the worker discusses with Mary the possibility of leaving, but Mr. Meirs intimidated her, the investigator reported.

Her eyes were red. Mary was trembling. Mr. Meirs said, 'Mary has something to tell you.' Mary whispered, 'I don't want to go.' I said, 'Mary, what made you change your mind.' She did not answer me. I stepped out of the house. Mr. Meirs said, 'I raised her from a child and babied her, to be treated like this' Mr. Meirs then stated, 'Mr. Moore, don't you or them set another foot in my place.' His voice low but biting. I left.²⁷⁸

This case in particular can be connected to the labor exploitation and restriction to domestic service relative to the worker experience of black women in the second half of the twentieth century. This case also represents an extremely exploitative condition where a black woman was treated paternalistically and relegated to a dependent relationship with no family members. Her fear of leaving outweighed the abuse she experienced. As noted from the archival evidence, the NAACP investigators and workers made repeated attempts to remove her from the Meirs household, conveying their concern for Mary. This case reveals a dependent relationship this domestic worker had with her exploitative employer. She lived in slavery-like conditions where she lacked access to education and mobility.

The 1947 case of Mrs. Lester Jackson also is noteworthy.²⁷⁹ The NAACP brought attention to the pattern of federal employment agencies attempting to restrict black women to

²⁷⁷ Mary Wright, Box 108, Part 1, NAACP Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

²⁷⁸ Mary Wright, Box 108, Part 1, NAACP Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

²⁷⁹ A238, Folder 4, Part 2, NAACP Papers, Library of Congress, Washington DC.

domestic service. Mrs. Lester Jackson, as noted by the NAACP, was a trained and experienced teacher attempting to register for work in education. The interviewer at the employment agency responsible for job placement was noted by the NAACP as, “telling her she could only register for housework.”²⁸⁰ Mrs. Lester, as noted by NAACP personnel, had no experience nor the desire to be a housekeeper, and insisted that she be registered as a teacher. They also referred to her as a “neat and clean colored woman worthy of being registered as a teacher.”²⁸¹ The NAACP brought this case to a broader investigation of the federal employment agency in New Jersey’ pattern of registering black women as domestic workers regardless of their qualifications, as in the case of Mrs. Lester Jackson. The details from this case provide evidence that the NAACP not only investigated the complaint of Ms. Lester but moved towards a broader examination of the New Jersey Employment office for acts attempting to restrict black women to domestic service. Exchange about this case in particular occurred between Walter White, Executive secretary for the NAACP from 1929-1995 and Lily Turhune, Secretary of the Welfare Society. These individuals discussed addressing discrimination against black women in New Jersey.

The NAACP addressed the employment discrimination of black women in the area of domestic labor as well as the defense industries as presented in the previous pages. Further cases investigated by the NAACP show that they also recognized the gendered nature of this discrimination. Black women’s womanhood was denied as they were not viewed as embodying ‘traditional’ notions of womanhood. An example is the NAACP national office, brought charges against a private bank in Charlotte North Carolina, for discrimination against black women who were pregnant employees. In the cases of Diane Gabriel, Sandra Williams and Carolyn Morrison, these women were prevented from returning to work after giving birth to children. In

²⁸⁰ A238, Part 2, NAACP Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

²⁸¹ A238, Part 2, NAACP Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

each of these cases, the NAACP notes that these women when requesting a return date from supervisors, they were told their positions had already been filled in their absence. Prevailing stereotypes of black women as caretakers and cooks prevented black women from entering occupations they were trained in. The violent denial of employment and employment training opportunities were experiences black women faced during this period following World War II.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Conclusion: Research Limitations & Implications for Further Research

In this section, I summarize the goals of each chapter. For the findings chapters in particular, I discuss the goals and limitations associated with my arguments and the cases involving NAACP advocacy in housing, police brutality, and employment discrimination. In addition, I discuss why it is important that social advocacy and nonprofit work should consider the complexities of intersectional identities. Finally, I discuss the contemporary mission of the NAACP, and how the twenty-first century mission and contemporary work is more explicit about the needs of black women.

The goal of this dissertation was to examine how black women's cases of discrimination filed with the NAACP highlighted intersectional discrimination based on their intersectional identities. It offers a sense into the racism, sexism and classism black women faced from 1945-1995 though looking at the actions of the NAACP. The framework of intersectionality helped to guide the analysis of specific issues that came from archives. The time period itself is significant for this research because it embodies a period of policy shift and increased access for African Americans. The increased access during this period can be related to specific political changes including, Executive Order 9981 in 1948 that sought to abolish discrimination in the armed services, Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Civil Rights Act of 1968 which both contain provisions seeking to eliminate employment and housing discrimination on the basis of race and sex among other characteristics. The NAACP was selected for this research period considering it is the longest standing organization in the United States working towards preventing social marginalization on the basis of race or color. In addition, black women, the population selected for this research inquiry, held various leadership and administrative positions within the

organization both prior to and during the selected research period. In addition, the NAACP membership during this period grew eight times over.

The research in this dissertation was carried out through qualitative method, archival approach and data was applied to the empirical framework of intersectionality. The original research inquiry initiating the study necessitated the use of archival research, and the population that I focused on required the use of the framework of intersectionality. Because this study investigated the experiences of black women with the NAACP in the second half of the 20th century, I used archival material located at the NAACP national archives at the Library Of Congress, Manuscript Division. Throughout the data analysis portion, the theoretical framework of intersectionality was employed to understand how the issues that emerged in the archives could be considered intersectional experiences for black women. A general limitation that comes from utilizing this methodology, is that my analysis is based on individuals, or groups reaching out to the NAACP for assistance on a variety of issues related to social discrimination. This means that there is sample bias as many black women faced intersectional discrimination but never filed complaints. While I do not generalize that all black women faced the same discrimination in housing, police interactions and in employment, these cases offer a window into some of their experiences in each of the areas.

The literature review chapter of this dissertation helped contextualize the general research inquiry as well as establish textual understanding of the theoretical framework of intersectionality. The presentation in the literature reviewed helped to situate the general research inquiry within historic discussions of the relationship between black liberation and women's liberation. Some scholars argued that black liberation efforts supported women's liberation, while others argued that women's liberation only appropriated the strategies and

ideologies of black liberation. The literature review also examined important discussions and helped note the racism, and sexism associated with the theoretical framework of intersectionality, as it has been discussed implicitly in reference to social movements in the United States. In addition, from this portion of the dissertation I was able to situate where my research would contribute. Specifically, I examined how an organization noted historically for its effort to improve the lives of black Americans, also worked to address the unique experiences of black women. The latter is in the portion of the literature review that discusses NAACP historical literature. I looked out how NAACP literature produced for the era, looked at the contributions of black women in how they worked as agents of change for the organization, and not how it impacted black women as a population. My research investigated how NAACP actions addressed the lives of black women as a constituency.

Findings: Housing Advocacy

Housing advocacy during the research period of 1945-1995, emerged with approximately thirty cases involving black women that were located in the NAACP archives and included from the research period. In presenting the housing trend in NAACP advocacy for black women I laid out an argument for how housing can be considered an intersectional issue for the population. First, I discussed how historically, and specifically during the period preceding World War II, social marginalization on the basis of race broadly characterized black Americans experiences with housing and issues related to housing. The racial bias characterizing black Americans housing experiences during the period were rooted in systemic racist perceptions of black people. I then examine how black women can experience that reality, as well as one that because of sexism subjects them to negative stereotypes of representation. I argue, that the racist and sexist

social constructions of black women's identities subjected them to a form of discrimination recognized in the actions of the NAACP. I explain that the NAACP likely recognized this, because of the rise of black female led households during the period, coupled with the NAACP focus on enforcing federal housing law. I then present the cases and examine how they reflect the specific way black women may have been discriminated against in housing during the period.

There are limitations associated with presenting NAACP housing advocacy data and making an argument that the organization made impact considering black women can be affected by a combination of racism and sexism. First, because I found no explicit statement from the NAACP within their housing advocacy platform for the period that made distinctions in how they addressed issues for families, black men and black women. In order to make my argument I looked at their direct actions involving the lives of specific black women. This means that I had to make an argument that the organization impacted the lives of black women, being careful not to define impact as a comparison to the experiences of other subgroups within the general black population. My argument is based solely from the direct actions from national, local and regional branches. A second limitation, is that my work looks broadly at the work of the NAACP in the United States and does not include details of specific locations of the organization that can impact the access different branches had to black women, especially those impacted by the issue areas covered in this dissertation. Issues such as the branch's surrounding population size, the concerns of the local administration of branches, and political limitations that may have been placed on particular organizations.

Findings: Advocacy against Police Brutality

NAACP advocacy against police brutality emerged frequently in the NAACP national archives following documentation from the 44th national convention in 1953, where police

brutality was discussed as a common issue facing Black Americans. In this section of my dissertation the goal was to begin by establishing the relevance of police brutality and police interaction in black communities as inherently racialized. Next, I discussed how black women can be impacted because of their race, but also how their gender identity makes their racial experience different from the general black population. Black women have a gender identity, that through stereotyping and unfair representation distorts how violence is viewed as impacting their lives. Specifically, I present NAACP cases of police brutality, and argue that details of the cases they recognize, reflects attention to the unique realities black women experience with regard to state violence. Specifically, the identities of black women discussed in this chapter, were degraded in an attempt to rationalize violence against them. The NAACP recognized them in contrast to the attempts to degrade their identities.

Similar to the housing findings, cases of police brutality in the lives of black women for the time period contain two notable limitations. First, many of the cases I identified in the national archives where the NAACP addressed police brutality in the lives of black women were concentrated in the 1950s and the 1960s. This means that the relevance of the issue for the NAACP could be compromised, because of the emergence of organizations focused on police brutality in the late 1960s, such as the Black Panther Party (BPP, founded 1966) and Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC, founded 1960). The existence of the Black Panther Party in particular could have had an impact on the NAACP accessing police brutality cases in the late 1960s and into the 1970s because according to the archives, they were critical of and sought to distance themselves from the BPP. Second, because I am looking for evidence of impact in the direct action across branches of the organization, my analysis can be limited by not covering the characteristics of individual branches that could impact the access they had to black

women, or police brutality cases. These issues could include, political restraints of the local area, the size of the population and the percentage of the black population that were black women.

Findings: Employment Advocacy

Employment advocacy during the second half of the twentieth century, from 1945 to 1995, emerged with many cases involving the NAACP in defense of black women. The goal of this chapter was to establish how the history of labor and employment can be considered an intersectional issue characterized by racism and sexism and understand the impact it had on black women. In order to accomplish the latter, I began by discussing in detail the history of the relationship between Black Americans and labor in the United States. From this history, I went into discussing the marginalization and exploitation of black women in the labor market from the stereotype images used to minimize their identities and restrict them to the domestic service sector. The third part of this chapter was a presentation of NAACP employment cases where the organization acted in defense of black women. The cases in this chapter were used to support how black women experienced domestic labor exploitation, and discrimination according to public perceptions distancing them from the quality of femininity. In addition, I defined the race and gender worker identity of black women in this chapter. The NAACP employment advocacy efforts, can be considered in alignment with policy changes, especially following *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) as well as Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the establishment of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission in 1965. These policy shifts can be considered as having an impact on the way the NAACP focused on ensuring federal and private employers were compliant with the law, thus giving rise to specific discrimination suits.

The issues for black women that emerged were: domestic worker exploitation, sexual exploitation and degradation, and discrimination against pregnant black women.

Similar to previous findings chapters, the employment findings contain two notable limitations. The first limitation is that the data on employment advocacy is based on the availability of employment opportunities for black women depending on the original location of the data. Specifically, depending on the region of the United States the cases emerge from, access to employment or the health of the local economy could impact the NAACP access to cases of discrimination. A second limitation, is related to the significant number of cases requiring legal defense with regard to employment. This means that a branch of the NAACP would need to have the administrative capacity to pursue a case of that nature. Without knowing the details of an individual branches' legal capacity, it is difficult to rationalize any change in the rate of employment cases on behalf of black women.

Implications for Further Research: Social Advocacy, Black Women's Liberation, and NAACP Contemporary Goals and Activities

The importance of this research in the contemporary period relates to the complexity of social identity and social oppression in nonprofit and social advocacy work in the United States. Specifically, by studying a population uniquely impacted by racism and sexism, I was able to begin to see how issue areas including those not contained in this dissertation (employment, housing, education, legal defense, anti-poverty programs) are more than one dimensional and must be understood according to the identities of the population one is seeking to have meaningful impact with. This is especially important when working with populations that are marginalized by complex systems characterized by race, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity,

religion and nationality. Future research should examine how nonprofit organizations such as the NAACP addressed intersectional identities in other contemporary work.

In 2011, the NAACP released a strategic plan to improve the advocacy efforts in its nearly 2500 branches throughout the United States. Their work at the end of the twentieth century in some ways were aligned with their goals in the twenty-first century. The strategic platform of the NAACP in the United States, focused on education, health, public safety and criminal justice, voting rights and political representation, and finally expanding youth and young adult engagement.

Each of these issue areas contain a breakdown of goals to help the public understand the work of the organization, in addition to bringing the work of its branches in uniform. In the area of education, the NAACP at the national level details the following goals: (1) increasing resource equity and target funding to neediest kids; (2) ensuring college and career readiness as well as a path to success after graduation to all students; (3) improving teaching and growing great teaching in underserved communities; and (4) improving discipline by eliminating zero tolerance and keeping kids in school. For healthcare the organization's goals for the twenty-first century include (1) a focus on African Americans and other people of color having access to timely and affordable healthcare and (2) a focus on preventing and treating diseases that disproportionately impact African Americans (such as diabetes, obesity, HIV and AIDS). For the issue of safety and criminal justice the organization's goals are (1) treatment for addiction and mental health, and (2) addressing problems with judicial sentencing that disproportionately impact African Americans. For the area of voting rights and political representation goals are (1) free, open and protected access to the vote and fair representation at all levels of the political process; (2) increasing democratic participation and civic engagement; and (3) increasing proportion of

African Americans in public office. And finally, the NAACP strategic goal around youth and adult engagement is to increase the capacity of local branches and provide them with more of the resources necessary to engage younger populations.

The twenty-first century platform outlined in the previous page combined with more recent announcements made at the national level, provides some context for where my research can potentially be applied. Specifically, at the beginning of 2019, NAACP President Derrick Johnson announced that the NAACP would be investing more efforts in a research based approach. Johnson specifically noted that “new structure will enable the association to deploy resources efficiently as conditions on the ground continue dictate, to employ a research based approach to civic engagement and to ensure closer alignment between National office staff and NAACP branches across the nation.”²⁸²

Implications from research from the twentieth-century activities of the NAACP can contribute to the strategic research oriented goals around social advocacy, as well as the goal of bringing the activities of individual branches closer in uniform. The issue areas that were discussed in this dissertation are police brutality, employment advocacy and advocacy against housing discrimination, they all can inform work of the 21st century.

For the issue of police brutality in this dissertation, black women can experience violence impacted by historical representations of their identities. Specifically, black women could experience marginalization in the area of racialized police violence because of their gender identity. Based on the NAACP response in some of these cases strategic research from their twenty-first century platform could look at how the stereotypes of black women are embedded in certain practices of social service efforts. Furthermore, because my research is limited in

²⁸² NAACP, “NAACP Restructures to Advance Advocacy Strategy,” press release, February 16, 2019.

identifying the effect of local demography and history of black women in communities where local branches are, NAACP contemporary work could go further to identify those details and how they may influence appearance of stereotypes of representation that impact black women's access and quality of services.

For the area of housing advocacy in this dissertation I argued the rise of black female led households, coupled with stereotypes of representation for black women could produce a pattern of discrimination against black female led households. Based on information from NAACP cases of housing defense for black women in the twentieth century, the work of the twenty-first century could be strategic in examining how changes in black populations could influence responses based on stereotypes of representation. Similar to the area of police brutality contemporary strategic research of the twenty-first century platform could examine the demographic of specific branch locations of the NAACP, and the characteristics of the specific black population toward understanding unique needs and the potential for communities to hold stereotypes for those black populations.

Finally, for the area of employment advocacy I argued that the history of labor in the United States for black Americans and black women in particular resulted in a deeply rooted pattern of labor exploitation. The pattern of labor exploitation for black women can reflect historical perceptions of their labor related to specific racial and gender stereotypes. My arguments in this chapter can help inform strategic efforts of the twenty-first century by emphasizing that historical roots influence contemporary economic displacement or specifically inextricable labor or employment discrimination. In addition, the NAACP contemporary platform for the twenty-first century could go further as to identify historical factors of specific black populations in areas where NAACP branches are located. Specifically, going from an area

of limitation in my research, to identify access to employment, demography and other local economy factors that can influence specific black communities.

While the previous discussion is based on the assumption that a significant amount of work of the NAACP in the twenty-first century would focus on the lives and experiences of black women, the research in this dissertation can also provide insight into the goal of bringing NAACP branches closer in uniform when performing for Black Americans and other populations of color. Future research on the NAACP can go beyond the limitations of the research in this dissertation and identify impact relative to the specific characteristics of the demographic surrounding local and regional branches. Specifically, identifying the characteristics of specific populations can enable an understanding of the amount of resources a branch needs to expand its capacity to serve its surrounding population, assuming that the local branch would serve its proximate community. What I am referring to here is equity and bringing all branches up to a specific performance bar, according to what they need to have the same level of effectiveness with other branches.

The NAACP has not existed without criticism. For example, while police brutality cases were investigated in this research the organization has been criticized for not addressing the issue. For example in an article discussing Rosa Parks and police brutality in Michigan, Say Burgin discusses how the Detroit branch of the NAACP struggled to gain community support on cases of police brutality stating that “that issue struggled to gain traction outside of poor communities, especially urban Black communities, in the 1960s. The Detroit NAACP chapter struggled for years to make police brutality a concern to white officials, but they toiled in vain. The group’s executive secretary, Arthur Johnson, maintained that Detroit’s newspapers ‘had a

standing agreement not to cover incidents of police brutality.’ ”²⁸³ Police brutality concerns black men and women and particular focus on black women cases must be addressed.

Though occurring years after the NAACP advocated for direct action against police brutality just over ten years earlier, what Burgin presents is still a relevant internal contradiction with the national platform.²⁸⁴ Another example comes from more recent years. Scholar and activist Andrea Ritchie has criticized a local branch for inaction on the issue of police brutality in the life of a transgender black woman, Duanna Johnson. Ritchie criticized the NAACP’s response: “The local NAACP said, essentially, as an explanation for their inaction, “We don’t condone what happened to her, but we don’t condone her lifestyle either.”²⁸⁵ Ritchie’s criticism provides an opportunity for the NAACP to expand how its branches conceptualize and articulate black identity beyond binary and conservative parameters. It is important to respond to diversity within black communities. As recent as 2019, the NAACP publicly recognized the experiences of black women and explicitly engaged the concept intersectionality. In a May 2019 edition of the NAACP’s *Crisis* magazine they reference scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw, a proponent of intersectionality, stating that

Black women often operate at the intersection where race and gender meet, experiencing heightened social challenges in today’s society. The potential for discrimination widens with each added intersection. Black women are even further marginalized if they have a disability, identify as LGBTQ+, or are a religious minority, to name a few.²⁸⁶

This statement is also important and an area of growth for the organization considering its broader legal strategies have rarely explicitly incorporated intersectionality for black women

²⁸³ Say Burgin, “Rosa Parks on Police Brutality: The Speech We Never Heard,” *AAIHS*, January 23, 2020.

²⁸⁴ Say Burgin, “Rosa Parks on Police Brutality: The Speech We Never Heard,” *AAIHS*, January 23, 2020.

²⁸⁵ Andrea Ritchie, as quoted in a talk at Brooklyn College, November 1, 2017. See also Robert Jones, Jr., “Co-creator of #SAYHERNAME Spotlights Police Violence Against Black Women and LGBTQ People at Brooklyn College Event,” CUNY media release, November 8, 2017, <https://www1.cuny.edu/mu/forum/2017/11/08/co-creator-of-sayhername-spotlights-police-violence-against-black-women-and-lgbtq-people-at-brooklyn-college-event/>.

²⁸⁶ Benjamin Crump, “Say Her Name,” *Crisis*, May 10, 2019.

during the 20th century. The organization had made explicit reference to black women experiencing both racism and sexism without the label of intersectionality, but this had not been tied to formal legal suits, legal strategies, publicity or cases regarding specific black women.²⁸⁷ This is why my research focuses on how the NAACP responded to specific black women and what those cases can tell us about their work and how they recognized the distinct reality of black women before it was given a popularized label of intersectionality; thus beginning to theorize on what intersectional strategies would look like in the lives of black women.

It is important future research and contemporary organization's practice focus on black women. Contemporary dialogues of movements such as *Black Lives Matter*, which was initiated by queer women of color, as well as *Say Her Name*, which was a movement shedding light on the invisibility of black women's violent encounters with police. The theoretical discussion in this dissertation with specific regard to police brutality, can contribute to both of these contemporary social movements. Specifically, in this dissertation I interpreted the social issue of police brutality as an intersectional issue and this interpretation situates police brutality both historically and within institutional advocacy. Understanding how organizations work to bring attention to the experiences of black women has the potential to extend the goals of contemporary social movements like Black Lives Matter and Say Her Name and create sustainability through black institutionalization.

Furthermore, applying intersectionality to contemporary social advocacy issues can be important towards understanding how we can measure the impact of social advocacy and direct action in the lives of distinct groups that exist within an already impacted demographic, according to their distinct experiences. This research can develop in the future, by examining

²⁸⁷ Papers of the NAACP, Library of Congress, Washington DC.

how organizations that do not have such a historic relationship with a distinct population (e.g. Black Americans), work to understand the complexities of the populations they work with, even when they provide one type of service. The latter, can potentially place the goal of effectiveness in these organizations less on numeral output, and more on sustainable impact. For example, I argue in the NAACP work that they addressed many sides of the complex experiences of black women. These sides included: sexual exploitation, racial marginalization, discrimination against their role as mothers as well as other characteristics impacting their overall quality of life.

The relationship black women have with the NAACP has been outlined in the introductory as well as the literary portions of this dissertation. To reiterate the points made previously, black women became a critical part of the organization in order to address the racial and gender biases inherent in their work in the early 20th century. The work of black women carried into the administrative, field and political areas of the organization. This is also one of the core reasons I choose to investigate how this organization had an impact on their lives.

Considering this foundation in the twenty-first century, the NAACP appears to have made explicit strides in representing black women and girls and recognizing their needs. In 2014, the organization produced a study, “Unlocking Opportunity for African American Girls” that investigated the way black girls were disproportionately subjected to harassment, excessive discipline, and discrimination through various stereotypes through their experiences with education. The goal of the NAACP to address their experiences was to provide programing tailored to these needs such as, access to counseling, scholarships to STEM programs and increasing access to extracurricular activities. For black women in particular, the organization has appeared to make strides in the twenty-first century towards publicly and explicitly supporting black women. In 2019 for example, the organization joined the Women's March

highlighting issues important to black women such as healthcare, the economy, education, national security, and criminal justice. It was at this event, that members of a local chapter also stated the intersectional experiences of black women with regard to these issues.²⁸⁸ The future success of the NAACP depends on their commitment to black women as noted in a recent online journal by Luvvie Ajayi Jones (2020), titled “ Black Women are the Adults in the Room” who constantly challenge racism, sexism and classism.²⁸⁹

²⁸⁸ NAACP press release, January 18, 2019.

²⁸⁹ NAACP, “Importance of Black women in Electoral Politics Through Civic Engagement,” press release, 110th National Convention July 11, 2019.

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Appendices

Appendices A, B, and C map out the archive locations for the specific content discussed in Chapters 4, 5, and 6. These archive locations refer to the NAACP Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

Appendix A

Findings: The Fight Against Housing Discrimination and Access to Emergency/Social Assistance Figure 4.4

Name/ Issue Area Context	Date	Archive Location
Queen Cohen	1953	NAACP Part 2 Box 201 Savannah Housing Authority
NAACP Housing Consumer Department	1953	NAACP Part 2 A53
Lucy Lockett	1971	NAACP Part 8 Box 229
Dorothy Suttle	1977	NAACP Part 8 Box 229
Mrs. Barnett (No First Name Listed)	1974-1978	NAACP Part 6 C26, C27, C28 Report of Activities Alabama
Linda Mobley	1974-1978	NAACP Part 6 C26, C27, C28 Report of Activities Alabama
Queen E Austin	1974-1978	NAACP Part 6
Isabell Larry	1974-1978	NAACP Part 6 C26, C27, C28 Report of Annual Activities Alabama
Alice Day	1974-1978	NAACP Part 6: C26, C27, C28, C29 Report of Activities Alabama
Estella Sistrunk	1974-1978	NAACP Part 6: C26, C27,

		C28, C29 Report of Activities Alabama
Ella Bell Vaughn	1974-1978	NAACP Part 6: C26, C27, C28, C29 Report of Activities Alabama
Willie Mae Peterson	1973	NAACP Part 6: C26, C27, C28, C29 Report of Activities Alabama
Mattie Mae Grant	1974-1978	NAACP Part 6: C26, C27, C28, C29 Report of Activities Alabama
Clydis Johnson	1974-1978	NAACP Part 6: C26, C27, C28, C29 Report of Activities Alabama
Sadie Garrett	1974-1978	NAACP Part 6: C26, C27, C28, C29 Report of Activities Alabama
Mary Lynn Floala	1974-1978	NAACP Part 6: C26, C27, C28, C29 Report of Activities Alabama
Jeanie Mae Temple	1974-1978	NAACP Part 6: C26, C27, C28, C29 Report of Activities Alabama
NAACP V Massachusetts Commonwealth	1978	NAACP Part 5 Box 952
NAACP vs City of Norwalk	1987	NAACP Part 5 Box 972
NAACP Greater New Haven "Jane Doe" and Madeline Hicks"	1995	NAACP Part 5 Box 202

Appendix B.

Findings: Fighting Police Brutality Table 5.4

Name/ Description	Year	Location
Rose Ingram	1947	NAACP LDF 1 Folder 5
Joanne Grant	1962	NAACP LDF Box 176
Ruthe Tinsley	1946	NAACP Part 2 Box A472
Beatrice Jackson	Between 1956-1965	NAACP Part 3 Box A243
Lorraine Battle	Between 1956-1965	NAACP Part 3 Box A243
Marie Stewart	Between 1956-1965	NAACP Part 3 Box 244
Dorothy Glenn	Between 1956-1955	NAACP Part 3 Box 244
Ruby Glenn	Between 1956-1965	NAACP Part 3 Box 244
Helen White	Between 1956-1965	NAACP Part 3 Box 244
Jane Phillips		
Willie Ruth Williams		
Rebecca Wilson	1962	NAACP Part 3 Box C230
Gwendolyn Barnes	1957	NAACP Part 3 C21
Dorothy Young	1966	NAACP Part 4 A53
Ruth Loving and Daughter	1970	NAACP Part 6 A53, A54, B4, B5
Mrs. Juanita Ford	1970	NAACP Part 6 A53 A54, B4, B5
Mary Bailey	1970	NAACP Part 6 A53, A54, B4, B5
Mary Alice Coleman	1970	NAACP Part 6 A53, A54, B4, B5
Unnamed Black Woman		
Adelaide Johnson	1970	NAACP Part 2 Box A155

Nora Green		NAACP Part 3 Box 294
Unnamed Female Prisoner		NAACP Part 3 Box 243
Gladys Green		LDF Box 108
Willie Mae Frazier	1969	NAACP Part 6 C37

Appendix C.

Findings: The Fight Employment Discrimination Table 6.2

Name/Issue Area	Approximate Year	Location
Mrs. Lester Jackson	1947	NAACP Part 2 A238
Integration in War Industries	1947	NAACP 2 A238
Irene Morgan	1951	NAACP Part 1 Box 46
Florence Leseuer	1951	NAACP 2 Box A155
Gladys Fermon	1945-1946	NAACP Part 1 Box 29 Folder 27
Gladys Blackman and Naomi White	1947	NAACP Part 2 Box 194
Leslie Perry	1947	NAACP Part 2 Box A113
Douglass (first name not available)	1945	NAACP LDE 29
Ola Mae Lacy, Ida W. Boyd, Edythe Franks.	1956-1965	NAACP LDE 29
Mary Wright	1947	NAACP Part 1 Box 108
Katherine Thomas	1955	NAACP LDE Box 108
Catherine Davis and Pearline Newson	1962	NAACP LDE 1 108
Wilma Hendrick	1963	NAACP LDE 1 108
Mrs. Annie Rankin	1965	NAACP Part 5 Box 2718
Betty Parker	1968-1969	NAACP 4 J10
Doris Holmes	1968	NAACP 4 J10, J9
Corinne Willems	1969	NAACP 4 J10, J9
Vernetta Harrison	1969	NAACP Part 4 J10, J9
Bertha Adcock	1969	NAACP Part 4 J10, J9
Deborah Renwick	1969	NAACP Part Five, Annual

		Report 1969
Ardelia C. Harvey	1970	NAACP Part Five, Annual Report 1970
Patricia B Allen	1972	NAACP Part 4 J10, j9 1977-1988
Lorraine Hawthorne	1979	NAACP Part 5 Box 72
Irene Lo Re, Jacqueline, Edwards Jenny Green Lee	1977	NAACP Part Five <i>NAACP v. New York Clearing House</i> Box 1715
Carolyn King	1974-1978	NAACP Part 6, C26, C27, C28
Mrs. Annie D. Harvey	1974-1978	NAACP Part 6, C26, C27, C28
Linda Cruz	1974-1978	NAACP Part 6, C26, C27, C28
Mrs. Matera Washington	1944-1949	NAACP Part 2 A155
Catherine Balogune	1974-1978	NAACP Part 6, C26, C27, C28
Shirley A Glenn	1974-1978	NAACP Part 6, C26, C27, C28
Maxine Johnson	1974-1978	NAACP Part 6, C26, C27, C28
Jeanie Temple	1974-1978	NAACP Part 6, C26, C27, C28
Emogene Stevensen	1974-1978	NAACP Part 6, C26, C27, C28
Alfreda B Fannings	1974-1978	NAACP Part 6, C26, C27, C28
Gloria B Davis	1974-1978	NAACP Part 6, C26, C27, C28
Susan Smith	1974-1978	NAACP Part 6, C26, C27, C28

Miss Flodella Mitchell	1974-1978	NAACP Part 6, C26, C27, C28
Miss Goshay	1974-1978	NAACP Part 6, C26, C27, C28
Mrs. Lillie Brown	1974-1978	NAACP Part 6, C26, C27, C28
Lucille Marie Bevers	1974-1978	NAACP Part 6, C26, C27, C28
Betty Anderson	1974-1978	NAACP Part 6, C26, C27, C28
Mrs. Joan Windom	1974-1978	NAACP Part 6, C26, C27, C28
Marie Kelton	1974-1978	NAACP Part 6, C26, C27, C28
Diane Gabrielle	1974-1978	NAACP Part 6, C26, C27, C28
Sandra Williams	1974-1978	NAACP Part 6, C26, C27, C28
Carolyn Morrison	1974-1978	NAACP Part 6, C26, C27, C28
Dorothy Dowell	1974-1978	NAACP Part 6, C26, C27, C28
Queen Britt	1974-1978	NAACP Part 6, C26, C27, C28
Joyce Kimbo	1965	NAACP Part 6, C53

- **National Council For Black Studies Conference, Atlanta March 2020**

TEACHING

Teaching Assistant for African American History, UWM Fall 2014-Spring 2017

- Designed and implemented curriculum for discussion groups about African American history for undergraduate students

Teaching Assistant for Black Reality Fall 2016-Spring 2017

- Led small group discussions to engage and encourage student discussions of around contemporary issues
- Provided academic assistance to Dr. Gladys Mitchell Walthour from fall 2016-Present.
- Taught a class on black feminist theory

Research Assistant at the Greater Milwaukee Foundation - September 2012- September 2014

- Designed and utilized a database for organizing and reporting qualitative and quantitative data for organizations utilizing foundation dollars for neighborhood improvement.
- Conducted secondary research on community benchmarks including racial equity, education, and racial segregation, income and housing equality.
- Designed research methodology and conducted focus groups with community members as well as community organizers.