Women of the contemporary Militia Movement: Perceptions of ideology through experience identity voice and action

Gina R. Terinoni

The University of Montana

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarworks.umt.edu/etd

Let us know how access to this document benefits you.

Recommended Citation
https://scholarworks.umt.edu/etd/5239

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Graduate School at ScholarWorks at University of Montana. It has been accepted for inclusion in Graduate Student Theses, Dissertations, & Professional Papers by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks at University of Montana. For more information, please contact scholarworks@mso.umt.edu.
The University of MONTANA

Permission is granted by the author to reproduce this material in its entirety, provided that this material is used for scholarly purposes and is properly cited in published works and reports.

** Please check "Yes" or "No" and provide signature **

Yes, I grant permission  
No, I do not grant permission

Author's Signature  

Date 11/24/97

Any copying for commercial purposes or financial gain may be undertaken only with the author's explicit consent.
WOMEN OF THE CONTEMPORARY MILITIA MOVEMENT:
PERCEPTIONS OF IDEOLOGY THROUGH EXPERIENCE, IDENTITY,
VOICE AND ACTION

by

Gina R. Terinoni

B.A. Mansfield University, 1993

presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of
Master of Arts
The University of Montana

1997

Approved by:

Chairperson

Dean, Graduate School

Date
Women of the Contemporary Militia Movement: Perceptions of Ideology through Experience, Identity, Voice, and Action. (152 pp.)

Chair: Dr. Gregory Camp

In addition to the lack of research regarding the Militia Movement and the confusion surrounding members' identities within other Far Right groups, women militia members have been almost completely overlooked. Traditional wisdom maintains that women who are the wives of militia men only act as "auxiliaries" to them, thus seldom exhibiting independent action. This characterization of women militia members as "auxiliaries" neglects a significant aspect of collective action among American citizens. This research challenges the depiction of the Militia Movement as a "movement of men" by examining the militia women as independent actors.

The theoretical and method approach is discussed as a means of exploration into this politically sensitive topic. Feminist theory and social action theory are used to determine the strategies and motivation involved within this gender-integrated movement. Also this movement's expression of resistance is analyzed. Methods that were applied include observer-as-participant and various forms of interviewing. The life history method, being the most prominent method, was used when interviewing to give voice to the militia women. It allowed them the opportunity to explain their choices and reasons for their identity with the Militia Movement, to reflect on certain events that effected their belief system, and to discuss ways in which they learned the movement’s dominant ideologies. By applying the life history method, the militia women’s perception is portrayed through experience, identity, talk, and action. Analysis of their stories contributes to the illustration of these women’s ideologies and the strategies they use to express their beliefs.

Various themes that surfaced during the interviews are explored which include: anti-feminism, getting "back to basics,” gender roles with the movement, the U.S. public education system, anti-Communism, and race. This portrait of militia women maintains each woman’s individuality, at the same time it presents an image of experience that can be used to understand other women’s identity with the Militia Movement.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Special appreciation is extended to my thesis committee: my chair, Dr. Gregory Campbell for offering constant academic and emotional support throughout my graduate studies, Dr. Katherine Weist for her enthusiasm and continuous suggestions especially regarding my methods and theory, and Dr. Rodney Brod for his editing and critiquing skills. Also, I thank Dr. Robert Balch for introducing me to the Far Right network, therefore opening the door to my studies.

My friends and colleagues have been most helpful in stimulating my ideas and focus, especially Aaron Goodfellow for suggesting this topic and offering support when I accepted the challenge, Beverly Orth’s automobile expertise, and Jim Russo’s random acts of spiritual uplifting.

Gratitude to my family members especially my mother and father, Madlyne and Eugene, and my sister and brother-in-law, Maria and Tom, for giving me lasting support and encouragement. And, to Matthew, for his genuine interest and confidence, and the use of his Bronco which allowed me to conduct fieldwork!

I am most grateful to all of the women and their families who eagerly expressed their deepest thoughts and concerns, thus enabling me to discover their roles as social actors in society. Without their understanding and acceptance of me as an academic this research would not have been possible.
When the HIMALAYAN peasant meets the he-bear in his pride,
He shouts to scare the monster, who will often turn aside;
But the she-bear thus accosted rends the peasant tooth and nail,
For the female of the species is more deadly than the male.

When Nag the basking cobra hears the careless foot of man,
He will sometimes wriggle sideways and avoid it as he can;
But his mate makes no such motion where she camps beside the trail,
For the female of the species is more deadly than the male.

When the early Jesuit fathers preached to Hurons and Choctaws,
They prayed to be delivered from the vengeance of the squaws.
'Twas the women, not the warriors, turned those stark enthusiasts pale,
For the female of the species is more deadly than the male.

Man's timid heart is bursting with the things he must not say,
For the Woman that God gave him isn't his to give away;
But when the hunter meets with husband, each confirms the other's tale—
The female of the species is more deadly than the male.

Man, a bear in most relations—worm and savage otherwise,—
Man propounds negotiations, Man accepts the compromise.
Very rarely will he squarely push the logic of a fact
To its ultimate conclusion in unmitigated act.

Fear, or foolishness, impels him, ere he lay the wicked low,
To concede some form of trial even to his fiercest foe.
Mirth obscene diverts his anger! Doubt and Pity oft perplex Him in dealing with an issue—to the scandal of The Sex!

But the Woman that God gave him, every fibre of her frame
Proves her launched for one sole issue, armed and engined for the same;
And to serve that single issue, lest the generations fail,
The female of the species must be deadlier than the male.

She who faces Death by torture for each life beneath her breast
May not deal in doubt or pity—must not swerve for fact or jest.
These be purely male diversions—not in these her honour dwells.
She the Other Law we live by, is that Law and nothing else.

She can bring no more to living than the powers that make her great

iv
And the Mother of the Infant and the Mistress of the Mate!
And when Babe and Man are lacking and she strides unclaimed to
claim
Her right as femme (and baron), her equipment is the same.

She is wedded to convictions—in default of grosser ties;
Her contentions are her children, Heaven help him who denies!—
He will meet no suave discussion, but the instant, white-hot, wild,
Wakened female of the species warring as for spouse and child.

Unprovoked and awful changes—even so the she-bear fights,
Speech that drips, corrodes, and poisons—even so the cobra bites,
Scientific vivisection of one nerve till it is raw,
And the victim writhes in anguish—like the Jesuit with the squaw!

So it comes that Man the coward, when he gathers to confer
With her fellow-braves in council, dare not leave a place for her
Where, at war with Life and Conscience, he uplifts his erring bands
To some God of Abstract Justice—which no woman understands.

And Man knows it! Knows, moreover, that the Woman that God gave
him
Must command but may not govern—shall enthrall but not enslave him.
And She knows, because She warns him, and Her instincts never fail,
That the Female of Her Species is more deadly than the Male.
CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

During the colonial era Europeans portrayed the United States as a land of prospect, happiness, and hospitality (Bennett 1995: 17; St. John de Crevecoeur 1782). They thought opportunity to abound despite one’s ancestry or religious beliefs. This paradise-like portrait of America attracted many emigrants and their dreams. What many Europeans experienced was quite different from what they anticipated. Upon their arrival, America was anything but welcoming; it was a country that harbored hostile feelings between the “chosen people” and the newcomers. “The fear of alien peoples and alien ideas was a heritage of the colonial period and the years of revolution and nation building that followed” (Bennett 1995:26). America’s political and social stability has fluctuated due to its recurring encounter with conflict and intolerance which has been expressed by the American people.

There is constant conflict and change that occurs in all societies and the United States is no exception. “This turmoil relentlessly transfigures the patterns of relations between the various classes, ethnic groups, generations, and regional groups which make up the society” (Wilson 1973: 4). Conflict is a reflection of a society that presents conflicting opportunities for it’s people who struggle to achieve their goal (Ibid.; Lockwood 1956).

Members of a society will often realize that their ideologies are shared by others which may result in collective behavior or a social movement. Social movements are “a
group of people who are engaged in an ideologically coherent and noninstitutionalized way of changing the present state and trajectory of their society” (Garner 1996: 43). Social movements are often regarded as brief expressions of aggravation that do not have much effect on a society’s history or on the people’s lives who were involved. In point of fact, social movements are influential in creating a people’s history by reacting to their society’s current social experience and desiring change. “Acting as a catalyst of political revolution, social movements have wrought momentous changes all over the world” (Wilson 1973:5).

Internal conflict in America has prevailed since colonization. Tensions among religious, economical, and political situations have created the American makeup and the media has assisted piecing together American citizens’ conception of their country. The problem is that media coverage tends to be reactionary only raising public awareness following a major event or catastrophe. The media’s selection of stories that they decide to market greatly affects the way that the public contemplates about their current situation. In particular, regarding domestic terrorist acts, the media has shed light on potential harms to society only after they have been a significant danger to the American people (i.e. Oklahoma City bombing). Most often this is when they attract social scientists to examine the aspects of the event who attempt to trace the steps that preceded such an act. Nevertheless, these actions have not been enough to satisfy many communities across the United States.

Human Rights groups, such as the Southern Poverty Law Center in Alabama, the Montana Human Rights Network, the Anti-Defamation in New York, the Coalition for
Human Dignity in Oregon and the Northwest Coalition Against Malicious Harassment in Washington have joined the cause to educate the American people and law enforcement agents about the Far Right Movement and how the Human Rights members view Far Right members as a threat to society. Although there are some distinctions between these groups' goals, all of these groups are responding to the frustration of not being informed about violent and racist activities that are taking place in their communities. These groups have been successful in distributing their discoveries of Far Right activity to their members and quelling of some Far Right groups. For example, the Southern Poverty Law Center has bankrupt several Klan organizations by taking them to court for violent acts against American citizens (Ridgeway 1995: 120-2; Terinoni 1997).

Human Rights groups have been beneficial to American society by informing citizens about various factions of the Far Right Movement. However, they reacted prematurely when the Militia Movement surfaced in the media by discussing various organizations under the Far Right interchangeably. This caused confusion for many American citizens, including community members, academics, law enforcement agencies, and government officials. Non-specific research regarding the contemporary Far Right Movement has caused Human Rights groups to make grand generalizations about the various groups. In turn, this clouds our understanding of how the Militia Movement meshes into the Far Right Movement making it difficult for American citizens to understand what is happening in their communities. Thus, misinformation about certain organizations and not distinguishing between Far Right groups has caused tension between many of these groups and the American people.
Academics who have been studying the Far Right Movement largely represent the disciplines of political science, history, and sociology. Far Right activity and an increase of media coverage have drawn attention to such a compelling and unexplored social issue. Far Right Groups that have been receiving the most attention from researchers are those with racist agendas, including the Ku Klux Klan and the Skinhead Movement. Another branch of the Far Right Movement, the Anti-Government or Patriot Movement, in which the Militia Movement falls under, was slow to gain media and academic attention. It took incidents such as, Branch Davidians in Ruby Ridge (1992), Waco, Texas (1993), the passing of the Brady Bill, and the ban on certain assault weapons, to expose the movement’s feelings of distrust for the United States government.

Journalists duly reflected a suddenly intensified concentration on militias, because of the Oklahoma City Bombing on April 19, 1995, in a series of newspapers articles and television journals (Bennett 1995: 446). The worst act of terrorism in United States history ended two decades of public neglect toward the Militia Movement. Although prosecutors have not proven that the accused were members of a specific group, their similar ideologies and shared distrust toward the United States government sounded the media alarm. Finally, the media has remained focused on America’s growing internal conflict occurring between a significant number of citizens and the American government.

By the summer of 1996, opposition and protest to our government’s “overbearing” actions expanded into each of the fifty states through militia membership (Sheps and Pitcavage 1995). Clarification of this widespread movement is in demand and can no longer be avoided. Whichever direction the Militia Movement is headed, it is
bound to affect all American citizens socially because their grievances are delving into numerous institutions within American society.

As seen with various collective identities, protests, and subscribed ideologies, social researchers often attribute the downfall of a movement to blurring the lines between the movement and society. On the other hand, the success of a movement is often associated with the size of its collective identity (Friedman and McAdam 1992). In the case of the Militia Movement, it is already nationwide. Although it may appear that the members constitute a small fraction of the population, their contact, interaction, and overlapping ideologies with other Far Right groups must be considered to be a potential for alliance. In turn, this could create a significant collective action of American citizens (Sheps and Pitcavage 1995). Therefore, it is imperative that the social and political ideological framework of the Militia Movement is available to American society through scholarly research. Examining the social and political components of the Militia Movement in a genuine all-encompassing manner offers American citizens a clarification of the Far Right Movement’s various factions rather than relying on mainstream America’s journalists who have presented an extremely biased, superficial portrayal of the Militia Movement.

In addition to the lack of research regarding the Militia Movement and the confusion surrounding members’ identities within other Far Right groups, women militia members have been almost completely disregarded. The critical concern is that assumptions exist that these women subscribe to submissive, conventional roles in the movement. Traditional wisdom maintains that women who are the wives of militia men
only act as "auxiliaries" to them, thus, seldom exhibiting independent action. This characterization of women militia members as "auxiliaries" neglects a significant aspect of collective action among American citizens.

Incidents that have heightened militia memberships have been solely interpreted through men's perspectives as journalists and news reporters mostly interviewed men. Negotiations between the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Jordon, Montana Freemen occurred with the men. Because of this biased coverage many Americans believe that the men are the complete portrait of Far Right hostility. In particular this approach leads most American citizens to the assumption that militia men are in complete control of these situations with the women simply contributing by taking care of the children.

Reexamining the stereotypes and myths that caricature the identity of militia women, original research has been conducted with women members who live in the Greater Pacific Northwest region. This research presents information obtained from seven key interviewees, their life stories, and supplemental interviews with other militia women and men. Also, discussions with other Far Right members who are in frequent contact with militia women were reflected in this research.

I focus on the women's interpretation of militia ideology and action because researchers, media, human rights groups, and others who have covered the Far Right Movement have disregarded their opinions. Although their public presence and voice is not as significant as the men's, there is some mention of militia women's contributions to the movement.\textsuperscript{1} When researchers and journalists discuss militia women, it is usually in a subtle way, with minimal amounts of information.\textsuperscript{2} Such accounts distort rather than
deepen our understanding of the women’s role in the Militia Movement.

The limited coverage and studies of the Militia Movement focus only on men’s protest which presents a misleading image of the movement. This gender-biased research limitation causes the image to “become defined as movements of men, and the centrality of gender politics [to the movement’s agenda] is overlooked” (Ferber 1996: 113). This research presents a different reality which contradicts the traditional perception of these women. By focusing on the women I wanted to portray their life experiences, how they were attracted to the Militia Movement, and uncover the foundation of the women’s role within the Militia Movement.

In order to understand the militia women’s motivation for militia identity I have examined their protest in this social movement and compared their actions with other women in social movements. By using the life history method I have explored their experiences which influenced their militia identity and learned about their ideologies through their talk and action.

Before engaging in an examination of women of the Militia Movement this social movement’s role within the larger picture must be understood. The Militia Movement falls under the Patriot sector of the Far Right Movement because of it’s similar goals and ideologies of the other Patriot groups. Definitions of the Patriot Movement are offered to present a clearer understanding of the Militia Movement’s goals and to offer the reader essential information regarding the similarities and differences between these groups. Although fluidity is a substantial problem with these groups these definitions should provide certain boundaries for an improved understanding of the groups’ various
Defining the Patriot Movement

For those researchers who have studied the Far Right Movement, one of the most difficult problems they have encountered is how to define these groups and distinguish them from other closely related entities. Some Far Right members also have difficulty identifying with one group because of overlapping ideologies. However members of the Far Right Movement are not as concerned with what people label them as they are with stating their ideologies. Since this research pertains specifically to the Militia Movement, I will briefly discuss the faction of the Far Right Movement where the militia is ideologically located, referred to as the Anti-Government or Patriot Movement.

There are significant ideological and political differences among some Far Right organizations whereas other groups share more similarities. Despite their variations, the fact remains that the overall distinct ideology of distrust for the American government and their will to fight back has bound all groups identifying with the Radical Right (Southern Poverty Law Center 1996). In the following examination of the Patriot Movement I differentiate the various ideologies of Far Right groups. The ideologies discussed represent: the Militia Movement, Religious Right, Christian Identity, Racist Right, Constitutionalists and Sovereigns, Second Amendment groups, Tax protestors, Freemen, and the County Movement. Although many of these Far Right groups' ideologies overlap, their specific agendas differentiate them while preserving their group boundaries.

The definitions of the Far Right Movement presented here are the results of a
collaborative study of interviews that I conducted with militia and Far Right members, and an examination of academic literature, Human Rights groups' material, and Far Right organizations' propaganda representing various factions of the movement. Each interviewee was asked to describe each Patriot group in her own words and then critique my understanding of the "patriot web." As I discuss in greater detail in Chapters Two and Four, I am illuminating the Far Right Movement according to the women militia members' viewpoints.

One must understand that the various militias are not identical in their ideology and agenda. The information presented here represents members of the particular militia that I studied which claims to be significantly different from paramilitary-focused militias. The following definitions offer clearer boundaries for the reader thus enabling the distinction of the Militia Movement among these groups. By defining these Patriot groups, I am portraying the contrasts between these groups as clearly as possible. This does not infer that these factions of the Patriot Movement are in isolation from one another. As is seen in the Militia Movement, some of the ideological boundaries are blurred as members "drift" in and out. "This tendency toward fluidity has probably increased in recent decades, as many movements take on the form of loose networks, rather than clearly defined organizations" (Garner 1996: 25; Klandermans 1992). Emphasis is placed on the fact that all of these groups’ ideologies and members tend to be fluid in some aspects.

A description of the Militia Movement is presented first to use as a guideline to compare them with other Patriot Groups. As I will discuss in greater detail in Chapter Three, the Militia Movement is composed of American citizens who have come together
ideologically to share and act upon their distrust for "big government" tactics which they accuse the U.S. government of using. Their ideologies cover multiple issues including accusing the government of infringing upon their right to bear arms through alterations of the Second Amendment, disagreeing with the ban on certain assault weapons, and objecting to the government’s counteractions to alternative America’s beliefs, which they believe were gravely violated. Examples of events that are the objects of Militia Movement contentions include Ruby Ridge and Waco. On a larger scale, active militia members fear that U.S. government officials are striving to join a "New World Order" which will only take more freedoms away from American people, turning them into "sheeple."4

The Militia Movement is a generalized term which includes a number of independently “unorganized” militias nationwide who vary in focus and agenda. There are two categories of militias. The first category refers to the educational enterprise militia that is adamant about teaching people about how they believe our government is over exerting its powers in controlling American citizens’ lives. One militia woman expressed,

We’re out here to educate people. Our key objective is so that they’re getting food put away, they have water put away, they have medical supplies put away. What we see in the process of happening in this country, what we have seen in other countries, it’s going to happen to these people. They’re going to be controlled. If you don’t have food, you’re going to be willing to do whatever you can.

All militias stress and support the notion of Survivalism; they emphasize taking care of oneself not expecting anyone to assume your responsibilities and to encourage people to be prepared to defend their households.
The second type of militia is concerned with paramilitary training and combat. This does not infer that the other militia types are not prepared to defend their beliefs through paramilitary tactics but that this militia's agenda is to train American citizens in paramilitary practice. The paramilitary-focused patriots locally base many militias and participate in military training to protect their Constitutional rights. They feel that they are part of the Far Right movement who must be actively prepared to defend themselves and their communities against the United States' tyrannical actions (Barkun 1997). Some militia groups, such as the Michigan Militia, have the combined agenda of taking on the role of the educator and the paramilitary mentor.

The women whom I talked to in this study are involved in educating American citizens about what they consider to be our government's tyrannical behavior. They are a resource center for frustrated citizens by distributing videos, books, newsletters on various topics including the government controlling the weather, government impact on Western medicine, government cover-ups of self-incriminating evidence (i.e. involvement in Oklahoma City bombing), and the government’s influence on the public school system. These women are involved in many issues focused on in the Patriot Movement.

Survivalists have woven their way throughout the Patriot Movement. This lifestyle and belief system is the grounding point for many Patriot members. The idea of being able to take care of themselves without having to rely on the outside world is a significant passion expressed throughout the Patriot Movement. “Survivalism” was a term coined in 1976 by survivalist writer, Kurt Saxon. Speaking from his own experience he claimed a survivalist to be “one who anticipates the collapse of civilization and wants to save himself
and his loved ones and bring something to the movement, if you would, which will contribute to the advancement of the next generation" (Ibid., 213). This definition is broad enough to cover secularists who feel that nuclear war, environmental pollution, or racial conflict threatens them, religionists who subscribe to Post-Tribulation beliefs, which is that they will endure the Tribulation whereas personal armies will remove evil beings from the earth and, “Christian Identity survivalists who anticipate an imminent catastrophe and believe that as the self-identified remnant of Israel, they must withdraw from an increasingly dangerous world until such time as their enemies have been defeated” (Ibid.). In fact, this definition supports the general beliefs of most if not all Far Right members. The most significant difference between other Far Right groups and most Survivalists is that most Survivalists avoid physical and verbal confrontation with political officials. Regarding this aspect militia members are more aggressive than basic Survivalists. Many Survivalists’ share the agenda to be prepared in their home with food, medicines, ammunition, and other necessities. This is routine of militias as well. Government officials have interpreted the behavior of severing all ties with society as a threatening situation that can jeopardize the stability of the Survivalist’s contentions. One can extract an example of this situation from the disastrous Waco incident. When people make a distinction between themselves and society by interpreting their world through conspiracy theories they begin to justify their opinions and fears as superior to those claiming to live in a trusting world.

A world read according to conspiratorial and apocalyptic scenarios may thus lead to courses of action that are anything but retreatist, when a sense of survival and a millenarian view of history seem to demand active
engagement with the putative forces of evil. When that occurs, the retreatist leaves his encampment and may violently assault whatever symbols of authority can be found (Barkun 1997: 217).

The Religious Right shares similar ideology to that of Survivalists in that they are preparing for the advancement of the next generation, the difference is that their emphasis is on the moral path. Ultimately, they are striving to create a theocratic government. According to the Montana Human Rights Network (1994), they are profoundly homophobic but do not profess overtly racist or anti-Semitic views.

I have included Christian Identity groups within the Religious Right although their ideologies are found throughout the Movement. Christian Identity followers belong to non-denominational churches proclaiming that the Aryan “race” is the Lost Tribe of Israel, making them genuine disciples of Christ. They depict others, particularly Jews, Blacks, and people of other “colors” as inferiors sent on this earth to challenge God’s will. They believe that Jews are the literal offspring of Satan and Eve, whom they must do battle with, including their allies, to redeem the world. These groups often refer to books of The Bible, extracting significantly different interpretations from mainstream American religions (Barkun 1997; Terinoni 1997; Abanes 1996: 155; Ridgeway 1995; Aho 1990).

Christian Identity ideology is embedded in the Far Right Movement. It is the foundation for many Far Right movements’ ideologies especially those representing the Religious and “moral” aspects and the political factions of the movement. Identity racial beliefs are downplayed because they do not consider all people to be human and because these beliefs are based on the concept of God’s will being done through his selected helpers, the Aryan “race.” These beliefs enable Christian Identity followers to justify their
extreme racial beliefs, talk, and actions (Aho 1990: 261). Christian Identity is represented among some of this study’s interviewees and will be discussed further in Chapters Four and Five.

Many factions of the Racist Right rely on Christian Identity rhetoric to support their ideology that the White “race” is superior to all other “races.” They believe that immanent biological differences are prevalent among individual “races,” ethnicities, and religions that reflect the value of the group. These groups subscribe to White Supremacist ideologies believing that their God prefers the Aryan “race” to all other “races” (Barkun 1997; Montana Human Rights Network 1994; Aho 1990). Neo-Nazis, Skinheads, and certain religious groups under the Right Wing endorse Racist Right philosophy. These groups’ agendas to battle for “White Power” often result in verbally and physically violent conflict with their “opponents.” “Opponents” to Racist Right groups include persons of “inferior” race, ethnicity, or creed; federal government and officials, community members, and human rights groups. Although certain militia groups are tolerant of the “race” war that is prevalent among many Far Right groups this is not their priority. And, some women that I interviewed said that “race” violence was sinful and is not improving America’s situation of internal conflict.5

Constitutionalists and Sovereigns are both broad in scope sharing more similarities than differences. Both groups think that the current American judicial system has misinterpreted and manipulated the Constitution. Some of these groups believe that the original Constitution heirs are White Christian men and that people from other races have different citizenship rights (Montana Human Rights Network 1994). They recognize
two distinct types of American citizenship, "state" citizenship and Fourteenth Amendment citizenship. They believe that "state" citizenship existed before the Fourteenth Amendment and that they acquired this "natural" citizenship with one's birth in the United States. Constitutionalists and Sovereigns claim that federal laws do not bind them because they are "sovereign" citizens of their state (or, republics) in which they were born.

Fourteenth Amendment citizens are considered to be those individuals who received the "benefits" contained in the Bill of Rights from the federal government. Patriots believe this type of citizenship to be second class, being inferior, thus subject to all federal laws including taxes, contracts, and speed limits. They see these citizens as in debt to the federal government because that is the institution that granted them their citizenship.

Sovereigns and Constitutionalists believe that they have been tricked into giving up their "sovereign" status citizenship when they signed certain "contracts" with the government. They believe that one becomes a second class citizen when one obtains a driver's license, a registered marriage license, a birth certificate, and a social security card, to name a few. They view these processes as having transformed them from a "state" citizen to a U.S. citizen (Abanes 1996:31). Referring to the dreadful subjects of England's power structure, many patriots believe that "[i]f you have ever signed a document claiming to be a 'U.S. Citizen,' you are presumptively one of these 'subject' citizens [sic]" (Ibid.; Meredith 1994). Many Patriots have declared themselves sovereign believing federal laws and regulations no longer bind them. They often achieve this "sovereign" status when one files at the local courthouse, and breaks all contracts with the federal government, renounces presumed Fourteenth Amendment citizenship, and, lastly, declares themselves
"state" or "sovereign" citizens.

One of the women that I interviewed said that a Constitutionalist is anyone who takes an oath pledging allegiance to our Constitution. This definition sets all government officials and law enforcement under the Far Right Movement’s Constitutionals. She also disagrees that there are two kinds of American citizens stating:

I believe that when the Fourteenth Amendment occurred, that put everybody under the Fourteenth Amendment. It didn’t matter who you were. When you study it [Constitution] and read it, you see that everybody falls under the Fourteenth Amendment. What’s happened to others and what’s happened to the Blacks, and the Japanese when they were here; then, Hiroshima happened, the attack on Pearl Harbor. Anybody that was Japanese or of oriental descent, they [United States government] took their property, locked them up in camps. In Fort Missoula, they were held there. Their property was taken, they were detained. And it’s finally happened to all of the rest of us that live in this country. It’s all of us, it’s not just one group of people.

The same woman found the term, Sovereign, to be very vague. She claims herself to be Sovereign because she can take care of herself. By this, she referred to growing her own food and not having to rely on anybody. In this situation, a Sovereign by definition is quite similar to a Survivalist. And, she claims herself to be a Constitutionalist because she is dedicated to making sure that the government upholds the Constitutional laws of the United States.

Coinciding with Constitutionals’ beliefs are Second Amendment Groups. These branches are issue-oriented in that their agenda lies with American citizens’ right to bear arms. They proclaim that the U.S. government is infringing upon these freedoms when they propose legislatures that alter the meaning of the Second Amendment. In particular, they advocate against the Brady Bill and certain assault weapons bans. An
interviewee disagreed with this title of the group because she feels that you cannot focus on the Second Amendment without having privileges of the First Amendment. "This makes you go back to the First Amendment because that gives you the freedom of speech, or you’re not going to be able to holler that you want the right to be able to keep the Second Amendment." Supporting the Second Amendment is just one of the many concerns proclaimed by the Militia Movement and other Patriots.

**Tax protestors** also focus on their Constitutional rights, but their agenda regards their belief that the Federal Government is illegally taxing American citizens. They refuse to pay federal and income tax (Montana Human Rights Network 1994). One militia woman proclaimed her tax protesting, accusing her county commissioners of being thieves. She told them:

> you’ve got people who’ve lived in this valley for seventy-five to eighty years, that built this valley up to what it is. They [United States government] have made taxes so high that they can’t determine if they should eat or pay your taxes because they’ve become so exerbent [sic]. Now, if they don’t pay their taxes, you steal their land. That makes you a thief and you need to figure out another alternative. So, that makes me a protestor regarding that tax. I don’t feel that that’s fair to do that to these elderly people. I mean, they’ve struggled, they’ve worked, and they [government] imply that they should just sell. No. That is their home. That is something that they’ve worked and struggled for, and you want to come and take it away from them.

This interviewee and her husband pay personal property taxes, but do not pay federal taxes. They believe that they are the ones who invested in their business and they keep it going so they should receive all of the profit, not the government.

The **Freemen** are a group that closely relates to Sovereigns. According to one interviewee, there are different kinds of Freemen.
There are Freemen who stand up and say I am a free man because I am a Survivalist, I am a Sovereign citizen, I am capable of doing all of these things. Ok, then, you’ve got the fringe of the Freemen who are out here writing CMO’s [Jordon, Montana], doing a disservice to everybody because they are defrauding someone of their property and it’s wrong. You just can’t justify that kind of behavior. So, you’ve got branches. They don’t fall under somebody’s control, they just fall under Sovereigns. I don’t listen to anybody, nobody controls me, I am not dependent on anybody else.

One can mostly find Freemen in Montana, where they once created their own self-ruling community called Justus Township in Garfield Country, Montana. This community consists of houses and buildings on a 960-acre wheat farm that the IRS seized because of unpaid taxes by the owner, Freemen Richard Clark (Abanes 1996: 38; Tharp 1995). “The township has its own laws, currency, and system of government based on teachings from the Bible, the Magna Carta, common law, the U.S. Constitution, parts of the Montana Constitution and sections of the Uniform Commercial Code” (Abanes 1996:38). Freemen maintain a common law court system in which they convict and sentence enemies from the macro-American society. They place bounties on law enforcement officials and sentence lawyers, judges, and sheriffs to hanging for not complying with their wishes. The Freemen have also been involved in passing fake money orders and liens on property (Ibid.).

Certain militia members have been involved with Freemen, but they say that it was because the government was stripping the Freemen of their rights not because they agree with their ideologies. In the past militia members have acted as a supporting body with the Freemen against the government’s fabricated charges and brutish arresting techniques.

Lastly, County Movement members view the local government as the highest power in their community. This group’s philosophy overlaps with the Constitutional and
Sovereign ideology in that they do not acknowledge the power of the federal government, only responding to their county or state’s officials. This movement is a similar version to that of the Posse Comitatus, meaning “Power of the County.” The Posse Comitatus resulted during agricultural crisis in the mid-eighties when many farm foreclosures forced American farmers off of their lands (Terinoni 1997; Bennett 1995: 352; Corcoran 1990).

The militia women that I interviewed were confused by this term. Rather than seeing it as a defense against the federal government they explained to me why being involved with your local government and community is important. These women explained to me how they are active in their community food bank and welfare system for the benefit of all people. They talked about going to state meetings regarding proposed legislatures and how they have successfully influenced some decisions in their county.

**Presentation of Chapters**

I have outlined the chapters of this research as follows. Chapter Two entails my theoretical orientation and the methodological approach that I applied for the duration of this project. I integrated feminist theory and social action as a means to determine motivations for militia identity. By assimilating theory and method I explore the strategies that the militia women used in order to achieve their goals while considering their talk and action. I have provided an archival analysis of literature discussing the movement, including the examination of social scientific research, Far Right and militia propaganda, and media and journalism’s contributions to American society’s knowledge of the militia. Then, the discussion of participation observation will be presented explaining what I
discovered at certain events and during interactions with the militia members. Lastly, I
give an in-depth look at the interviewing techniques that I used with my interviewees
including the open-ended approach, formal and informal interviews, and the life history
method.

Chapter Three traces the deep-rooted ideologies of nativism in Post World War II
Era, up to the contemporary Militia Movement. The links between these historical Far
Right groups and today’s Militia Movement are presented to portray the reality that
nativism and anti-government feelings are a part of American history. The various
relationships between contemporary Far Right groups will be presented as will the events
and martyrs that contributed to an influx in militia membership and fear of the United
States Government.

Chapter Four provides seven life histories of the militia women that I interviewed.
By presenting the collected life histories, I intend to portray the collective action of the
Militia Movement from comparative backgrounds of the women. The information learned
from these interviews will also be presented and analyzed in Chapter Five.

Chapter Five explains and offers analysis of the social and ideological components
of the contemporary Militia Movement, including its members experiences with
motivation, family life, education, gender roles, and racial implications. I derived this
information from the collaborative examination of interviews, observations, and literature.
I will discuss the rivals of the Militia Movement and also draw parallels between the militia
women’s experiences and how they relate their daily experiences to their grander
viewpoint.
In Chapter Six I will conclude with the positive and negative aspects of this research. I will consider different approaches that I could have applied and how they could have affected the study. With all of this in mind, I will discuss certain guises of the movement in which I intend to explore further.
CHAPTER TWO
THEORETICAL ORIENTATION AND METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

Introduction

My interest to study the Militia Movement resulted in what I considered to be an unclear assessment of militia ideologies portrayed by the media and Human Rights groups. This was for the most part unexplored territory in the academic world which offered minimal attention regarding their differences compared to other Far Right movements. In addition to few analyses of militia ideology I was also left to consider how the women were functioning in this movement. Patriarchal improvisation has influenced social scientists to dismiss women’s participation as simply not worthy of academic attention but feminist approaches have been involved in tearing down this myth.

Studying women in the Militia Movement involves two major considerations: giving women a voice by presenting their gathered knowledge and studying women as social actors intending to create change. By placing emphasis on the women’s interpretation of the Militia Movement the women are able to share their experiences that led them to their selected ideologies which refers to the encompassing movement. Social movements are contributing factors to our understanding of societies and the many cultures that are existent; “...social movements are the sites where new cultural resources, such as identities and ideologies, are most frequently formulated” (Swidler 1995: 30; Friedman and McAdam 1992). To understand a social movement’s processes and its members, one must consider the common goals that represent that movement. These
beliefs are the fabric of the movement that make its existence possible. Without these common goals the movement would be non-existent. When studying a social movement we want to learn the ideology of its members which includes "the entire complex of ideas, theories, doctrines, values, and strategic and tactical principles that is characteristic of the movement" (Herberle 1951:23).

Reading literature that named militia activity was the first step in my research of the Militia Movement. This is where I felt challenged to decipher specific militia ideologies from the women's perspective. I wondered how accurate the stereotype was regarding militias and the women: would I be able to actually talk to anyone in the Militia Movement? Once I came in contact with the movement, would the men allow me to talk to the women? Why would they talk or want to talk to me? As I engaged on my journey to learning about the motivations and strategies of the Militia Movement I found that participant observation analysis would only be a small contributing factor to my understanding of the movement. My questions about their ideologies were vaguely being answered and I was receiving a conglomeration of Far Right rhetoric. I realized how important the interview method would be, most specifically the life history method. The life history method offered a way to connect the women's lives with their participation in the Militia Movement by uncovering past experiences that influenced their belief system. As I interviewed these women they became more comfortable with my approach to gather information about their lifestyles. Their sentences were carefully shaped by their perception of their "world view," "an organization of ideas in which the self is the axis" (Ginsburg 1989: 133, Redfield 1953: 86).
Life histories were conducted with the majority of the women interviewed based on necessity for information, not so much their role in the movement. However, I do think that the variations that exist among these women are significant enough to offer a fair representation of the life of a militia woman. On varying levels all of the women considered themselves social actors in protest. In coherence with the research strategies that I use, I aim to demonstrate that by learning about women's life experiences you can determine how they subscribe to certain ideologies within movements, and how these women's contributions to the Militia Movement are significant factors in its endurance regardless of how "traditional" their beliefs and actions may appear. In this chapter I will discuss the theoretical and methodological contexts that I used to portray and examine women and the Militia Movement in Chapters Four and Five.

**Theoretical Orientation**

*A Feminist Approach*

Women being as guilty as the men, most researchers accepted the cultural biases of patriarchal society regarding only men's contributions to their culture and completely overlooking women's livelihoods. What was once accepted as truth in American society - male domination - has been questioned and debated.

And what has been true of common cultural stereotypes has, of course, been true of the view of women implicit in Western social science. For the most part, scholars have taken for granted a view of women as passive sexual objects, as devoted mothers, and as dutiful wives (Rosaldo and Lamphere 1974: 1).

Exceptions in research existed throughout the twentieth century, but studies have
magnified since the Women's Movement in the social and academic world in the 1960s. With Michelle Zimbalist Rosaldo and Louise Lamphere’s call to action to refute biasing their data according to their own patriarchal culture in *Woman, Culture, and Society* (1974), “new perspectives” emerged in feminist theory for the sciences. Feminist theory had filled the void regarding the man’s culture with new perspectives of both sexes contributing to societal structure and behavior. Feminist theorists believe that it is “reasonable to argue that the social world is the creation of both male and female actors, and that any full understanding of human society and any viable program for social change will have to incorporate the goals, thoughts, and activities of the ‘second sex’” (Ibid.).

The effects of silence regarding women is being debated between two main effects, both of which are critical to the understanding of their roles in different cultures. In one instance female quietness is seen as the cause of their passiveness and the other being “the fact that social science has neglected women makes women of the past and other cultures seem silent, when in fact the silence is that of current western scholarship” (di Leonardo 1991: 198). This paper addresses the issue of women’s silence caused by western researchers contributing to their powerlessness. By being silenced through appearance of academia’s interpretations of men’s experiences, the women are losing control over their life way and how they participate in the making of history. Silence can be a demonstration of power in protest (Ibid.), however, if the activist has not chosen her silence as a protest strategy there is no underlying power that she is experiencing.

Although this research’s approach is guided by a feminist perspective, there are clashes with a few basic methods that many feminists try to incorporate in their research
skills. My study of militia women differentiates from traditional feminist studies in that the militia women examined here have not formed a separate identity from the men, but are one faction of a gender-integrated movement. Another variation is that this study determines the militia women as contributing social actors, showing their gendered experiences in American patriotic culture and society, rather than testing their feminine roles on a global level. Contrary to feminists purposely not distinguishing between academic and interviewee, referred to as subject and object (Barrett 1996: 164), I place emphasis on the distinction between researcher and researched. My reasons are due to the religiously and politically sensitive matter which was desired to be learned without deceiving members into hoping for my membership or confusing them by my presence. This puzzlement would likely be experienced without clarification of my stance as an academic researcher because of our common American nationality. As Kathleen Blee experienced while interviewing former Klanswomen, when I probed into the militia women’s reasons to belong, they acted surprised that I would even ask that question (1991: 6). In Chapters Four and Five I will examine how these women had a difficult time understanding why any American person would not think and act the way that they do regarding their country’s fate.

Social Action

When studying a social movement it is important to learn the many steps that led to an actual collective identity of people. Once that social movement exists, one must examine the different degrees that the members are involved in order to achieve their goal.
F.G. Bailey (1969) discusses human behavior as revolving around “normative rules” and “pragmatic rules,” the former being the code of conduct in society and the latter being the aberrations from the ideally perceived conduct. People resort to this planned behavior in order to accomplish certain goals referred to as strategies and tactics (Garner 1996; Barrett 1996; Bailey 1969; Herberle 1951).

Protesting behavior is not a random act within society. “Everyday life...is acted out in an arena of competition and conflict, and social change rather than stability is the normal state of affairs” (Barrett 1996: 101; Boissevain 1974). By studying the individuals participating in a social movement, one can learn how these people perceive their world, how they are choosing their own destiny, and which plans they have set forth to accommodate their goals. According to Bailey (1969) individuals’ behaviors are not determined by the prevailing social structure. Individuals “are active, choice-making agents locked in competitive struggle. Nor is the social structure unified and static; rather, it is a dynamic entity, continuously being reshaped by the shifting allegiances, coalitions, and conflicts that characterize human interaction” (Barrett 1996: 101). Individuals in social movements certainly are not self-less in their motivations to change their surroundings. They are “self-interested individuals manipulating values and norms to their own advantage, choosing between alternative strategies, and establishing relationships and alliances governed by reciprocity, with the whole process feeding back on and transforming the value system and social organization” (Barrett 1984: 102; Barth 1966).
Strategies and Tactics

Ron Herberle distinguishes between two types of social movements and their approach to produce change in society; the first is reform which is attempted gradual change by influencing society's socio-political framework, the second being revolution which occurs when movements desire their proposed plan for society's change to be carried out promptly (1951: 368). The revolutionary movement tends to accompany their demands with violent acts although this is not always the case. Revolutions may begin at the grassroots level, but they most often spread their grievances to a national level so that they affect a significant portion of the society's various levels and components (Ibid.). This strategy is exemplified in the Militia Movement as its foundations began at the protesting of Ruby Ridge and militias now claim representation in each of the fifty states.

In order to understand the various components of a social movement, researchers must consider the various steps and networks involved. A social movement holds a vision that can attempt achievement of its goals by the use of strategies and tactics. Roberta Garner describes the tactics of a social movement to be the many factions of that social movement which all aid in the success of that particular strategy (1996). Social movements have a choice as to how they will go about their manipulative strategies targeting either political authorities or the public. The political movement's strategy is directed at influencing political and governmental powers which will in turn change the public's actions. The alternative approach, most often used by the Militia Movement, is directed at the society's people which intend to collectively challenge the government by changing individual beliefs and actions. Strategic approaches used by social movements
change according to societal factors and historical conditions (Ibid., Herberle 1951)8

Garner refers to clandestine organizations or cell structured movements as working underground because of a "single-party rule" that oppresses their ideas and does not allow movement formation (1996: 28-9). Regarding the Militia Movement, although the United States is not a "single-party rule" in government, many of the members believe that Republican and Democratic party representations are a farce in order to lead American people into total Communist control. Militia members' reasons for cell structure supports the idea that in case of being captured and interrogated that they would not be capable of causing the movement's collapse (Militia of Montana circa 1992-3).

Stanley R. Barrett discusses the two major critiques of social action theory as losing focus of the grander societal picture by concentrating on the individual activist and by losing historical significance and influence of present by observing every day life (1996: 105). I do not think that this research suffers from either of these criticisms. By focusing on the individual and their life histories I am learning about their perceptions of how their daily lives have been affected by the larger societal structure, how these militia women hope to create change on a larger scale, and I uncover constant correlations that these women make on a -micro and -macro level. The life history method incorporates the value of these women's past experiences and how their lives have been influenced by them.

*Integrating Feminist Theory and Social Action*

Learning about protest from the woman's perspective provides a more complete
understanding of how social movements function. As will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Five, studies of women in social movements show how their participation has been significantly different from that of the men. Women who protest tend to use different strategies than the men in protest whether it is a women's movement or a sex-integrated movement (West and Blumberg 1990).

In order to learn about the various resources that the militia women utilized in order to protest their issues and concerns, the methodological approach had to be planned according to how I could acquire the most representative knowledge regarding their experiences. The following section is a discussion of my methods and the trials and tribulations that I had encountered while I was on my journey to learning about women and the Militia Movement.

**Methodological Approach**

The methods that I used to study women and the Militia Movement involved a triangular approach which acquired information by incorporating archival research, observer-as-participant, and interviewing with an emphasis on the life history method. When I began meeting members in the Far Right Movement, my goal was to approach women who were involved in the Militia Movement. This task was more difficult than I originally projected because I wrongfully assumed that the members would distinguish themselves from other Far Right groups. While I had suspected that just the media and observers of the movement did not have a clear understanding of Far Right members and their specific group associations, I came to realize that many Far Right members did not
see themselves fitting neatly into specific categories. As I met these Far Rightists, I was presented with a great deal of commonality in rhetoric that they admitted they were accustomed to rambling off to journalists. I had to find a way that would penetrate the standard complaints of the entire Far Right Movement and tap into why and how each woman interviewed came to choose her identity as a militia member. I chose the life history method because it was the only way that I could uncover why these women personally assume their identity with the Militia Movement. Considering all of the steps that I took to learn from these women, the life history method proved to be the most beneficial for understanding the women's perspective regarding the Militia Movement as well as creating a trusting interviewing relationship.

**Archival Research**

Being the first step of my fieldwork, the literature search allowed me to see how little was written on the Militia Movement, especially regarding militia women. My search broadened to the Far Right Movement because many observers had been grouping the various factions of the movement into generalizations. I learned what type of information was being sought and certain methods that were used to collect the information.

The first part of the archival research involved reviewing relevant academic literature pertaining to the overall Far Right Movement, including studies of various White Supremacy and Christian Patriot groups. What I found was that the majority of books and articles that discussed Far Right organizations were compiled by journalists and/or Human Rights members. Non-profit organizations' propaganda, that either supported or
protested the Far Right Movement, were reviewed in order to provide the researcher the opportunity to compare certain topics and issues which are being discussed by organizations such as: the Montana Human Rights Network, the Southern Poverty Law Center, the Coalition for Human Dignity, the Militia of Montana, media communications including various local and national newspapers, television programs, and radio broadcasts. This aspect of the methodological approach was maintained throughout the research.

Social Scientific Literature

When I began my research in June 1996 I was frustrated with the literature in the academic world because it appeared that no one really was interested in deciphering the different groups’ ideologies, but were satisfied with maintaining the media’s classifications of these groups as anti-government racists. Considering the timeliness of this research I was not sure where the militias fit into the Far Right picture, so I referred to general literature which encompassed the entire movement. This approach led me to learn about the general ideologies that were being portrayed by these groups and their strategies they used to influence the rest of society.

Although I was unclear if there was any connection between the Militia Movement and White Supremacist groups, I found a large amount of information regarding researchers’ experiences with the members and how they approached their studies. Partly this step of archival research served as my mental preparedness to take on such a politically sensitive topic with a movement of people who were not considered desirable to
work with by many researchers. James A. Aho’s *The Politics of Righteousness: Idaho Christian Patriotism* (1990) was the groundbreaking study that exposed the contemporary Far Right’s infiltration into American society. He localized this movement by demonstrating how religion plays a major role in the Far Right movement’s goals and ideologies. Religious members of the Far Right movement do not necessarily belong to a particular religious. Aho’s study was thorough but not complete because of his neglect to examine the woman’s role in the movement.

Another work that intrigued my study of women in the Militia Movement was Kathleen Blee’s *Women of the Klan: Racism and Gender in the 1920s* (1991). Through extensive research of membership lists and interviews, Blee traces the women’s Klan throughout historical circumstances explaining how powerful and separate this group was from the men’s Klan. She uncovered the Klan women’s strategies of how they were involved in manipulating images of community members that were much different from the Klan men’s approaches.

Other academics that have been studying various Far Right groups include political scientists who debate whether the contemporary Militia Movement’s complaints are comparable to early revolutionary militias or whether there is no connection to their claims at all (Beamun 1997; Nash 1997). Political analysts have been tracing the history of militias and activity to link or decouple their ties to early revolutionary militias and are interested in current court cases that are taking place regarding federal control issues. Law journals offer exhaustive coverage of claims being filed against the Federal government by Far Rightists and how they are challenging the Constitution’s amendments.
as being illegal to the original intentions of the United States forefathers. Lawyers are busy examining the claims that these groups are fighting for the maintenance of the United States as a Republic.¹³

A major argument that surrounds studying Far Right Movements is the ethical concern of contacting the members. Some observers accuse social scientists such as James A. Aho of supporting these groups by attending cross-burnings (Perlstein 1995: 81) rather than seeing the value in communicating with Far Right members as a means to first-handedly learn about their ideologies which aids in the interpretation of strategy and achievement of their goals. I am not suggesting that researchers argue for or against extremist movements but to genuinely study these groups in the most possible unbiased fashion. By challenging these movements researchers are weakening the communication by demonizing the movements. This will cause the members to retreat away from societal interaction rather than provide a deeper understanding of how they came to assume their identity. Thus, the divide between the movement and the larger society, and our understanding of the movement, may be worse off than our initial theories regarding the movement’s ideologies and motivations.

Human Rights Organizations’ Propaganda

When studying a social movement one must consider all factors that have influenced the groups’ behaviors, one of the major contributors being the counter movements that take shape (Mc Laughlin 1969: 5; Zanden 1969). The various human rights groups that prepare and distribute information regarding the entire Far Right
Movement are acting collectively as counter-movements. The beginning of such groups as: the Southern Poverty Law Center, the Montana Human Rights Network, the Anti-Defamation League, the Coalition for Human Dignity, and the various off-shoots of these groups demonstrates how the success of Far Right groups inspired counter attacks. As Rudolf Herberle explains, “an initially successful revolution is likely to reach a point where its achievements are at least partially destroyed by the mounting resistance and eventually successful counter-action of those classes whose interests have been hurt” (1951: 370).

Particularly disturbing is the fact that Herberle attributes violent acts generated by the initial movement to be onset by the threat of being shut-down by the counter movement (Ibid.).

Roberta Garner refers to counter movements as being “locked into combat with other movements” (1996: 35), as demonstrated in the relationships observed between the Militia Movement and the various Human Rights groups. “The movements are hostile to each other, their goals in general and on specific issues are diametrically opposed, and they devote resources to constricting or destroying the enemy” (Ibid., 396). Both the Militia groups and Human Rights branches have published literature and dedicated videos to breaking down the “enemy’s” character as a respectful American citizen and human being.¹⁴

Counter movements are “a particular kind of protest movement which is a response to the social change advocated by an initial movement” (Steuter 1992: 289; Mottl 1980: 620). When the battle between a social movement and its counter movement is not won by one of the movements in a reasonable amount of time, and conflict remains,
a relationship of interdependency develops. "This pattern of interdependence is one in which programs, ideologies, and strategies on each side are continuously adjusted so as to deal with the changes in ascendance between the two groups" (Steuter 1992: 301; Turner and Killian 1972: 310). As the counter movement struggles to defeat the initial movement’s goal, its own ideologies transform according to necessary alterations in order to remain competitive with the movement (Ibid.). An example of an anti-Militia Movement human rights group is the Southern Poverty Law Center who concentrated part of their focus of the Far Right Movement to the Militia Movement when they founded the Militia Task Force.¹⁵

**Media’s Portrayal**

The media’s role regarding Far Right groups, in particular the Militia Movement, is one of great complexity. So as to not lose focus of the central theme I will briefly discuss their presentation of the Militia Movement and the militia women. The Militia Movement’s perception of the media will be examined in Chapter Five.

The media has been responsible for coining terms such as Christian Identity, White Supremacist, Hate Groups, and anti-government groups to name a few. Supplying human rights groups with their information, the media has been the voice to the American people regarding the Far Right Movement as well as other social movements. These news journalists have shaped our images of Far Right members through newspaper and magazine articles, television magazine shows, television local and national news, and radio broadcasts. They have presented us with more than the basic facts of legal charges against
members, they have added insinuations to their presentations. Some journalists base their assumptions on too little information learned from brief interviews (with mostly men) which they use to portray the entire movement’s beliefs.

I am not disqualifying the media’s credibility for all of their stories regarding Far Right groups, however I am implying that a great deal of gendered-sensationalism occurs in their reports. Researching into local and national newspapers will offer one numerous examples of this Hollywood, bad-guy portrayal. One example comes from The New York Times which announced on February 11, 1997 that “Peter Langan, a member of a right-wing revolutionary cell that robbed more banks than Jesse James, was found guilty in federal court here Monday on five counts of bank robbery and of using an explosive device during a robbery” (Weber 1997). Even if he had been part of the Aryan Republican Army that was accused of robbing twenty-two banks, the comparison of Langan to James as a solo robber is an act of misrepresentation that causes the public to associate with the legend of Jesse James. Later in the article Langan’s girlfriend is painted as the submissive victim: “In the first row, his girlfriend, Cherie Roberts, only closed her eyes as the first two guilty verdicts were read” (Ibid.) That was the end of the paragraph.

I encountered numerous articles that displayed catchy titles and summarized captions as well. “When the bomb hit, John Trochmann’s Militia of Montana went on red alert, called up the FBI, and headed for a strip joint. An intimate week in the bunker with the most dangerous patriots in America” (Voll 1995: 46). Actually according to the article after the Oklahoma City bombing, the Militia of Montana office had been receiving threatening and harassing phone calls. John Trochmann, whose voice Daniel Voll
compares to Clint Eastwood in the article, decided to call the Federal Bureau of Investigation to make a complaint. As for the strip joint, that occurred ten days after the bombing in another town where John’s brother was working a gun show. John was not present, nor was the rest of the Militia of Montana. As for the bunker, at least the author says to his and his camera crews’ dismay, they were not “running around in camouflage” (Ibid.) In a bold caption blown up, John Trochmann’s wife, Carolyn is portrayed as the submissive, loyal wife who must remain strong: “I know my husband will be killed...and I have made my peace with that. If you live according to natural law, you’ll be at peace. Do I look like I’m at peace? Well, I am” (Ibid., 52).

To the extreme of women being presented as being passive, poor souls, the most publicized militia woman, Linda Thompson, is viewed as out of control. When women do extend their social protest outside of their household goals into the public arena, they are often criticized for their participation by authorities, media, and their own families (Neal and Phillips 1990). Women and men militia members that I talked to ridiculed her. The title of the article in which Thompson is portrayed as an extremely dangerous woman is called “The White Woman From Hell” (Vollers 1995: 50).

In order to not completely exhaust my point of criticism with the media, I offer one last example. I have watched a few television magazine shows that offer brief coverage of Far Right activity especially since the Oklahoma City bombing, but the most extensive one I viewed was called “Birth of a Militia,” and was broadcasted by 48 Hours on CBS in September 1996. The 48 Hours’ reporters had gone to a small town in Utah to recount the lives and involvement of a small part of the Rocky Mountain Militia. They set up an
expressive forum allowing the men to verbalize their grievances with the government and showed how they are “prepared.” One excerpt had the militia men telling the reporters that something was happening so they could not allow them to be there because it was dangerous. The focus was on the men while the women were filmed cooking and holding the children and were only asked about their fears for their husbands and their families. The sheriff criticized the reporters directly when they interviewed him, saying that the media’s attention to these groups is only encouraging violent acts because the militias have to eventually act on their words that they say to the media. There was also a part where the woman journalist went out to the Badlands with the sheriff, and he encouraged her to shoot a gun into the air several times. This showed the journalist’s fear of shooting the gun and surely had other innuendos of violence and guns.

This “news story” did nothing more than display the macho-influenced tension that exists between law enforcement and the Rocky Mountain Militia. This type of irresponsible reporting is only creating a grander fear and misunderstanding among all sides of this argument.16

**Far Right and Militia Movement Propaganda**

The final archival research to be discussed is that pertaining to the published and mass distributed discourse of the Far Right Movement and the Militia Movement. There are many ways in which modern technology has aided in the networking of militias nationwide rather than just relying on the postal service. In addition to newsletters being delivered by the postal service and being bought at Gun Shows and Expositions, they are
sent by e-mail, faxed, and located over the Internet.

There are many topics and issues that are discussed and passed along the Far Right network that have taken the place of holding public meetings. Generally, publishing minimizes direct harassment from observers and reporters. Topics discussed include current grievances of the Militia Movement such as President Clinton’s relations with China and support of “Goals 2000” which members consider to be evidence of a Communist take-over. Topics and networking strategies of the Militia Movement will be fully examined in Chapter Five, therefore I will discuss the next step of my methods, obtaining observations.

Observer-as-Participant

After an extensive literature review was conducted, observations were obtained and recorded. Raymond Gold (1969) discusses the different levels in which a field researcher may learn about another’s culture and behaviors. Because of the politically sensitive topic of this thesis, I chose the role of observer-as-participant. This researcher “identifies himself or herself as a researcher and interacts with the participants in the social process but makes no pretense of actually being a participant” (Babbie 1995:284; Gold 1969). My role of observer-as-participant included attending social and political functions such as gun shows, expositions, and spending time with the women and their families. All of these events offered me the opportunity to observe who is saying and doing what in comparison to what was previously mentioned in an interview. It also gave me the chance to meet various members of the organization to interview which assisted my goal of
obtaining a better understanding of this social movement.

I originally had planned to attend militia meetings and religious services with the women, but I later realized that the women who were involved in a group no longer held meetings because of press interference and most of them did not attend church services. They meet with friends in the same group only if there is an emergency or concern about a law about to be passed or a proposed program. Militia members went from holding public meetings in the past to having small gatherings in their homes to avoid media exposure. Also, they function in small groups because they feel more secure by being with close friends whom they believe they can trust.

Acting as observer-as-participant paralleled my interviewing techniques as they counterbalanced each other. During an interview, a person may say one thing, but then later may be observed doing something completely different or vice versa. Observational results were not always that extreme. These observations also allowed me to learn about the women's roles in the Movement in accordance with how they view themselves. I was able to see most of these women interact with their husbands as well as with other movement members which demonstrated their persistence in participating. Minor discrepancies were discovered throughout the ongoing analysis of my field notes and will be examined Chapter Five.

**Interviewing**

In order for me to learn and understand what the Militia Movement members were experiencing, I had to go and learn first hand what they believed. This area of my
methods has proven to be the most difficult to obtain but the most beneficial for my research purposes. As is shown in the literature review, there is a lack of contact with the members which I believe has caused a mass confusion in the understanding of the militia movement’s beliefs and actions.

Formal and informal interviews with Militia Movement members proved to be the most resourceful aspect of my research. Although I interviewed Far Right women and men informally, I was most concerned with conducting formal interviews with militia women. Altogether, I collected seven life histories of militia women and, informally I interviewed approximately twenty men and women Far Right members to get their assessment of the Militia Movement and the women’s involvement. Formal interviews with the militia women were conducted in cafes, in the interviewees’ houses, and in one militia headquarters. The interviews ranged from one meeting up to four meetings and lasted from one and a half hours up to four hours. I also informally discussed militia situations with scholars studying the Far Right and a few Human Rights members who follow militia activity.

I had to apply my own strategies when interviewing the militia women. Placing the women at ease was my main concern making the interview more like a conversation. As Stanley R. Barrett experienced during his fieldwork of right-wing White Supremacists and anti-Semites in Canada (1996: 132), I remained silent when interviewers expressed their religious and political concerns. My job was to learn from these women, not to try and persuade or influence their beliefs. I, too, was asked for my opinions on occasion, but never really addressed these questions. Sometimes the inquiring interviewee would excuse
my response with my victimization of a “liberal-left education” (Ibid.).

It was difficult to find militia women at first because mostly they have been overlooked in public literature which focuses on the militia men’s activities. Also I had problems figuring out who was a militia woman, according to their standards or mine. I was fortunate to be introduced to a woman who is outspoken with her views regarding the Militia Movement and her Christian Identity beliefs. And, with this interviewee I had to rely on the snowball effect which led to more interviews. Christian Identity beliefs and ideologies often overlap with many movements of the Far Right, making my first contact an optimal connection to other members of the various organizations. Also, she had spread the word that an academic was studying the women in the movement and she had informed me that a few of her friends were interested in being interviewed. This woman was considered to be my initial key-interviewee.

Such persons can not only recall a wide range of events and explain most customs, but they are also likely to know more about how many important decisions were made and can influence other persons to make additional information available. They can also help the fieldworker in gaining access to ceremonies and important events (Edgerton and Langness 1974: 36).

I eventually had six more key-interviewees.

Systematic Interviewing

Systematic interviewing was another form of the interviewing process that occurred. This type of interview was used to avoid the tension of a formal interview and often occurs when the fieldworker has a few topics in mind for a particular person and strikes up a natural conversation around these ideas (Langness 1967). For this research,
this type of interview was conducted particularly with the men in the militia. Since my focus is on the women’s position this method was used to reveal any contrasts and comparisons with how the women and men think about the women’s role in the militia.

**Open-ended Interviewing**

The first interview that was conducted with my initial key-interviewee was in open-ended format. I thought that this would be the best way for the interviewee to remain comfortable and, it would allow me the opportunity to explore unexpected topics that she alluded to. This inductive research approach led to the discovery of the important current issues to the militia women. I used our initial interview results to structure our next interview and based succeeding interviews on those questions as well.

Because this is a minimally explored research area, I relied mostly on the contacts that I made through this key-interviewee, then through people who I encountered at self-sufficiency and preparedness expos and gun shows and one woman whom I contacted because her phone number was listed over the Internet on a militia homepage. Then, as I met and talked with other interviewees and depending on how comfortable the relationships became, I conducted life histories with the interviewees.

**Life History Approach**

Current anthropology of the 1990s has seen a few changes in fieldwork techniques and methodological goals, the most apparent being the re-emergence of life history as a predominant technique. The life history method was very popular in the social sciences
before the Second World War, but Barrett (1996) claims that the quantitative method had taken hold of these fields shortly after that time, and other social scientists say that after WWII, the ethnographer’s primary method was participant-observation (Hammersley 1992: 32, Bertaux 1981; Plummer 1983). Reverting away from quantitative methods and placing emphasis upon empathy for the individual, rather than quantifying and sorting subjects, feminist anthropology was a major contributor in the revival of the life history method. Most researchers now agree that there has been a definite resurgence of the life history method as a social research method; in particular, the feminists researchers have rediscovered the life history method, which parallels their theoretical framework. For the feminist social researcher,

"the life history is seen as a means to give voice to people, vividly to capture institutional and historical forces as they impinge on and are experienced by individuals; and to guard the wholeness and integrity of individuals rather than slicing them into analytic pieces which are packaged into generalizations reflecting abstract features of the social structure” (Barrett, 1996:165).

By taking the militia women one step beyond the traditional interview, I escaped entrapment of grand rhetoric which was preached by many members. Life histories “shed light on how each woman identifies herself, what she perceives as the major events and significant turning points of her life, how she ‘makes sense’ of her political involvement and beliefs and how she defines herself in relation to political issues, to other racial or religious groups and to the...movement” (Blee 1996: 93).

By wanting to learn the militia women’s personal opinions, and not their husbands’ or movement leaders’ beliefs, these women were asked to reflect upon their own belief
systems. By engaging in the life history method the militia women did not have to chronologically organize events that took place in their lives. Rather, they recalled certain experiences that happened to them according to the topic we were discussing. Although this method did inspire some of these women to aid me in putting the pieces of cause and effect together they were not pressured to do so. This method had caused a majority of the women interviewed to search beneath the obvious and standard reasons to belong in the Militia Movement. As the interviews progressed, they started to reflect upon childhood experiences and talked about different stages in their lives and how they viewed these experiences as contributing factors to their militia identity.

Although interviewing my first contact in the movement was informative, I realized that I was listening to rhetoric combined with her feelings about her personal experiences. These personal stories aided me in putting these feelings into perspective as to how she came to be involved in the Far Right movement. I realized that I needed to hear the complaints of the movement, but it was more important to learn how her life experiences had led her to and helped her to carve a personal wedge into the movement. I believe that these individual life histories portray how these women's experiences, as well as the men's, have provided the foundation for the Militia Movement. The life history method was the most logical way for me to understand their involvement and to compare and contrast the experiences of the other women that I interviewed.

The life history approach that L.L. Langness refers to is a very detailed and lengthy record of a person's life as it has been told by either that person or by others or both, and includes information that is either already written or learned through interviews (1967).
This intensive approach was conducted with key-interviewees in order to compile data of the women's backgrounds, comparing and contrasting their similarities and differences of their life experiences with one another. The researcher may not be able to discuss with the interviewee every issue in the community or movement, but will attempt to cover the current events.

The life history is often used as a means to represent some characteristic of either culture or anthropology or both that otherwise is believed to have been overlooked (Ibid.), as is the situation with women in the Militia Movement. Most often, a researcher whose goal is to portray a culture selects a person who is most typical as a member of the culture (Ibid.), but this is not always the case. The atypical and typical attributes of militia members were unknown at the beginning of this study. Hence, through orally recorded life histories of typical citizens, as well as atypical ones, a comprehensive historical framework or geographical region may be illustrated (Allen and Montell 1981). When considering historical influences on these women's ideologies, age is a significant factor in their current interests pertaining to the Militia Movement as will be discussed in Chapter Five.

The purpose of utilizing life histories as a method in this research is that these women have not been fairly represented in any documented history of militias or previous studies of the Far Right. Also, these women's experiences are of value by themselves. The goals of life histories in this research is to learn what about the militia is important to these women, how they became interested in this ideology, how they have been affected by certain events that have included militia participation, and how they perceive their
roles, within the movement. Through the collected life histories, in addition to the analyses of the group’s ideological, published propaganda, one would be able to portray the collective identity (Taylor and Whittier 1995, 1992; Melucci 1995) of these women in the Militia Movement. The analyses of documentation set forth by the leaders of the movement, in comparison with what is learned from individual narratives, will present certain representative opinions that interrelated the voices of the movement and its actors. The author’s goal will be accomplished at this level, once an image of this social movement is portrayed as a result of these individual opinions combined (Melucci 1995). This method was not utilized until I established a rapport with the key-interviewees, because this method is quite personal, and in order to be successful, I needed to have a well explored knowledge of the interviewee.

**Conclusion**

By combining the methods of archival search, observer-as-participant, and interviewing, I intend to address such issues as how the women came to be involved in the Militia Movement, which ritual or behavior did they do in order to consider themselves a militia member, what beliefs of theirs did they have to compromise or, leave behind altogether, and at which point did they consider themselves to be members of the movement, therefore adopting the dominant ideologies of the movement. I will explore the shared ideologies of the members, how they have collectively chosen to pursue and enforce their ideologies, and how they have chosen to express their beliefs as opposed to what is conveyed during an interview. This approach will aid in the detection of how
members may diverge away from the standardized doctrine of the movement.

By paralleling my theoretical and methodological approaches to this research, I aim to show how women contribute to the Militia Movement by using different strategies compared to the men. This difference has caused them to be portrayed in the past as being pacifistic because they apply “alternative” methods of protest, talk, and action compared to the men who remain constant “model” militia figures in the public domain.

In order to comprehend the women’s talk and action that is presented in their life histories in Chapter Four, the history of the re-emergence of the contemporary Militia Movement must be considered. In the next chapter, a historical review will present past Far Right ideologies that have transcended into contemporary militia ideology therefore placing the women’s life experiences in perspective.
CHAPTER THREE
RE-EMERGENCE OF THE MILITIA MOVEMENT

Contemporary militia ideologies are not unfamiliar concepts that have just recently attracted a considerable number of American citizens. These ideologies are representative of historical Far Right Movement's beliefs and criticisms of the United States government. Current militia members verbalize a modern form of nativism and fear of an overzealous government (Bennett 1995).

Whereas contemporary militia members claim to be upholding the aspirations and prospects that our ancestors expressed in colonial times, they attribute most of their dedication to the movement in the more recent past. This chapter focuses on Far Right ideologies and agendas from post World War II through the 1990s. This history will offer the reader a view of the development of Far Right beliefs and how members of today's Militia Movement draws on these deeply-rooted ideologies to strengthen their own goals.

Today's militia members consider themselves to be the defenders of our Constitution and the defenders of our country from foreign powers. This patriotism is similar to that of colonial militias, however the manner in which contemporary militia members have pursued their goals is much different.

Colonial militias were controlled by the government, thus not posing a threat to the United States government. These militias were not considered to have expressed Far Right ideology because they were fighting strictly for the protection of their country. They, for the most part, agreed with the United States government, battling for the same
reasons (Sheps and Pitcavage 1995). The contemporary Militia Movement, one faction of the Far Right Movement, is far from agreeing with the current United States government. The purpose of this research is not to argue whether contemporary militia claims correspond to those of the colonial militias. The contemporary definition of “militia” is far more complex than that of its original meaning.¹⁸ And, contemporary militias’ actions and approaches are far more similar to post World II Far Right Patriot groups than they are to colonial militias. This is why I have decided to focus on the history from Post World War II to the 1990s.

Post World War II Far Right organizations claim that they are contending against all enemies of the United States including enemies both foreign and domestic. By tracing the history of the Militia Movement as perceived under the Far Right movement, one can find astonishing similarities between post World War II Far Right ideology and present-day militia beliefs. “When a movement has a compelling ideology and speaks to the dreams of millions of people, it rarely disappears completely. The form changes, the strategies and organization are updated, the ideology is revised; the movement mutates but does not vanish” (Garner 1996: 7).

Aside from defending their country, post World War II Far Rightists and contemporary Patriots have publicly challenged government officials to work for the American people, rather than taking control of the American people. They claim that the American government displays tyrannical behavior. Thus, contemporary militia members are prepared to defend themselves against the United States military units if and when they elect to take total control of American citizens.
After presenting post World War II patriot groups' similar ideologies which I maintain to be conducive to contemporary militia ideology, the re-emergence of the Militia Movement will be examined. I will portray the various connections between Far Right groups and their ideologies while displaying similarities with today's Militia Movement. The contemporary Militia Movement’s ideologies are linked to various groups across the United States. In order to remain focused within this research, the most influential movement's developments as they pertain to the Greater Pacific Northwest will be discussed.

**Origins of Female Patriotism**

Whereas I do not present an examination of colonial militia ideology and purpose, I believe it is necessary to include an overview of women’s behaviors in historical revolutionary acts, based on the fact that many people have disregarded women in documenting historical events. Only recently have scholars begun to retrace history's steps, taking a closer look at women's contributions, experiences, and accomplishments.¹⁹ Nancy Woloch noted that the American Revolution gave men no choice but to acknowledge the importance of women in American society (1996: 50). As the United States government moved men around the country for fighting purposes, women assumed new leverage. The war greatly affected women's thinking about society. “Most important, under the stress of the first modern revolution, women were suddenly assumed to be capable of sharing a highly valued and extremely rational political sentiment: patriotism” (Ibid.).
During the Revolution, men appreciated women because of their enthusiastic support for their country and their cause, for boycotting foreign goods, and for assuming roles of new authority (Ibid.). Women's significant contributions to revolution were first recognized during the tea boycott in Boston that was one of the results of the Townsend Act of 1767. The men realized that they needed the women's support to be successful, thus initiating the women's sense of power. South Carolina Presbyterian William Tennent III addressed the women of his church, in August 1774, regarding the boycott on tea. His speech appealed to the women, offering the chance to receive appreciation nationwide and act as a force of resistance against Great Britain.

If women stopped drinking tea...their action would convince the British that American patriotism extends even to the Fair Sex, and discourage any future attempts to enslave us. Tea purchased by the housewives would be paid for by the Blood of your Sons, but if they instead avoided its use, your country will rise and call you blessed (Norton 1980:159, Smylie 1973, Tennent III 1774).

This sarcastic, yet appealing, statement led women to a politically active frame of mind.

Besides protesting tea, women's dedication to their country motivated them to protest importation. At that time the church was not prompting their actions. Together the women were determined to save their country from destruction and slavery when their “invaluable Rights and Privileges are attacked in an unconstitutional and most alarming Manner (sic)” (Norton 1980: 161). In October 1774, a meeting of fifty-one North Carolinian women, called Edenton Ladies Tea Party, signed an agreement that did not mention tea. Instead, the women declared their “sincere adherence” to the resolves of the provincial congress and proclaimed it their ‘duty’ to do ‘every thing as far as lies in our
power' to support the ‘publick [sic] good’” (Ibid., Force 1837). This statement was a precedent for women to include themselves in public policy thus embarking women’s talk and action in the public sphere. They gradually became participants in the community rather than remaining private helpmates to their husbands.

The examination of women’s participation in the American Revolution demonstrates how consequential it is for Americans to understand each faction of protest. By viewing these colonial women in a reconstructed understanding, one can consider that the outcome of the Revolutionary War would have been different had the government not considered these women as noteworthy contributors to the cause. It is therefore reasonable to assume that if the women’s participation was absent, the revolution would not have been successful.

Unfortunately, this chapter is not abounding with stories portraying women’s experiences of protest throughout history. This results from the lack of research regarding women’s involvement with Far Right organizations. In addition to writing history in an all-encompassing manner through women’s and men’s perspectives, we need to consider what happens to women’s roles after the protested goals are achieved. I include patriotic women’s participation in the following accounts of movements according to available documentations.

Post World War II: Origins of Conspiracy

The contemporary Militia Movement’s most profound roots trace back to post World War II, a time of distrust and competition for international supremacy between the
United States and the Soviet Union, thus emerging the Cold War Era. "For Americans, the intense fear of communism that characterized this period, the economic and social development that accompanied military and consumer production, and the sharp disagreement over the Vietnam War, provided a seedbed for extremism--shaping it, encouraging it, propelling it" (Hamilton 1996:8). At a time when Americans thought their country could by defeated by no one, they lost the opportunity to rule China and Eastern Europe. This disappointment caused a significant number of American citizens to devise theories explaining that internal enemies existed in the United States, who prevented this country's success (Ibid.).

While many American citizens were fearing a Communist take-over, the Civil Rights Movement was grounded as a response to social, political, and economic oppression. This movement surfaced during post World War II as plentitude caused many White Americans to migrate to suburban lands. Concurrently, Whites felt that Communists and Blacks were threatening societal order thus causing Whites to fear that an alliance had formed between these two groups. This theory resulted in many hearings that discussed how specific American citizens were trying to overturn the United States (Ibid., 9).21

As social tensions abound with the fear of being overthrown internationally and domestically, cynicism blossomed in many American citizens’ minds. Some Americans distinguished their situation as “Us vs. Them,” with constant opposition to foreigners and minorities. Conspiracy theories resulted in protest and conflict, social turbulence, and economic dismay. Many American citizens viewed government mistakes as purposeful
tools used by Blacks and Communists to betray fellow citizens. Some American citizens assumed the crusader role, non-forgiving, nor willing to compromise, desiring only victory against the “Others” (Ibid., 10).

Far Right members believed that their self-worth was subsiding as their individual freedoms were being threatened, morals were being challenged, and their economic stability was awash (Ibid.; Bennett 1995). This distressing perception, felt by many American citizens, diminished class lines among Far Right ideology when a sense of collective action formed (Hamilton 1996).

Far Right ideology emerged at the onset of the Cold War and as a significant amount of citizens expressed grievances with societal instability. These beliefs surpassed the ending of the Cold War in 1989 when the Soviet Union collapsed, and, can still be found in contemporary militia ideology (Ibid., 10-11). To draw on this conclusion, an examination of the Far Right’s most prominent organizations throughout the Cold War is imperative to understand why these beliefs remain prominent in contemporary American society.

Far Right Origins and Specific Ideologies

The John Birch Society, founded in 1958, set out to preserve “our inheritance” from an “international communist plot.” This society also fought the Civil Rights Movement coinciding with Far Right ideology that Communists and Blacks had formed an alliance. As is evident with contemporary militias, the John Birch Society was set up in cells, professed their nation’s decline along a lecture circuit, and published propaganda in
form of books and pamphlets. Birchers' major opposition was to:

U.S. membership in the United Nations, the International labor Organization, the World Health Organization, UNICEF, the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, and NATO. It opposed 'so-called defense spending,' all foreign aid, and diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union and other communist nations. It was against the National Labor Relations Act, social security, the graduated income tax, the Reconstruction Finance Corporation, the Tennessee Valley Authority, government wage and price controls, 'forced integration,' U.S. government bonds, the Federal Reserve System, urban renewal, water fluoridation, the corporate dividend tax, the 'mental health' racket, federal aid to housing, and all programs 'regimenting farmers' (Ridgeway 1995:76-7).

Unlike one component of contemporary militia ideology, the John Birch society did not advocate the refusal of paying federal taxes and was not determined to overthrow the government. This does not exempt these ideas as endeavors of some Birch members.

Robert DePugh, a former Bircher, founded the Minutemen in 1961 with the notion of acting as a last defense against U.S.-Communist defeat. The Minutemen believed that there had been no respectable president since World War II. They also speculated that the United States government was not representing America's best interest. The Minutemen resorted to revolutionary tactics, formed secret squads, and claim to have mastered technology to benefit their warfare purposes. This group succeeded in building an alliance with the National Rifle Association, through which they received free ammunition and discounted weapons (Ibid.).

Another former member of the John Birch Society, Willis Carto, established the Liberty Lobby in 1957, with the intentions of connecting Far Right patriots with Congress. The Lobby spent most of its time researching and gathering news to bridge the gap
between Patriots and Conservatives, anticipating the take-over the Republican party.

Similar to many Far Right groups, the Liberty Lobby was nativistic in that it opposed all things foreign, standing to protect the "ideal" White American culture. Resembling the Bircher's recruiting techniques, the Lobby published books and publications, and, expanded to radio broadcasts and videotapes. The Lobby accomplished representation in the political arena during the 1970s and remains an influential cohort to the contemporary Militia Movement (Hamilton 1996: 13).

The 1970s was the gateway of Far Right ideology into the political arena which was maintained throughout the 1980s. Far Right backing magnified, "still tied to cold-war fears that communism would take over the world, but obtaining fresh energy from the myriad of cultural changes brought on during the 1960s, such as civil rights for blacks, expanded rights for women, a larger welfare state, and a stronger national government that had been used to advance these changes" (Hamilton 1996:15). The 1980s also encountered expansion in the Christian Identity practice and the manifestation of the New Right. The New Right arose out of frustration with an increase in governmental compromise with liberals. Neil A. Hamilton attributes the molding of the New Right to political strategist, Richard Viguerie (Ibid., 24). Viguerie supported an increase in defense spending, breaking down social programs, and advancing a traditional moral agenda according to Christian fundamentalism. He eventually bridged the gap between the Far Right and Populist ideology, convicting the government of invading individual freedoms, the media of being untrustworthy, and academia of condoning society's immoralities (Ibid.).
The Militia's "Posse"

Various Far Right ideologies overlap one another, but the most profound shared belief system exists between contemporary Militia Movement ideology and the Posse Comitatus (Chaloupka 1996; Bennett 1995; Anti-Defamation League 1994). The Posse Comitatus, founded in 1969 in Portland, Oregon by Henry L. Beach, believed that the center of the government must be the county and that the county sheriff was the supreme government authority (Sargent 1995). Posse Comitatus ideology expresses a dislike for big government and a strong sense of nativism. These beliefs were popular among Midwestern farmers who went bankrupt as a result of high governmental interest rates, while they experienced a decrease in land value, causing numerous farm foreclosures (Ridgeway 1996; Corcoran 1990). At the foreclosure auctions, violence broke out and several farmers refused to leave their land (Corcoran 1990). Although not all members of the contemporary Militia Movement agree with such extreme, violent acts performed by groups such as the "Posse Comitatus," numerous members empathize with and condone forces that Posse members used to prevent the seizure of their properties. Many militia members believe that these farm foreclosures initiated the downfall of our nation's economic stability. They also theorize that this was just another leap toward the government's total control of the American people's lives. A further examination of the Posse's ideology regarding the prevention of big government is necessary because their beliefs assume a striking resemblance to actions and claims made by contemporary Militia Movement members.

The late Gordon Kahl, formerly of the "Posse Comitatus," is one of the most
prominent martyrs for the Patriot Movement (Ridgeway 1995; Corcoran 1990). Kahl, a North Dakota farmer, pleaded to his fellow struggling farmers at an American Agriculture Movement meeting that all of the farmers had fallen victim to “a Jewish-led, communist-supported conspiracy that had infiltrated the U.S. government, the judicial system and law enforcement, and was bent on destroying the Christian Republic that had been established by the Founding Fathers” (Corcoran 1990:24). He was staking his claims historically, reviving Benjamin Franklin’s anti-Semitic views that were expressed in 1787, that if we let the Jewish take hold of our nation financially, it would be our death to independence.

Kahl denounced paying “illegal” income tax to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), stating that if Americans succumbed to this, they were only positioning the already rich bankers in command of our nation’s economical well-being (Ibid.).

By targeting the farmers, Kahl accused the government of hunting down the last stance of independence and individualism within the United States. By “stealing” the farmers’ land and causing multiple foreclosures, the government would secure control of the food supply, which would advance to domination over each individual. Kahl, as well as contemporary militia members, saw these achievements of the American government as stepping stones leading to their long-awaited “One World Government.” In response, Kahl and the Posse Comitatus “encouraged people to reclaim their sovereignty by returning their driver’s licenses, birth certificates, Social Security cards, and any other government-issued documents, contending they gave heed to ‘Jewish fables, and commandments of men, that turn from the truth’” (Ibid., 27). By performing these deeds, Kahl, other Posse members, and contemporary militia members believe that Americans would become
empowered and help to restore the American republic. Thus, sovereign citizens advocate that they will no longer forcefully hand over their wealth to the nonproductive welfare recipients and idlers, whom they believe to be the majority. Sovereign citizens theorize that the welfare recipients maintain the democratic vote so they can continue to reap money from sovereign individuals.

The Posse believed that the intent of the original founders of this country was to create a Christian Republic where all individuals are sovereign. Posse members claim to be responding to this goal by promoting, safeguarding, and protecting the Christian ideology. Consequently, they were to act in accordance with the original amendments to the Constitution. Both Posse members and contemporary militia advocates believe that all amendments ratified after the Constitution, including the Bill of Rights, are unconstitutional. This philosophy reflects the Posse Comitatus' anti-Semitic beliefs that illegal legislators were contributing to the Jewish-led conspiracy that supported and endorsed these amendments (Ibid.).

Gordon Kahl maintained his extreme beliefs and perceived the government as the enemy. According to his son, Kahl anticipated a confrontation with the government. After nearly escaping a shootout in Fargo, law officials eventually tracked down Gordon Kahl. In the end, Kahl shot two United States Marshals and led federal authorities on a multi-state manhunt, which ended his life in a fatal shootout in Arkansas (Ibid.). Various conspiracy theories surround the death of Gordon Kahl, continuing to pave the way for untrusting American citizens who draw parallels to recent government misconduct.
The Contemporary Militia Movement

The New Right's moral agenda combined with many frustrated Americans bore the formation of the 1990's Far Right Movement, in particularly the Militia Movement. The contemporary Militia Movement originated as a collective acceptance of the Far Right's shared ideology that the federal government has gone corrupt, thus calling for certain patriotic individuals to step forward and scrutinize government activities. There are many aspects of this belief including the threat of denying American citizens their Second Amendment rights by confiscating the weapons of free-thinking American Patriots (Sheps and Pitcavage 1995). Each militias' specific goals vary, however their grounded ideology expresses a fear of big government. They revolt against the idea of the United States joining a "One World Order" and resent the American government for gaining ample control over the American citizens' lives. These contemporary patriots are expressing similar fears to those attributed within earlier Far Right Movements. Examining each group's protest in its historical framework and time indicates how there has always been a strong sense of nativism, and the desire for the United States government to work solely for the well-being of American people, rather than maintaining their involvement in international affairs. Decades of American patriots have believed that government action should directly benefit the American people (Barkun 1997; Ridgeway 1995).

Although contemporary militias have formed in the 1990s, the foundations for their beliefs were molded in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Examples of why some of this study's interviewees and their families support Far Right ideology stems from their opposition to the government's involvement in the Cuban missile crisis, inflation of the
1970s, and the farm crisis of the 1980s. As displayed in history, Far Right groups have surfaced as a result of previous political economic events. Far Right members use these events as examples to express deep-seated contempt toward the government’s handling of certain situations (Sheps and Pitcavage 1995).

Already distrusting American citizens had several events to aggravate their discontent with the United States government which encouraged them to find others who shared similar beliefs. The negligence of government agents at Ruby Ridge in 1992 and Waco in 1993, in addition to the passage of the Brady law and the assault weapons ban, became the forces behind the expansion of already established militias that led to the beginning of the Militia Movement nationwide (Chaloupka 1996; Bennett 1995; Sheps and Pitcavage 1995). Many militia leaders interpreted the government’s action in these events as a prelude to the joining of a socialist “One World Government,” also called the “New World Order” (Sheps and Pitcavage 1995). The “New World Order” theory encouraged the formation of many citizens’ militias who proclaimed that they were protecting the freedom of the genuine American people by upholding the Constitution of the United States, excluding the Fourteenth Amendment, and stating that they are the heirs to the ideology of the Minutemen who fought at Lexington and Concord (Ibid.).

Ruby Ridge: Grounding a Movement

When speaking at expos and meeting engagements, individual members of the Militia Movement often proclaim how they have been well-informed of the government’s deceiving ways long before the 1990s. More American citizens were harboring these
same feelings of anguish toward the government for various reasons, so they solidified the ideology to distrust our government and fight for American citizens’ freedom at the Ruby Ridge standoff. Early in 1992, men and women of all ages and various factions of the American Far Right traveled to Ruby Ridge in Northern Idaho to support the Weaver family against the “Feds.” Neo-Nazi skinheads came to support their “racial brother,” Christian Identity members came to support their fellow believer, and patriots such as Bo Gritz, Jack Mc Lamb, and their followers were there to express their intolerance for a tyrannical conspiracy that they accused the Unites States government and its agents of participating in (Montana Human Rights Network 1996; Ridgeway 1995).

The Ruby Ridge incident remains a significant event of martyrdom for the Patriot Movement. Many patriot organizations were established as a result of the comradery that they experienced with others who shared a similar distrust for the American government. The late Eva Vail Lamb, a “Bo” Gritz for president organizer, founded the Idaho Organized Militia, with the purpose being to be ready to intervene in future situations that replicate the Weaver incident. “Bo” Gritz established his paramilitary SPIKE training program to prepare Americans with Delta Force skills that they can use for future confrontations with the “New World Order.” Christian Identity Pastor Pete Peters organized the Estes Park, Colorado Conference that brought together various leaders and 150-175 “Christian men” of the Far Right Movement to discuss how to handle the government’s intolerable acts against the Weaver family (Barkun 1997; Dees 1996; Abanes 1996). In Montana, the formation of United Citizens for Justice (UCJ) occurred which encouraged many citizens to protest the government’s tyrannical power that they
felt was executed by covering up evidence that would have indicted Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) agents in the Ruby Ridge siege (Montana Human Rights Network 1996).

According to the United Citizens for Justice flyer (C. Jan. 1993), their organization was established after the Ruby Ridge siege was over when “a group of approximately 250 concerned citizen’s [sic] joined together to discuss different ideas concerning how they could make sure something like that would never happen again and to see if there was any way in which they could help Randy Weaver and Kevin Harris.” At first, UCJ was founded as a support group for the surviving Weaver family, but it promptly expanded its mission that the Militia of Montana would later pursue. The goals of UCJ were:

1. To return our government to a position of service to the people and defender of individual rights as our fore-fathers had intended.
2. To provide information, education and support to ensure that all citizens of this country will not have to live in fear of an overzealous government (Abanes 1996; United Citizens for Justice flyer, undated [circa Jan. 1993]).

For a variety of reasons, Randy Weaver and Kevin Harris were acquitted of most charges, the United Citizens for Justice disbanded, but their ideologies provided direction for the Militia of Montana (MOM) which was founded in 1993. From the start, MOM became one of this country’s main distributors of militia propaganda (Abanes 1996). People sharing similar ideologies across the nation have been buying propaganda including books, newsletter subscriptions, and videos which they use to keep informed about current militia issues.

The Estes Meeting which took place in Estes, Colorado also had a major impact
on the augmenting of the contemporary Militia Movement. Larry Pratt, former legislator of Virginia, current leader of Gun Owners of America, was present at the Estes meeting. He was the first individual to suggest publicly that rather than forming traditional lobbying techniques to influence governmental policy, Americans should form local, armed militias. He recommended that these militias be structured like those of Guatemalan and Filipino freedom fighters, who had voluntarily formed militia units to resist communist death squads that had been a horrifying threat to the local population (Abanes 1996: 22).

The majority of the patriots had taken these words lightly, until the tragedy at Waco, Texas. Then, a significant number of militias were founded and thriving across the states. President Clinton added to militia’s anger when he encouraged tighter gun control laws in the summer of 1993. On top of this “Second Amendment violation,” militias swallowed up gun owners throughout the nation. This resulted after the United States government passed the Brady Bill which places a five-day waiting period on the purchase of guns and required gun sellers to run a background check. The militias were outraged, yet they had to face another law which would infringe upon their right to bear arms, the enactment of the Crime Bill (Ibid.; Ridgeway 1995; M. Williams 1995).27 It appeared that this bill would cause the outlawing of nineteen kinds of semi-automatic assault rifles and accessories, but after government legislatures passed it, militia members and other Far Rightists learned that the ban in fact pertained to more than 185 different types of semiautomatic firearms (M. Williams 1995).

For those Americans where guns are not a part of their everyday life, this legislature may not seem significant to get outraged over. For those American citizens
who are preoccupied with defending their family and land on a daily basis, this was an upsetting time that outraged many Patriots, spreading their anger like a wildfire.

Coinciding with the fact that certain events and proposed and passed laws have inspired many American citizens to form militias, militarization of law enforcement plays a major role in the threat to individual rights and freedoms. Of major concern is the abuse of power used against American citizens through groups such as: Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms (BATF), Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA), United States Marshals Service, Internal Revenue Service (IRS), Fish and Wildlife Service, Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, Environmental Protection Agency, and various branches of the Justice Department. The United States government is viewed as having performed countless acts of intimidation on American civilians, and Americans have experienced an increase in the usage of SWAT teams, helicopters, and armored personnel carriers. Of even greater concern is the fact that the United States government has deployed the National Guard and other military branches as forces in domestic law enforcement issues, tasks in which they are not familiar or prepared to handle (Kopel 1996). In addition to these federal organizations, many militia members in the Greater Pacific Northwest are protesting what they viewed as the overpowering actions of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM).

Government response to these groups has only added fuel to the fire. The perceived dehumanizing tactics of journalists have led the government to create "terrorist" policy which classifies all Far Right groups, causing the militias to maintain a defensive perspective. Militia members are excessively wary because the government is legally
watching American citizens a little closer than they have in the past. An example occurs when the law enforcement taps phone wires based on suspicion, without a court order (Kopel 1996). The contemporary Militia Movement is more concerned with defending their freedom and property from their own government rather than defending their country against a foreign takeover.

To these Patriots, the government has transformed itself from acting as "public servant" to serving as both a foreign and enemy force, which is threatening the freedom of all American citizens. Thus, this belief contributes to the foundation of militia deliberations in which members see a legitimate basis for the battle between the American government and American "patriots." Many of the militia ideologies and strategies that have been discussed surface in the militia women’s life histories which are presented in the next chapter.
CHAPTER FOUR
LIFE HISTORIES OF MILITIA WOMEN

Introduction

In addition to the difficulties I had experienced with finding militia women to interview once I talked to the women, trust was an instant issue that needed to be handled. The majority of the women interviewed recalled some sort of bad press that they had received in the past and I had to gain their trust based on nothing. One reason why I turned to the life history method was because it assisted me into placing these women at ease by personalizing the interview. I asked questions about how they were affected by certain events; once I asked how these experiences and their militia identity related to their personal lives the women seemed to become more comfortable with my research. The women understood that I was sincerely wanting to learn from and about them and that I was not there to make money on their story or to argue with them about politics and religion.

In this chapter, I present seven life histories of women who either consider themselves to be members of the militia or who fit this study’s criteria of a militia woman as I discussed in Chapter One. Each woman’s life history represents the information that was gathered during the interviews that ranged in the number of visits and duration of the conversations from two hours up to five hours, with as many as four interviews each. All of the women allowed me to tape our conversations that took place at their homes, militia headquarters, or cafes. The names of the towns and states where these interviews were
conducted have been withheld and I used pseudonyms for the women interviewed and their family members in order to secure their privacy and anonymity. These histories are accompanied by brief analyses of how these women’s beliefs were influenced by certain events which aided in establishing their identity pertaining to the Militia Movement. These analyses will be discussed more thoroughly in Chapter Five. These women’s life histories illustrate overall themes that typically surface in the Militia Movement at the same time upholding each woman’s source of righteousness.

In the life histories of the militia women, certain themes emerged consistently in the plot. The majority of the women spoke of how independent they were in their family, or how they did not take any grief from authorities who tried to enforce too much power or control over them. Most often their first social conflict with authority occurred in the public school system. As will be portrayed in the following life histories, all of the women fear that the children are not being correctly educated in the public schools. The biggest fear regarding the schools is the government instituting “Goals 2000,” which all of these women view as a part of the “One World Government” or “New World Order.”

As was the case for all of the women interviewed, there was as sense of uncomfortableness with some of the terms that were used to describe their identity. The term, “Militia Movement,” was questioned by most of the women because of the negative connotations associated with that term. They preferred to use each of their individual group’s name, but for the sake of maintaining their anonymity that specific information has been withheld. The title, “Militia Movement,” places all of the militia organizations under one title and even though there is a significant amount of networking taking place between
these groups, the militia women view their involvement as being more local and individualistic. They expressed being genuinely concerned about their family and not another militia group a few states away. A notable problem in terminology was with "Christian Identity Movement" being similar to reasons behind the women not seeing an actual movement. The main problem was that I wrongly assumed that all of the militia members that I would be interviewing would be Christian Identity. In fact, only one of the women blatanty referred to herself as Christian Identity, and one other woman said that many people considered her to be Christian Identity but she prefers to be simply know as a "Christian." Again, rejection of a term has occurred because of the negative connotations associated with it. The women activists were raised with various religious affiliations. Most of them were satisfied with calling themselves "Christian" and do not attend church on a regular basis.

All of the women activists expressed some sort of discontent with the term, "feminism." While they view themselves to be strong, supportive, goal-oriented, non-submissive women, they surely did not consider themselves to be feminists. They all supported their view of the women’s and men’s roles with stories in The Bible. These women stressed the importance of morality in their lives and always made this connection to the American way of life on a larger scale. It is important to understand their life histories, because their experiences that have led them to identify with the Militia Movement. An examination will assist our understanding of how these militia women have come to perceive their ideal living environment. It is also crucial that their interpretations of themselves as actors causing social change are taken seriously and no
longer overlooked because these women do exhibit a sense of power in the Militia Movement.

The Women’s Stories

Rose

Rose is one of a select few women who is a central figure in the Militia Movement nationwide. Rose is very outspoken and realizes her power within the movement influencing both men and women. She has been involved since the beginning of the re-emergence of the Militia Movement in 1992, when she, her husband, and other family members co-founded a concerned citizens group after the tragedy at Ruby Ridge. Events that fueled the re-emergence of the Militia Movement were the passing of the Brady Bill, Waco, but Ruby Ridge was the most influential factor to initiate collective action for Rose and her family. Eventually their citizens’ group led to the formation of a state militia, expressing the need to participate in the prevention of another tragedy like Ruby Ridge or Waco.

Women in her family and members of the movement commend her for her bravery. Rose is involved in running the militia headquarters which distributes educational materials to other militias nationwide. She also organizes lectures for her husband who speaks at nationwide meetings and expositions. Rose has only spoken at one engagement, but she and her husband have realized that she is an integral part of the Militia Movement and do not doubt that she will be speaking in the future. Aside from her involvement in the Militia Movement, Rose is very active in the local food bank as well as with education
issues with developmentally disadvantaged children. She also is active in writing letters to State legislatures about issues regarding teenage pregnancy and having the choice to live outside of their parent(s)' home if they are not supportive.

Rose is forty-four years old, a high school graduate, and the oldest of nine children. She believes that her strong will and desire to fight for freedom has been passed down to her from her ancestors. Her natal family's experiences has some affect on her as well. She reflected on childhood memories to explain her intolerance for authority and how she was taught to deal with such confrontations.

I was little and lived on the reservation. And, the boys were lifting my skirt and my dad went to the school. They told him that boys would be boys. My father then decided that I needed to learn how to fight, taught me that night, and the next day little boys were crawling all over with black eyes. When school called him in and said this can't happen, he said "girls will be girls" and got up and walked out.

Rose has accepted the challenge of being a woman with pride. She was raised to assume multiple responsibilities because she is a woman. It is not the submissive act that Rose feels she has taken on, but one of respect in how the bible tells us how to live. When Rose was pre-adolescent, her father instilled in her what it meant to be a woman.

I spent a lot of time outside. I milked fifteen cows every morning. My father discovered how much I loved it outside and he said it's time for you to be in the house. You're going to learn how to cook, do the dishes. He took me through the whole routine. And, for three months I was not allowed outside the house. So, then it became double duty. I did all the housework plus milking cows, birthing calves, etc. You don't just learn one thing. And, when you become a mother you learn how to do five to ten things at a time. You're learning how to sweep the floor, take care of the baby, have the meal cooking, have the laundry going. Have all of these other things working at the same time. Being a mother, being a woman, you learn how to do a whole bunch of things, you're not just focused on one thing. Where as a man, when he sets out to do something and it's like
tunnel vision. There’s one thing he has to take care of and he cannot be
distracted. As a mother and me being the oldest of nine children, I learned
all of that way before I even became a mom. I had to have everything
working like a clock, everything’s not all scattered around.

Rose was nine the first time that she used a shot gun when her mother took her
hunting. She grew up in a rural area of the Greater Pacific Northwest with no running
water or electricity until she was twelve. After her parents divorced when she was
thirteen years old, Rose kept a job to help her mother, a schoolteacher, raise the rest of
the children. She described herself as her “mother’s mother.” During the school year Rose
lived and cared for a woman who had multiple sclerosis and in the summers she led trail
rides with her family’s horses. These jobs fed the animals and clothed the children.

Rose often related her conflicts with authority to early experiences that she had
when she was in school. Rose has been feeling disgruntled with other people’s laziness
and fear of authority. She has realized that it takes strong leaders to rally the other
“sheeple.”

When I was in high school, I was in a class of thirty-seven students.
It was a history class, all of us were failing. I was a C student. I never had
extra time to be an A student or B student in between. I was the oldest of
nine children, I worked while I was in school so I had a whole lot of other
things going on in my life that involved me. Some of the students in the
class were straight A students and they were also failing, so I had a
discussion with the class and said that we’re all failing. There’s something
wrong here. We all agreed that it wasn’t because of our lack of our
abilities, but it was because of the way that the class was being taught, until
the instructor came into the classroom. I said, Mr. Gallagher, we are all
failing, something is wrong here. It’s not all of us, it has to be the way that
you’re teaching. Why is it that we’re all failing. It took me fifteen minutes
to get them to start raising their hands. It was because of the fear of what
would happen because he was in control. He was man enough to agree,
and said we had to do something.
At age eighteen, Rose married her first husband and they had three children. They divorced after twelve years in part because Rose was frustrated with his lack of taking responsibility.

When you have someone in your life and you share things, you should be complimentary of one another. It doesn’t mean you have to do the same thing. Be able to have pride in what they do and what their capabilities are. To know if something happened to this person, you can step into his shoes, or his shadow, and to be able to take over from where he was at. When there are bills to be paid and one of the persons of the couple is sick, or deceased, you have to be able to take on their responsibilities until they are better and back into things. In my relationship in my first marriage, I became the total caretaker. His problems were that I took care of them and that was wrong.

As Rose explained, she found herself doing all of the work and it was not helping anybody in her family. She shares similar grievances with the relationship between the United States government and American society. She disapproves of the welfare system because she feels that it is not helping Americans “to do” for themselves. Rose has projected a correlation with how she felt frustrated on a micro- and macro-level, all in one breath. She combined past experiences to explain her history of “not putting up with anybody’s guff.”

In fourth grade I had a teacher that was very abusive. Two kids whose mother had been shot to death by their step-dad, and the teacher would continuously bring it up every day. One day the teacher locked Jennie in the closet. The teacher was in a bad mood so she started to drag my sister around, and I got up and kicked the shit out of her. I went home and told my parents that I would probably be kicked out of school today because I kicked the shit out of the teacher. We never heard a word of it. I had learned that with society, you couldn’t go to someone and say that this problem needed to be taken care of. You take care of it yourself, don’t wait for “George” to do it. My ex-husband didn’t see the need to correct things like this and I did.
When Rose married her second husband in 1987, she decided to home school her children because she did not approve of the way the public school “was not teaching her children anything.” She encouraged other parents to pull their children out of school so they could be home schooled. She emphasized to her children how important it is to share responsibilities in the family and with a spouse.

Rose believes that she and her second husband were married once they had sexual intercourse. This act consummated their marriage which she refers to as a common law marriage. Rose and her husband do not have a marriage license because she said that the only purpose for a license was when interracial marriages started to take place. Besides then she could see no other reason to have a license.

Rose’s life long political interest is meshed with her moral fiber. She has real social and political concerns about the United States with regards to morals and the breaking down of the family structure. She believes that the women’s movement and feminism are causing the family structure to collapse. Because it takes two parents to support their household in today’s society she feels this is causing women to compete for men’s jobs which leads to conflict within families. Rose believes that this competition has caused many parents to lose focus on their family’s well-being and she explained how important it is. As well as not competing for men’s jobs Rose does not believe that women should vote, although she votes “because it is available to women.”

I believe that the man takes on the sense of the covering and the protection of that household. And, that if husband and wife are in beitude with one another then there shouldn’t be a conflict of how they are voting or how their life is going along the path. If I went in to vote and Al went into vote, and I voted against everything that he was voting for, not only did I cancel
out his vote, I null and voided my own. It became a conflict of well, what I believe is better than what you believe. And it wouldn’t be good for either of us. Now, when Al and I go down, I still vote. We discuss every person and every candidate that we are going to vote for.

Rose considers herself a Christian, though not belonging to a particular religious denomination. She says that when people choose to belong to a particular denomination they are putting up barriers to other people and causing a division. When she and her family used to have Bible study they would all read from a different Bible whether it was Jewish or Catholic, whatever they had on the bookshelf.

Aside from Rose’s external complaints that the government is unconstitutionally controlling the American, Rose is even more frustrated internally with non-active American citizens who accept the government’s tyrannical behavior. This is one of the reasons why she is so involved with the Militia Movement on a daily basis “to educate the people.” She has hope that the American people will come around as the government is being exposed for their wrong-doings one day at a time. Rose’s complaints within the movement mostly lean towards the irresponsibility of the men. She says that it is frustrating for dedicated militia members to have to deal with some guy joining just to inflate his ego.

A lot of men that come into it talk about wanting to become colonels, or generals, and they have a lot of wrath hanging over them. Nine times out of ten, that person that has got involved in its realm can’t even take care of their household. They don’t have a proper relationship with their wife, they don’t have a bonding relationship with their children. The woman has been somebody that they could breed and leave home to take care of their kids. And, they’re looking for some place to be so they can kind of build up their image. They usually don’t last very long because it only just takes so much time where their newness of being this macho man goes right out the window. The time where something really traumatic happens or a lot
of stress, they just take it and run. So, a lot of them don’t stay very long, it’s just a fringe for them.

Rose allows herself to be depicted as a member of the Militia Movement because “people know what we’re talking about when we say that.” There’s a certain understanding of how strongly she feels about her country and her beliefs. But, Rose believes that this is her way of life, not just some club that she belongs to, as will be detected in other life histories. Her role is not one that can be stepped away from at five o’clock each day.

There is no membership. It’s something that you know. If you care about this country, you care about its freedom, and you care about the children that you are going to give birth to. I always refer to young men, and some people say I’m grossing them out, what you carry between your legs is your seed. When you pass that on to a woman, that’s your generation. You need to take pride in that, and you need to know that you have honor and care for what’s going to come out of that. And, it’s up to you to say that it’s protected. It’s not something that’s to be taken lightly, it’s not something that’s to be used as a play thing. It’s something that’s very important, it’s a very sharing part of your life. You have to understand that you are passing on a generation of your life. You need to know that it’s going to be taken care of properly, not somebody else. Not ‘George’ down the street, or the schoolteachers down at the school, it’s up to you. Because that’s your life that goes on.

Rose’s endurance to profess her convictions to get the United States government back on track has endured harassment from her local community, from the media, and from strangers who will sometimes e-mail their office or leave a negative message on their answering machine. She and her family have endured the Oklahoma City Bombing, a time that she felt was very difficult because McVeigh held similar beliefs as they do therefore everybody was blaming the Militia Movement for the death of those people. But, Rose cannot be bothered with fear and is not willing to give up her fight.
Because if I allowed myself to be fearing everyday...I could never get anything done. I’d like to know that I get to live a long time. I’ve got grand-babies and children. I also know that they’ve got their own lives. I pray that their structure and their foundation that they’ve been given will help them be strong with whatever comes their way. But, being afraid, I don’t have time for that...Fear can totally encompass you, making you not be able to move or do anything.

Discussing fear with Rose reminds her of how she is a trained EMT and how she has witnessed people’s bodies shutting down because they had so much fear inside of them.

She says that because nobody was there to comfort them and to tell them that they would be all right, they let their fear take over.

I can’t have that. I mean, I get concerned about things, I keep my ears and my eyes open; I’m always watching, but I do not allow fear into my life. I check things out. Like that blue truck that was in and out of each driveway, I assume he was checking our meters. The road is closed off, so he shouldn’t be back there, plus our power hasn’t been out. I observe my surroundings. We walk our dogs every night. We listen, and look around. Not just being concerned that man might be out there, but also because of wild animals.

Celeste

Celeste is active in the same militia as her spouse. She works at the headquarters, mostly in charge of sorting the mail, gathering and sending orders that come in for militia materials, filing articles from newspapers and magazines regarding militias, as well as keeping track of government documents that she said “find their way to the office.” She is also in charge of planning and preparing everyone at the militia headquarters’ lunchtime meal and she fills in anywhere that she is needed. The men’s job is to deal with the media and only one of them communicates with the local sheriff to avoid confusion. The men
usually keep direct contact with the authorities in case of a stand off, or a situation that
has potential to escalate. Celeste’s husband travels to gun shows to represent their militia
and to sell militia educational materials including books, manuals, and videos. Celeste
sometimes travels to gun shows with her husband but she would rather be at home taking
care of the office and her house. Celeste prefers to not be in the forefront where the
action is. She said that she feels a certain sense of security as a woman so she prefers to
stay local.

Personally, my husband is the one that makes all of the decisions in the
household, but I still get a voice. He does all he can to please me because he
loves me. He will be the deciding voice. Also, it’s a form of protection
for their women. The enemy sees them as the target. They will be the
targets, not necessarily the wives. Because we are kind of in the
background, so they think. It’s a sense of security to have a man up front.

Celeste is forty-seven years old and has been married to her second husband since
1980. They raised four children together; they each brought two children from their
previous marriages. One of the reasons why they moved to the Greater Pacific Northwest
almost two decades ago is so they could home school their children. Home schooling was
illegal in the state where they had lived previously. Although their kids were in the public
school system at first, Celeste removed them in 1984 after she and one other women in her
family were accused of becoming too powerful in the Parent Teacher Association.

Celeste believes that other militia members, as well as herself, are involved in the
Militia Movement for several reasons, but similar to the other women interviewed, her
dedication is targeting the morals of the United States government and the American
people.
Well, I guess that I...they [militia members] want the standard moral to be those as scripture tells us what is moral and what is immoral. They want to keep it on the moral ground, they see it’s not. It’s their desire, and they of course know as well as we do that the Second Amendment being very important—that when a tyrannical government comes along and says this is the way you shall live and this is what we say is moral. And, when they begin to move in on the Christian people, set the moral standards that we cannot by any, you know, by any way with our own conscious mind obey them, you know we’ve got another alternative that we may have to use. And, again, it’s that Second Amendment right of defense. Because we can’t submit. Are you kidding, we’re Christian people. We’re dedicated to another master. And, I think that’s where most of the militia people are. We are not going to commit to or make us abort our third child, you know. When they begin to try to impose these rules on us, I think there are some real steps that we have to consider. On of those is that right to have a gun for your own self protection.

Celeste’s mother died when she was just seven years old. She, along with nine brothers and sisters, were raised by their father and stepmother. Celeste’s father raised her in the Lutheran religion, as her mother requested before she passed away. Celeste read the scriptures when she was growing up, then she took a break until she was twenty-three years old and prepared to have her first child.

I was twenty-three, having my first child. You start to think and wonder what you’re going to use as your guide. When you’re expecting your first child, you really think about your guide. It’s important to think about it. That was my first marriage. Sam [Celeste’s second husband] and I raised each other’s children. We were both raised Lutherans. We both struggled with that and we started to study scripture. We didn’t go back ever again.

Although Celeste and her husband re-discovered the scripture together, their interpretations being attributed to the Christian Identity religion, Celeste learned about the government from her husband and her husband’s harbored feelings toward the United States government after they were married. After Celeste began believing her husband’s stories and literature that portrayed the U.S. government as being deceitful, she claims to
have had her own experience that spiritually drew her into the movement.

Being aware of the government didn’t happen until about seventeen years ago, when I married Sam. He would say stuff about my government and not until after we were married. I was confused and needed to learn about these issues. I learned first about the media problem, two weeks after I’d read something that he left around, the media was telling us stuff so much later than after stuff had already happened. Other than that, that Gordon Kahl incident, that was the tap on my shoulder from the heavenly father. This man was not guilty, the heavenly Father told me...Media is owned and controlled by government. Just knew things were wrong. Early 80’s.

He went through my town in Minnesota! I saw him eye-to-eye. And I knew that man was Gordon Kahl. It was as if we knew. Spiritual thing, our spirits knew each other. And, I never knew what he looked like. And I get home and sure enough there it was on the news, his face. I can’t explain that.

As well as the Gordon Kahl incident, the Ruby Ridge siege and Waco tragedy are other more recent events that greatly effected Celeste’s dedication and support for the movement. Again, Celeste explains how God guided her decision to be involved in the Ruby Ridge incident.

Yes, I am a Christian. I’m a bible believer. If you had to put me down as anything, I guess one that follows the way. I don’t believe in any church doctrine. I’ve read a lot and I don’t agree with any of them. Therefore I choose to read scripture on my own. Sometimes I learn without even looking at scripture. Let me give you an example: those Ruby Ridge people. I didn’t know them, never met them. I knew there was a serious problem over there. I heard over the scanner that the mountain man just shot a federal marshal. And, right away I just assumed it was Randy Weaver. Al and Rose had met them, but I had not. Well, men, knowing that something real serious was going to go on over there, because of what had happened, were very attentive to what was going on--but they paced. Should I go, shall I not go? Will it be a hindrance to Randy and his family? Well you know what I say? I say, “Yahweh! God!, give us an answer! Father, tell me what to do! If it’s your will father, that my family goes and stands at the outside of that protest line, father cause my phone to ring at quarter to the hour.” And, father caused my phone to ring at quarter to the hour. That was my answer, that was our answer. And, I went to my husband. They had gone about their business. They didn’t hear
my prayer. I was alone in the house because I usually don’t talk out loud to my father with people around me. I chose to just direct it to God, but I do it with a loud voice when I do it. And they were out, and Sam had just walked in the door when I was up in the school room. Well, I didn’t have a phone upstairs, and I didn’t have a clock in the room. So, Sam answers the phone as he’s coming in the door. He said “Celeste it’s for you.” And, I said “Sam, what time is it?” And, instead of saying what we’d normally say, it’s quarter to one, and I even said to God quarter to the hour, not quarter to one. So, Sam looks at the clock and says “it’s quarter to the hour Celeste.” I said, “thanks Sam. Guess what, we’re going to Idaho.” Yes! I do. That’s my personal relationship with Father and he’s never failed me yet. I can’t say that everyone in the militia does that, but I do. He assured me that everything would be fine, and everything was when I was there with my family. We all went.

Celeste never separates her dedication to the Militia Movement from her dedication to Yahweh. She reluctantly accepts being identified as a Christian Identity member because of the negative tones that are associated with that title. Celeste finds the connotations associated with that identity offensive.

That was it’s original purpose. Just like Christian used to be. It was like calling Peter or Paul a neo-Nazi. It was the governing people calling them that, it was like a slap in the face. And that is like “Christian Identity.” Today it’s a dirty word. It’s like Mike White man coming to the country and calling the Indian women “squaws.” That means vagina. Now they are fighting that because it’s offensive, and that is what it is like being called Christian Identity. We wouldn’t like being called squaws. The government doesn’t want us to know our roots, because then we feel superior or something. That’s why they label us Christian Identity because they can watch us. They think it’s naughty to recognize that, being Caucasian.

Celeste who is a considerably religious person, but does not attend a church service, acknowledged her shared belief of the Christian Identity doctrine and also identified herself as a “racialist.” She says that she is proud of her “race” and there is nothing wrong with expressing that. This does not mean that she believes that her “race”
is supreme over other races, but she does support separation of the “races.”

Celeste views the woman’s role in the Militia Movement just as the woman’s role should be in her family. She sees the woman’s role as the helpmate, and just as the other women interviewed expressed, by no means does she consider the woman’s role to be submissive. One reason for women to be involved in the Militia Movement, Celeste stresses, is to support each other. She feels that the life way that she has chosen can be so dangerous and upsetting at times, that the women need each other to offer and thrive off of each other’s strength.

Celeste feels that she has been quite successful with helping her militia to educate the people about injustices being conducted by the United States government. Her ambition that she holds with her militia identity is that she will be part of the minority collective action that redirects the American people back to the basics, by educating them about every illegal act that the United States commits. Her natal family is not involved in the Militia Movement and at first they did not realize what Celeste has gotten herself involved in. She discussed her dreams of waking the American people to lead a moral way of life including her natal family in this group, claiming that it is not their fault. She blames the media for giving the militia bad press because she says the media is controlled by the United States government. Regarding her natal family’s opinion Celeste said:

They [Celeste’s natal family] think it’s interesting. It’s over the heads of a lot of them. They’re too busy providing for their family. They wouldn’t give up their guns. They’ve got that attitude. They don’t think we should just slump into a corner, but to take a stand. This wouldn’t be so extreme, but the media made it that way.

Celeste’s fear of her involvement in the Militia Movement has faded over the past
few years. Her most recent moment of fear occurred when the militia office’s phone was constantly ringing directly following the Oklahoma City bombing. She felt sick to her stomach when people were calling them and yelling, “Baby killers!” Eventually these calls tapered off and she has remained strong because she believes that God is the Supreme power and this is what he wanted her to do in the life that he provided for her. Celeste says that she is more apt to fear for her men, than for herself. She worries that they are too kind and might one day let a snake in their home because they do not have the strong intuition like the women. This is another way in that the men rely on the women, for their awareness and sensing of the enemy, whether it’s an immoral government agent or someone else. Celeste is aware of the dangers, but rather than fear, she prefers to deal with certain situations in a mild manner and not cause unnecessary panic.

I had moments of fear that somebody else would allow the devil to come in that door, and would it be a set up. Would somebody leave a bomb in our office for us, there’s been moments. Again, you wind up having to put some of that away. I had years ago, a call here, from somebody who said at a Human Rights meeting that was held here. That tonight there was going to be a barn burning and it was going to be at my house. I said “oh, interesting. Could you give me information as to the time, I’d like to have my children out.” The caller on the other line was stuttering because I didn’t freak out. I wanted my children out, and it was a little disturbing. But, years ago we had federal agents crawling on this property. Oh yeah. We’d go out there and romp around. We figured that we’d scare the hell out of them in our white outfits. We wanted to make sure that they saw us, because the rumor was that we wore camouflage. Well, at night with the moon shining, you can be seen for miles, right? Sometimes we’d pray that they’d fall out of the trees that they were in. What can I say? Bring them to the light of truth or get them the hell out of here father. And, they would fall. You know, give them a heart attack, it didn’t matter what the prayer was, they were affected.
Marie

In Marie’s eighty years of life, she believes that she has witnessed numerous indications and progressions which led to the quelling of the United States. Reflecting her age, at a time when Far Rightists were targeting the exterior rather than the interior enemy, Marie said that she “became aware” at a young age.

I became aware of it when I was a sophomore in highschool. I had a teacher who was from Latvia or Lithuania. He told us about how communism was taking over his country, and he said, “Don’t let communism happen to your country like it did to mine.” He said how the roads were changed, and street signs. Look up the word Jew. It used to be just a religion, now it is who you are. Mr. James instilled something in me that will never die.

Marie’s mother died when she was only six years old. It was during the Cold War that she and her two siblings were raised by their father who never re-married. Her father was rarely ever home and always with a girlfriend according to Marie. He would give his oldest, Marie, one dollar a day for bread and cheese for her and her siblings. Marie was married at a young age and was a schoolteacher mostly in her single years after her husband passed away in 1966.

Marie tried to get a kitchen militia started in her town, but she was unsuccessful due to the lack of women’s interest. Also, a few men that she shares political beliefs with tried to start a local militia, but only about four to five people were receptive to the idea so the militia never took shape. Marie’s standing in the militia is much more individualistic than most of the other women interviewed. Marie said that she would be ready to use her gun if she was forced to defend herself or her country; she said she would be right behind Anthony, who is a son-like figure in his mid-fifties and a close friend to
Marie. She is not as active as she would like to be as a result of her age, but she remains updated about government actions by subscribing to several militia and Far Right newsletters and magazines, including *Media Bypass* and *The Spotlight.*

Marie’s passion is for the protection of the original Constitution, the prevention of a “New World Order,” and to guard the American people’s individual rights from Communists whom she believes are planning to take over the United States. Marie is a retired schoolteacher, claiming that over her lifetime the United States public school system has been infiltrated by Communism. Many of her complaints revolve around the public school system, including the fact that her only child, her daughter, turned into a liberal when she went to college. Marie attended college in the Midwest and then out West and talks about how different schools are today. Marie has always said that the history books used in all schools underlie the true American heroes. Aside from the textbook issue, Marie pinpoints when the American public education system started to decline.

When I was in the university in 1935, there was a man that was the president of the university and he was a dark-haired communist, and we kicked him out. [My state] was the first state that tried to instate progressive education. It was first started in Russia. I was a teacher and I told my father that I wasn’t doing that anymore. You couldn’t swat the children any or you’d get in trouble. They asked us how many of us believed in God, and all of us did. And, they told us that we had to leave that outside, because we weren’t going to be teaching that anymore.

Marie believes that the public education is the most liberal that it’s ever been, and disregards the “Goals 2000” plan as a United Nations operation under the “New World Order” to weaken the United States. She believes that American society is “cutting kids
so much slack” that these children will never have a chance in the world.

Every year the SAT score goes down two to three points. They say that twenty years from now the average school student will have an IQ of an idiot. Now they’re adding some points so people think they are accomplishing something. Just like this affirmative action. What do you think that’s doing? It’s making inferior society, inferior children.

Marie has many complaints about liberalism, especially regarding the feminist movement. She believes that the fastest way to breakdown the family structure is by displacing the mother outside of the home and that the feminists are playing right into the hands of the “New World Order” by being the motivators.

That’s another thing they’re doing now. They’re telling us that motherhood is the lowest calling. That’s what they’re teaching and when you look into ancient history, once you destroy the family unit it collapses. You’ve got to have the family unit. Schools and churches are teaching that now.

In addition to blaming the United States government for the decline of America, Marie blames the American people who are not preparing themselves in cases of emergency; for instance, not storing at least three months worth of dry foods. Marie believes that the militia will play a major role in the revolution against the United States government, but she believes the individual’s role will be the most crucial.

But when it gets down to the nitty gritty, it’s going to be the old, uneducated hillbilly that’s going to save this country. Fifty-three percent of this country lives on the east and west coast. If it gets to a revolution, the Texans and Wyoming people are going to be pretty hard to stop.

Marie assures that there will be bloodshed in the United States, but this country will not go down because of dedicated patriotic Americans.

One strong connection that Marie associates with the “New World Order” that the
other interviewed women do not, is how she views “race” as a major factor in the
takeover by the United Nations. Foremost, Marie believes that with liberalism supporting
admixture between the “races,” the American citizens are all being turned into mongrels.
She thinks that this mixing of the different ethnic groups destroys civilizations as has been
proven in the past. Before Marie explained her views about the “New World Order,” she
candidly identified herself as a White Supremacist.

We started talking about this racist and what not, I guess I’m a White
Supremacist. But, if you drive to El Paso, Texas, beautiful city, over here
is Mexico. Dirt roads, pit toilets, no electric lights, and those people have
been there the same time or even longer. Now, in Africa, there has never
been an invention out of Africa that was worth a nickel. And, where does
all of this come from? It comes from White people...Well, you’re not
talking about the southern [African]. The Negro. They don’t even have a
wheel in several parts of that country, they don’t even have a hammer.
They’re breaking rocks with rocks. Then, the Egyptians, they had things
that we still haven’t perfected, such as coal light. We have never been able
to do that. They cannot take the Black, the Mexican and make them do
what the White person is doing. It would take them a half a month to get
to doing what the White man is doing.

Marie is a polygenist and also believes that the Caucasian “race” is being systematically
forced into decline through admixture. “The whole foundation of this “One World
Government” is to not help people, but to drag them down. They want to make a Third
World country out of the US.” Marie believes that anything good that has ever happened
in this world is because of the White intelligence factor, which Marie believes to be strictly
biological.

Throughout Marie’s life, she has been searching for a religion that she feels
comfortable in. She says you name the church and she swears that she has been a
member of it, including the Pentecostal, Baptist, and Lutheran churches. Marie joined the
Mormon Church in 1995 and says that she feels content there for now. One of the main attractions to the Mormon Church for Marie was their emphasis on teaching all people Survivalism, including storing food and being independently sufficient.

_Elena_

Elena is fifty years old, has been married to her first husband since 1977, and has one child. She was raised by her mother and father on the east coast, in a rural area, with one younger brother and one younger sister. After Elena and her husband got married, they lived in the southwest and then moved north for work. For the past two years, Elena and her husband have been separated by one thousand miles because her husband accepted government job training when he was laid off from his job in 1994. Elena assumed her husband's responsibilities and maintained her commitments. She was a mother who had also become a father to their son, only seeing her husband two to three times a year.

Elena is not a central figure to the Militia Movement as most of the women in this study are. She says that she stays informed through her militia friends that she considers to be close family. She shares many of the same beliefs and grievances of the other militia women, but feels a stronger conviction regarding her identity as a Christian Identity member. She attended the Christian Identity Church that her husband was a minister at until a few years ago when the members' included neo-Nazis and skinheads who displayed "everything but moral behavior." There was no longer a Christian community environment that there had previously existed, so Elena and her family ceased attending that church, but remain adamant about their interpretations of _The Bible._
Elena’s irritation centers upon the restoration of the United State’s moral fiber, for the sake of our children and this country’s future. As the other women have discussed, the decline in the American public school system is playing a critical role in the deterioration of America’s morals.

Raised a Methodist, later Elena began searching for answers in the Catholic and Pentecostal Churches, as well. Her husband exposed her to the Christian Identity faith and played a major role in effecting the path of life that Elena least expected to choose.

I kept searching and I could never get a drink to catch my thirst. On my first date with Ed we went to a John Wayne movie and went back to his house and read *The Bible*. I think I was twenty nine. I met him in a letter. My cousin was in the air force and he asked if it was ok if I gave Ed my address. Ed came and went to my ten year reunion, and then I took my parents to visit new Mexico where he was, and that’s when we went on our first date. After that he asked what I thought about him as a person, and I asked the same of him and then he said well what do you say that we get married? I was stunned. I had reserved myself as single at twenty-nine, not having children and that. I said “Oh, why not.” We were both twenty-nine, he was married two times before. He always wanted a home. I went back home and gave my notice. I was an income tax realtor and made a lot of money. Twenty years now. He’s a good husband: doesn’t cuss, drink, smoke. He knows his scripture backwards and forwards. He’s a good provider and dad.

Elena was also a florist and had her own business for several years out of her home during her marriage. After she closed down her shop because of lacking finances, she worked for another florist then was laid off in 1996. After many months of paperwork, she began a daycare out of her home in 1997.

Elena expresses a true love for solidity of the family. She was inspired by her parents believing that they taught her the morals that she has passed onto her son. She believes that there has been a major division in the family structure, which has led many
parents to become irresponsible and to not raise their children properly. In jest, Elena
traces the origins of the fall-out of the family structure.

It all started in 1962 when the Beatles invaded the United States. I blame
everything on them. Everything went haywire. All of the flower people.
The parents weren’t the same as my parents. I was a heretic and didn’t
know. I had a different way of thinking. I stuck by what my parents
taught me no matter what. So many kids are messed up these days, parents
don’t teach them manners and respect. Nowadays, people don’t know
what their kids are doing.

In the past, Elena has had unpleasant experiences with the media; one in particular
still effects the way that she and her family are treated in their community. She is angry
with irresponsible journalists that have contorted her words to sell a story, and she
despises how they have influenced her community’s actions who turned against her and
her family them for years.

They [journalists] wanted to know women in the Christian Identity
Movement. I mean what they did, how they raised their children, and I
thought boy, this is a great opportunity for me because I have a learning
disabled son, and I home-schooled, and I want people to know that it’s a
real positive thing. We’re not a bunch of, I mean, we don’t teach our sons
how to handle a rifle and march up and down the street, throw racial slurs
out. I mean that’s, we just don’t do that. And, I thought, this is going to
be great. They took pictures of when we went to paint class and we went
to the park, just neat stuff that we do all of the time. And, I was just, I
thought my heart was going to stop beating. No kidding. It wasn’t
anything like he said it was going to be. And, I phoned up the magazine
twice before it came out and I said, “what does it say?” “Well, we can’t tell
you what it says.” “Well, what are you going to title it?” “Well, we can’t
tell you what we’re going to title it.” They would never tell me anything.
They were just, it was unbelievable. And, and it was titled “Hate in
America.” Right. He just lied to me about all kinds of stuff, it was just
unbelievable, I was just devastated. And, I thought well, you know, when
an article like that comes out about you in your own town, I mean it’s
incredible. You don’t, you just can never imagine how people are going to
react. Some of them react as bad as you dreamt that they would. People
that you knew, and were your friends, when they see you on the street,
they turn their heads. They won’t, they won’t acknowledge you. You get all of these phone calls, it’s just, it’s ugly. It’s just really ugly. You see, what they accused me of doing, they did it to me. They discriminated against me. But, they don’t get it, they just, it just goes over their heads, they just don’t get what their doing.

Elena resents people who do not search for their own answers, but rely on the news media’s biased opinions. She said that they are “close-minded, gutless people” who have not taken the time to seek the truth for themselves.

Like all of the women interviewed, Elena believes that the government is suppressing information from the American people. She used the Randy Weaver case as her example. Elena felt particularly close to that incident because her son was the same age as Weaver’s son, who was shot and killed by government agents. She believes that if it happened to his family that it could happen to anybody’s family and that is why the people need to be involved in the militia.

There are lots of people in this country that care about what’s happened in this country, about the lies the government is telling us, and what they are doing. There are so many things that the government is involved in and they haven’t told the people. They don’t want to tell the people. They’re not ever going to until they have to. But the information leaks out. Just the fact that the militia is trying to make the people aware of what the government is doing to them. All the information is being concealed. Things that are happening, why are there foreign troops on our soil? I mean, what about that one thing? The government is never going to give you an answer. As I see it, the militia is just trying to educate the people, educate the people. When you’re dealing with educated people, you can find peaceful solutions to a lot of things. When injustices are stopped, things get turned around.

Elena believes that regardless of which branch of the Far Right Movement the government tries and even succeeds at shutting down, that the Movement will remain strong because of all of the other groups involved.
It’s a web within a web. So, if one little point of the web gets destroyed it doesn’t weaken the web. So, as far as White Christian Patriots are concerned there are lots of organizations that overlap and intertwine. So, if one little organization is taken out, right now they have been focusing on the militia. You could totally wipe out the militia and never talk about it again and the web is still strong.

As far as women’s and men’s roles are concerned, Elena deems respect to one another’s intelligence as a major factor to maintain a successful marriage. She criticizes the man that controls his spouse’s life because “Yahweh does not say to do that in The Bible.” The only statement that is close to that is how God created Adam a helpmate, but Elena views that statement as added strength to the man’s voice simply because he has his wife’s support. “Yes, the man is the head of the household, but behind every successful man, you’re going to find a successful woman somewhere.” Elena feels personally secure in her role in her marriage.

There isn’t anything that I want to do that I can’t do. I would respect my husband always, I would talk to him about it. I know my capabilities, I know what is possible. He may not like it, but he wouldn’t tell me that I couldn’t do it. It’s just an understanding that you have. That’s what marriage is supposed to be. I’m not his slave and I’m not going to walk ten paces behind him. God created woman from Adam’s rib, not from his head to be above him, and not from his knees to be below him, but from his rib to walk beside him. Two heads are always better than one and when you marry you become one. I have as much to attribute to the marriage that he does.

Women’s liberation was a complicated topic for Elena to discuss. She supports women who must work to benefit the welfare of their family because most families have both parents working to pay the bills. “But, women who go out and target a man’s job just to get it, I don’t think that’s right. I don’t believe in the women’s liberation the way the media portrays it with the burning bras and so on.”
“Race” is an influential factor in how Elena perceives her world. She blames the “kooks” for being attracted to the Far Right Movement because of the way that media portrays racism and turns it into a negative matter. She says that the media glamorizes the racial aspects of the Christian Identity Movement, but that is not what it is all about. She believes that she is racist simply because she is White, that she is most likely to stay within the White world. Elena does not consider herself to be a White Supremacist because she does not think that just because of the color of her skin that she is better than another racial person. However, she does support separatism.

Separate, but equal. And, you know I, you can say that to a lot of people, but I don’t think they understand what it means. In the scripture, God gave every race their boundaries and habitations. He said that and they can be equal amongst themselves but separate. That’s the way he made it. I think equality is a good thing for everybody.

Elena is a polygenist and a firm believer in keeping the “races” pure, deeming that admixture leads to impurity. She explains how she does not mind other “races,” but chooses to remain within her racial household. She and her husband have raised their son to also subscribe to this Christian Identity translation of the scriptures. Elena will not allow her son to date another “racial” person as long as he lives in her household, but says that she would have to accept it if he did after he moved out.

I believe, based on scientific fact that there are only three pure races: the Oriental, the Blacks, and the Whites. And anything else in between I believe man created that. I think if God intended of there being only one race of people he would have made it that way in the beginning. And he would have given it more color. Whether it be white, or yellow, or brown, it doesn’t matter if that’s what he intended. But I don’t believe he did. Since he created different races of people and if a race of people wants to keep their household pure, or, well, pure - that’s the only word I can say. Why isn’t it ok for those people in that race to do that? Ok. If I were a
black man, number one, I would want to keep my racial household pure. I would select a mate that’s of the same race that I am. Because that’s what God, he created that, why wouldn’t he want to keep it the way he created it?

Elena says that she has based her racial ideologies around her research of The Bible and with scientific facts. Through her studies, “races” profit from being kept separate from one another. Elena is very outspoken on the issue of “race” and does not understand why America is uncomfortable when talking about “race” and why the government is trying to force the “races” together.

I believe the Orientals have been here the longest. I believe the Blacks have been here the next longest and I think the White race has been here the least longest. Based on the scientific fact that we’ve been able to read. And, I uh, stand to be corrected if somebody can show me that, scientifically or historically, I’d be real happy to see that information, other than what I’ve been able to read...But, no matter, no matter what the beginning was, there are white people, there are black people, and there are oriental people. Where did they come from? And, why isn’t it ok to keep those races separate? It’s not a wrong thing. I think people should be able to get along ok, but I don’t think they should destroy their race. God created it. He created it, he said whatever he created was good, so, why isn’t it good to keep it pure?

If you totally want to destroy a race, you can do it. You can do it by marrying out of your racial household and having children out of your racial household. Because when you mix two substances, the result of that is an impure substance. That’s what it’s like to me, that’s it. I don’t see any problem with just wanting to marry within your own racial household. I see nothing wrong with that. And, people get real bent out of shape when you say that. It’s just hard to sit down and talk about one aspect of it, or several aspects of it, when people, they’re talking to you with a closed mind. They don’t want to hear what you have to say, they just want to argue with you... I believe what I believe because I’ve prayed about it and studied it, I’ve researched it. And I believe that this is right for me. And I’m not trying to cram it down anybody else’s throat, they can do what ever they want. They have to answer for whatever they say and do just like I do. And I don’t think there’s any hate involved in it at all. If somebody wants to marry outside of their race, that’s fine. You can still be
my friend. I'll still be just as kind to you as before I knew that. It's not
something I'd do, but I'm not going to think any less of you because you
did do that. That's your own personal choice.

Elena was last preparing for the return of her husband. She realizes that there will
be changes in each of their responsibilities, but is eager to discontinue her role as the
father, plumber, and carpenter. She looks forward to the challenge of finding her space
again, which may include returning to school. That is her one regret in life, that she did
not continue her education beyond high school.

Connie

Connie was born and raised by her mother and father in the Greater Pacific
Northwest. She is the oldest of two children. Connie is fifty-nine years old and has three
children from her first marriage, and has been married to her second husband since 1980,
who has six children of his own. Together, they have fifteen grandchildren. Connie
attended one year of college in her home state and currently works in a nursing home.

Militia activities that Connie participates in include: attending meetings with her
husband, occasionally attending trials of Far Right members, and a few years back she
helped form a local militia with her husband and friends, including other women. The
primary reason that Connie is involved in the militia is because of her love of her children
and grandchildren. "I don't want them to be slaves to corporate America."

Influenced by her parents to distrust the government, Connie says the evidence
was in the history books that she was taught from in school. She believes that the books
are filled with lies to protect the government that are just beginning to be exposed now.
She especially has a problem with instituting the “Goals 2000” into the American public education system. “They have the curriculum all over the world. It’s about changing our social, ethnic being.” Connie says that this is how the government will infiltrate its power subtly, to the children, and then when they grow up they will not realize that it is wrong. Just as mentioned by another woman interviewed, Connie fears that the backbone of the take-over is Communism. This is another motivation of Connie’s to keep her active in the Militia Movement.

It just happened. Probably since the sixties. I didn’t pay attention to the government, and I hated watching the news. Then, I started raising my kids, and the lights come on, you know. Raising family, that’s when I started. When Region Eight happened. Actually, when I was in fifth grade and my teacher said, “watch out for communism. This is what communism is,” and we studied it. Watch for it in your life. Of course I didn’t watch for it. And, then everybody was building a bomb shelter in the fifties. That’s when they decided to dump that nuclear waste on us. We didn’t have a bomb shelter. We figured that we’d want to stand out there and get fried. There wouldn’t be anything left after they came out anyway.

Connie and her family are victims of the Nuclear Test in Nevada, having lived in one of the “hot spots.” She is not surprised that the government has been withholding that information saying that they are even being criticized by the media and governmental health agencies for not releasing that information when they first learned of the health risks attached. Honesty is one of her requests to the government as a militia member.

[Militia members] hang tough to the Constitution. And, probably, the Ten Commandments, and do unto others. Just to be fair. We want the government to be fair with us. They waited fifty years to tell us that we had fall-out from the Nevada test-site. All of my family died of cancer. I lived in [one of the “hot spots”]. We always wondered why everybody was dying of cancer. This is a pain in your side. We were raised to be so patriotic. My grandmother came from Scotland and she was so proud to be an America citizen. And we were brought up so patriotic, and when
you’re lied to. I guess that’s why we joined.

Connie was raised to be a Christian, not belonging to a particular religious denomination. Her parents taught her everything, including how to be a moral person. She claims to have always followed the basic rule, “do unto others as you would have them do to you.”

Connie does not fear Communism because she is not a part of it and does not plan to be. “Communism is already in the United States but it is called socialism,” according to Connie. She considers herself to be a law-abiding citizen playing by the rules, at the same time speaking her grievances with the government.

If everybody was afraid to speak out and say what they thought and what they believed in, then we’re all done. You’d be surprised that most households won’t speak up. They’re afraid that they’re going to lose their jobs and that they won’t be able to make their house payments. And, they have children in school and they all own a car. That’s why they don’t speak up. And, I own a car and I don’t have my house paid for and I pay my damn taxes as long as I can. And, I speak up.

Her complaint against the American people is their silence. She feels that Americans are too concerned with losing their material possessions to the government, that they are living in fear, and not existing as independent beings.

According to Connie, her most recent experience with the media was comical. She had received phone calls about a militia movie that was to be filmed near her house and they wanted to know where all of the militia compounds and camps were. She laughed hysterically at them. She cannot believe that these people had fed into the stereotypes of men in the woods, “wearing camouflage with MI’s on their bellies.” Connie is angry that an American would make a movie portraying militias as poisoning their own people. As
with Oklahoma City, she believes that no American would ever purposely harm all of those people, and blames media for portraying militias as evil groups which has turned the rest of America against them. Connie believes that the media causes negative aspects of the Militia Movement. She says the media intensifies the Militia Movement’s actions and it sensationalizes violence and conflict which attracts young men who have not grown up yet. These “boys” are looking for a reason to fight and the media has set the stage for their confrontation, Connie says.

Whether there will be a fall-out between the government and the Militia Movement Connie is not certain, but she is convinced that the American economy is going to collapse. She blames this on the fact that America has been taken out of the people’s hands by corporate international leaders. Connie believes that this is killing American moral and independence.

They’ve all moved to Africa now, gold mines. All of our steal factories have left. Our farmers are shut down. It’s all corporate farms now. We’ll be doing all of the work while they sit up there. We’re not producing. All of your shoes are in China and Taiwan. Then they’ll take over when our money falls, the Communists. Then the UN will be in charge. I don’t know why anybody fears the militia. The militia is all of the people of the United States. All of the people are going to get pissed over all of these taxes.

Jennifer

Jennifer, the youngest of eight children, was raised by her mother in the mid-West. Her parents divorced when she was only nine years old. A few years ago, Jennifer moved to the Greater Pacific Northwest to work for her brother as a disc jockey, and currently
she is in the nursing field. Jennifer is thirty-three years old and divorced with three children. Her mother lives with her and helps with raising the children. Jennifer says that she could not be so involved in the militia and Freemen if it was not for her mother's support.

Having been a central figure in the Militia Movement, Jennifer claims to be more involved with the Freemen these days. She has been very active in both movements. Previously she was the director of her area when another militia in the state requested representation in her county, she helped to organize militia meetings, she was involved in communications during one stand-off, has been on radio talk shows, and has been interviewed by journalists.

There are many influential factors that have caused Jennifer to become so aware and concerned about her governments activities. Although she is younger compared to the majority of the women interviewed for this research, Jennifer says that she is from the Far Right Movement’s old school of thought.

I am a newcomer, but some consider me an old comer because I educated myself. You start your cycle, the cycle of life, like the “Lion King.” I started as a “sheeple.” I thought the media and the government was great, then you start contacting with people. Then you start to educate yourself, constant learning. Everybody has their own agenda, different ways to accomplish things. Everybody comes together to accomplish that circle.

Jennifer has been outspoken regarding her opinions throughout her life. A series of events led Jennifer to her dedication to both Militia Movement and Freemen ideologies. Now a Christian, Jennifer was raised a Catholic, but was asked to leave the church because of her involvement in a Ross Perot group. Ironically, she was asked to leave the
Perot group after she began discussing survivalist skills, then introducing "conspiracy theories." Currently, she and her children attend a Christian Church whose minister preaches "New World Order" beliefs. Some of the members are Christian Identity, but the church is interdenominational. The Church also supplies the children with education Monday through Friday with a home schooling approach, including small classes and accelerating at the child's pace.

Jennifer's convictions are driven by her protection of her children. "I center around my three kids growing up in a hazardous free country, that's all I'm concerned with." Jennifer identified with the Movement around the time of the Randy Weaver incident. She was learning her information through materials, and remembers being at a picnic when the Waco catastrophe occurred. She recalls looking at her mother and telling her that "there is something seriously wrong in this country." Her mother has always been encouraging Jennifer to speak her mind and Jennifer thrives off of this support. Jennifer recalls turning her mother onto her beliefs and her mother remembering how her own father used to tell her the same stories. Jennifer's mother is a believer and took the responsibility as informer when her daughter was at a stand-off. Her mother responded to all of the phone calls at their house, keeping many patriots updated about the situation.

Although Jennifer's mother ascribes to her beliefs, the rest of Jennifer's family is not as supportive. Jennifer believes that she used to be just like them in that she was oblivious to the wrong-doings of the government, acting as a "sheeple."

My father is the biggest Clinton fan that you will find. And, another brother called me after he saw me on CNN during the standoff. "What the hell are you doing out there?" You're like talking to a complete idiot here.
You have to go back to square one and try to figure out how to explain things. It was like, “you’re turning radical and you’re going to end up in jail.” There’s eight of us total, and we’re spread out. That to me is irrelevant. One day they’ll realize what their little sister has been up to and that she’s right.

Just as most of the other women expressed in their interviews, Jennifer no longer fears her involvement in the Movement. She has had rocks thrown through her car window and says that a man tried to kidnap her from the mall once, but her men friends stopped it from happening. Jennifer believes that she has time to be cautious but not to fear.

I think I stopped being afraid some time ago. I have put my whole life and my family’s life in God’s hands. There are things that I am concerned about, I am careful. Some call it paranoia. I’m careful of who I meet in private. If a guy calls and says he wants to meet me, I bring somebody with me. I never go a long distance by myself. So once you’ve got that belief and that strong conviction in God, you’re pretty much ... my fears have left. I fear for my children, but I pretty much have kept them out of things.

Jennifer says that her convictions are her lifestyle, she does not leave her thoughts somewhere and then pick them back up the next day. She looks forward to the day that she will find the right man to marry so that she can “be a mom.” She says that leading her life is very stressful but she manages well. And, if and when Jennifer gets married she does not plan to step down from her beliefs.

I have this cause that I have such a strong conviction for it. I can’t say that I’m too tired. I remember when I was six months pregnant, I remember sitting down and just crying. And, my mom walked up to me and said, “Do you want to get out of this? You can walk away.” And, I looked at her and I said, “It’s not an option.” I have such a strong belief. I have such a strong belief in what is right and wrong, I am not willing to sacrifice my children’s future. That for me it’s not an option to get out of it. I have put myself in the forefront, which wasn’t on purpose, but that’s
just the way it went. And, I said, maybe it’s kind of like being in the mafia, once you’re in, you’re in for life. It just isn’t an option for me. I know it in my heart. I’m not going to stop.

Although Jennifer displays a strong will to battle for her beliefs and be heard, she rejects the idea of herself being a feminist. Just as the other women interviewed, Jennifer looks to *The Bible* for her definition of the women’s and men’s roles in the family and society. She believes that the women are supposed to “support their men.” But, as in her case, when a man is not present the woman has to step to the forefront and defend her household. She believes that the men are meant to be the leaders of the militia and to not be afraid. As far as equality between the sexes, Jennifer disagrees with that because she likes the men having more responsibility. She does not believe that the women should be “barefoot and pregnant,” and she thinks it is discouraging that both parents are forced to provide for their families these days.

Equality between the “races” is appropriate for Jennifer, however she maintains a belief in racial purity. She would never mate outside of her racial household. Jennifer is teaching her daughters the same “moral and correct teachings” but said that she will leave the decision up to them. If they truly loved somebody outside of their racial household, Jennifer would support her children’s decisions. She claims that perhaps it was the way she was raised but Jennifer views herself as being racial, but not a racist.

Jennifer is entirely against homosexuality. Returning to *The Bible* for backing, Jennifer says that homosexuality and bisexuality are against God’s law, mostly being against procreation. “It’s not that man is supposed to lie with man, or, woman with woman. The whole point of procreation is to create. How are you supposed to create?”
She is also opposed to children being raised by homosexuals.

You're supposed to be raised by a male and female parent. One of my kids doesn't get to see her father, and she's wondering what's going on. They need to have the equal parts. My son, he sees his father but he lives with a house of women. I do have male friends that come around so it's ok. They have to have the balance of both. They need to have the balanced atmosphere.

A sense of getting back to the simple life and little government intrusion is expressed by Jennifer. But, until then she will still protest at her state's capital and participate in letter-writing campaigns. Especially when the Federal government attempts to institute Marshall Law, Jennifer expects everything will come to a head. She believes that there will be a war between the good and the evil to cleanse the earth resembling the Armageddon prophecy. Jennifer says that if the American people do not "wake up" soon that the United States will soar into atrophy.

Joan

Joan is twenty-six years old and was born and raised in the Greater Pacific Northwest area. Her first experience with the Militia Movement was when she began dating a man in the Militia who moved to her hometown. Her school tried to forbid her to take a trip with him but her parents said that she could go. She said that as she started to get to know his family who are also involved in the Militia Movement, and "they weren't anything like the rumors. I saw what the media was doing and the lies it was portraying about this family, and that was it."

Joan works at the Militia headquarters in the office. Her duties mostly revolve
around taking care of checking and responding to e-mail messages, looking up
government and Militia information on the Internet, at the same time taking care of her
three-year-old son. Sometimes, she also travels with her husband to present their Militia
information and sell books, videos, and newsletter at Expositions.

The fear has vanished from Joan’s life, once she learned from her husband’s
dedication and the Militia Movement.

I even got to the point where I asked Ben [Joan’s husband], “why can’t
you get out of it? It scares me. I don’t like the threat that they are doing.”
And, he said, “what the use of living as a slave, I’d rather die free.” That’s
an extremely strong conviction and that’s what our country was based on.
From then on, I learned something new everyday from this so called
movement.

Most of Joan’s complaints are directed towards the people who are busy talking
about how horrible Joan’s family is rather than discovering for themselves the truth. She
despises how people rely on the media for all of their information. She does not
understand how so many people can be against her family when it is her family that is
working at the local food network to provide for them.

Joan will be home schooling her son as he gets older. She, along with the other
women interviewed, has numerous problems with the public school system.

They cannot read. They are illiterate. When I was first getting into this
family, I wanted to know what I was getting into. And I went to a bible
reading, and Ben’s cousin who was six years younger than me was reading
better than me. I couldn’t believe it. And I was honor role and honorable
mention. I was embarrassed. There’s such a misconception out there that
these home schooled children cannot read and are illiterate. No, it’s the
other way around. Four out of twenty-eight could not read in my class.
I will definitely home school and get a lot of help. I know too much now,
that history is taught wrong. What they taught me and what Ben shared
with me, there were contradictions. And, I would go back to my teacher
and ask her. Like the federal government and government. How can we as a country be in debt to ourselves? That tells me there's another shadow government. That there's another government that we are supposed to keep in check. I want him [Joan's son] to learn the truth.

Having lost her first baby when she was only nineteen years old, Joan is extremely skeptical about bio-medicine and the corporate control over it. She feels that they are using the American people as "guinea pigs" for the government's benefit, without even warning the people. Joan expressed her mistrust for anyone who she could not trust her life with, they are not her friend.

Unfortunately, Joan was unable to discuss her views in more detail. Because of busy schedules, our last interview correspondence was supposed to be through the mail, but her husband read the follow-up questions and told her she could not respond because she would be jeopardizing her family's safety. By not completing the questions Joan said she had to respect her husband as having the last say.

**Conclusion**

The life history method was used to personalize and explore the foundations of militia women's involvement and to portray a collective action of their beliefs. This method allows for comparing and contrasting similar experiences that has led each woman to the Militia Movement and has rejected the notion that all of their religious and political beliefs are identical. Although differences in ideologies are apparent I believe that these life histories are representative of other militia women's lives.

The variation in age representation provides one with a view of what historical
events these women experienced and allows for comparison of how these women have selected different aspects of the problems facing Americans. With an array of examples, many of the problems presented revolve around the American public school system and how the government should not have control over the curriculum. Although the women explained similar beliefs regarding their interpretations of the women’s role in marriage and society, their views regarding “race” contrasted considerably. Most notable is the instance in which the only two women who attend church services on a regular basis were the women who brought up the “race” issue and how they feel about supremacy and separatism, and how The Bible is their supported documentation for their beliefs.

The majority of these women acted as the guardian to their siblings, as six out of seven of the life histories were with the oldest child. Half of the women were raised in a single-parent household, due to death of a parent or divorce between their parents. Five out of seven of the women were divorced, four being re-married. All of the divorced women used experiences from their failed marriages to explain their grievances with society’s morals and how it is deteriorating the family structure.

The frustrations that these women are experiencing always revert back to family values and the social immorality that they view in the United States. The struggle presented is how these women and their families want to provide for themselves without the government’s interference, yet they find themselves often concerned about this country’s immoral social behaviors affecting their lives. The next chapter delves into how these women view themselves as agents of change in the United States, how they strategically express their desires for their country by reflecting on their personal life
experiences, and how they have come to learn the dominant ideologies of the Militia Movement.
CHAPTER FIVE

ANALYSIS OF SOCIAL AND IDEOLOGICAL COMPONENTS OF THE
MILITIA MOVEMENT: THE WOMEN’S PERCEPTION

Introduction

In order to examine social movement ideologies one must examine three components. One must look at the goals of the movement, the members’ strategies used to achieve these goals, and the basis for their actions. The difficulty is that not all members subscribe to the same beliefs or reasons for their actions, but usually some aspect of their behavior and thinking can be traced to the movement (Herberle 1951: 24).

The life histories of the militia women were conducted in order to present and reconstruct the ideologies of the Militia Movement according to the women. These stories were used as a tool of discovery which uncovered the women’s personal experiences, how they chose this identity, their goals as militia members, and the strategies that they employed to create an impact. The women were involved in piecing together how they perceived the growth and development of their ideologies.

In this chapter I show how these militia women were independent actors whose lives and ideologies have not been compromised by the grander societal structure in which they live. This examination penetrates these militia women’s ideologies through experience, identity, voice, and action. What caused these women to be attracted to the dominant ideologies of the Militia Movement? How did they learn about these ideologies? Who and what influenced their convictions? How are they expressing their grievances?
What kind of social action are they engaged in? Does their speech and action compliment or contrast with one another? In addition to answering these questions I will show how these women have found strength in the movement and in themselves by acting collectively (especially in the beginning stages of the movement’s formation).

Certain themes constantly emerged in the women’s speech including: conflict with specified internal and external rivals, anti-feminism, desire for a simple life, religion, sex roles in family and movement, education, anti-communism, race, and complaints about the movement. By examining each of the women’s interpretations of these topics, I have compiled their stories which can be used as a generalization for the portrait of women in the Militia Movement.

Rivalry Defined: Internal and External

William Beeman refers to the Militia Movement as a “revitalization movement” claiming that “wherever one group perceives itself as having its powers and authority in society usurped by another and blames both external and internal causes for its fall from power” (1996: 43). Their external rivals include government, media, and human rights groups. The militia views these institutions as being hurtful to the American society and its heritage and reacts with resistance. Militia internal rivals are the American citizens. These people are often referred to by militia members as “sheeple” because of their irresponsible behavior and fear of the American government. To a lesser degree their internal rivals are also those members of the Far Right Movement whom they do not associate with because of disagreement in voice and action.33
I prefer to use the term "rival" instead of "enemy" because the militia members have not cut their communications and ties to the government, the media, or the American people. Although human rights groups have been offered a chance for rebuttal by certain militia members in the past, these groups would most likely be considered the enemy to the Militia Movement. However, to avoid confusion I prefer to use the term rival for all militia challengers throughout this interpretation.

The government, especially the Federal government, is the main rival of the Militia Movement. This is the institution that the Militia Movement considers to be most oppressive to the American people. The militia women expressed how they think that the government has overstepped its boundaries with regards to gun restrictions, land ownership, taxes, and wetland preservation laws. They feel that the government is overbearing and not fulfilling the dreams that our forefathers had for this country, that of freedom within a republic. The militia women expressed how they feel their individual freedom and liberties have been stolen from them and that the American government is no longer working "by the people and for the people." They believe it has changed into a large, oppressing corporation where hard-working Americans have been limited, bought out, and stripped of their dignity. There are many grievances against the government but the foundation of their criticism is based on the government controlling the American people in any way that it can. These women fear the government is turning Americans into dependent citizens who will become slaves to a communistic takeover once the "New World Order" is in effect.

The media is believed to be controlled by the government. A large amount of
militia propaganda and rhetoric that I was given was based on the belief that the government sets forth many lies, therefore they must be controlling the media in order to continue deceiving American people. They believe that the media is the government's tool in which to control American society and their beliefs. This is why they think that part of the Militia Movement's calling is to provide American citizens with information that will make them challenge their government's actions and bring criminal officials to justice. The militia women also attributed their bad reputation to media misrepresentation and incompetence. They believe that the media has created and sensationalized many militia beliefs in order to scare the American people aware from learning important knowledge about their government; also, the militia women view the media as a money-making opportunity to sell "stories." Although each of these women has mentioned an unfavorable experience that they had with the media, they have not shunned all reporters and researchers. They believe that there are people out there who are interested in their story and that if they discounted all media as evil then they would be contradicting their grievances with the media.

Contemporary Human Rights groups surfaced as a response to White Supremacy Movements in the 1970s. Their purpose was to deplete the power of the Far Right by informing their communities of their actions and some groups were involved in bringing Rightist criminals to justice.\(^4\) These groups include The Southern Poverty Law Center, Coalition for Human Dignity, Montana Human Rights Network, and the Anti-Defamation League. Many of these groups have assumed covering militia stories after its resurgence in the early 1990s.
There is a different relationship that exists between the Militia Movement and Far
Right groups as compared to militia dealings with the government and the media. Human
Rights groups are not trying to compromise with the Militia Movement. They do not
want to understand what experiences have led militia members to their way of thinking.
The militia women explained that there are a few government officials, mostly local and
state-wide, with whom they have a healthy communicative relationship and that they do
not consider all media articles degrading. Counteracting the Militia Movement’s strategies
of influence, the Human Rights groups are campaigning for the same crowd’s support -
the American public. Both movements take their competition to the personal level with
demonizing the other group’s leaders being critical of their personal behaviors as well as
their legal record. In addition, the militia women see the Human Rights members as
belonging to the “liberal Left” a group that they do not predict a compromise with.

All of the militia women consider their political thinking origins to be that of the
“sheeple,” an ignorant, fearful people. This is why their empathy is extended to some of
these American citizens including their family members who are not involved in the Militia
Movement. The militia women expressed hope for the U.S. and its citizens as long as the
citizens would “come-around” to the truth about their government’s tyrannical behaviors
and act on their honor. The Militia Movement leaders meet and lecture to “sheeple”-like
citizens at various gun shows and Preparedness Expos across the nation. The militia
women explained that it was an extensive and painful process to see their government in a
new and critical light and this is why it is so important for them to be supportive of their
fellow American citizens. The militia women view the current militia members as leaders
of the people who will turn society around (Beeman 1996: 43).

On the other hand, the militia women are angry and frustrated with the other portion of American citizens whom they believe have chosen to ignore and/or participate in their government’s unlawful actions of overbearing power and control of the American public. They accuse these citizens of having low moral standards. The women are against welfare and its recipients because they believe these people are unlawfully reaping hard-working citizens money and that they are falling into the government’s web of dependent citizens. The militia women think that the American people who are against the Militia Movement’s ideologies have based their opinions on incompetent reports and articles prepared by media and liberals. They are not opposed to Americans disagreeing with their ideologies as long as they learn the information for themselves and do not respond to hearsay.

*Militia Women’s Micro- and Macro- Associations*

The militia women discuss paralleling experiences in which their internal and external rivals have challenged their ideologies. Their thoughts are not concentrated strictly on the micro-level pertaining to their families and local community. All of their complaints are originated in the micro-level then to the macro-level or vice versa which demonstrates how they are aware of how these worlds are constantly affecting one another. For example, Rose discussed her ex-husband as being lazy and irresponsible because he was unable to provide for his family and her thought correlates to her resentment of the welfare system and its recipients.
Many of the women believe that their natal and extended family’s morals are suffering as a result of inaccurate education and how the national education level has gravely affected the country’s family values including government officials. These women believe that by people not being encouraged to store food in case of emergency that the government is in control of our food supply which causes dependency, desperate actions, and a path to Communist control. By the American people’s ignorance they are allowing the government to gain even more control over them. They also believe that the national media’s portrayal of the Militia Movement has created contention between militia and community members in local communities. And, the United State contemporary role as corporate America has caused traditionally independent peoples to be desperate and dependent Americans with no morale left.

All of these complaints relate to how the militia women are struggling every day to take America back and to instill the necessary values for a powerful country. They want to revert back to an independent country where people take care of their own problems and how things will get done only if you do not “pass the buck.” They see the reward of being independently active and self-efficient is that people will not challenge you. Rose expressed her success of having her sister and her family left alone by an abusive teacher once Rose physically managed the teacher.

**Motivation For Membership: Women as Social Actors**

Guida West and Rhoda Lois Blumberg suggest that women’s contributions to gender-integrated social movements and protest often exposed them to the oppression that
they as women are facing. They believe that these realizations lead them to social activism in women issue-oriented movements (1990: 21). This was the anti-thesis of the militia women’s participation in movements. Although the women interviewed are involved in public education protest, they have rejected having a need or interest in participating in any faction of the Women’s Movement. Beth Schneider indicates that “it would be instructive to examine the case of women in right-wing movements as a possible exception. Women’s traditional subordination to men may be part of the system of values they consciously espouse and fight to uphold” (Ibid.; Schneider 1989). This position was most often expressed by the militia women as not being subordinate, but being loyal as their husband’s "helpmate." They maintained that they were not powerless and submissive women.

Maternalism was a common theme that was talked about by the militia women. As is found with most protesting women, they cling to the idea of protecting and providing for their children. They rationalize their political protesting for the good of their family. “In joining revolutionary or racial struggles, some groups of women have also used the maternalism theme as a way of rationalizing the expansion of their nurturing roles into the public sphere” (West and Blumberg 1990: 22). These women expressed how they would fight to the end for their children. Often I was told that to really see them angry someone would just have to hurt or threaten their children.

The women in the Militia Movement do not have an alternate group where they are fully in control, as Kathleen Blee (1991) discovered with the Klan women. The women are a part of a gender-integrated movement and expressed no desire to branch
their energies off into another group. This results from strong dedication to maintaining
the family structure and supporting their husband’s ideas and actions. The militia women
expressed family action as opposed to individual action. They do not believe that a
marriage has ever survived with one parent being an active militia member and the other
disinterested because it is a complete way of life for them.

Guida West and Rhoda Lois Blumberg explain that women who are involved in
gender-integrated movements, even if they do excel in position, cannot function without
the men “guarding” the decision-making (1990: 24). As witnessed and stated by the
militia women, women are allowed into leadership roles as a result of their husband’s
absence either caused by death, imprisonment, or lack of available men or interest. “The
substitution of women for men in political protest is not unlike their use as a ‘reserve
army’ in the economy as marginal workers to fill gaps when men are not available” (Ibid.,
26).

There are differences in the ways that women respond to confrontations with
authorities. Women have resorted to traditional feminine methods to participate in social
change including artistic expression and household symbols including pots and pans. For
the sake of the militia women, they are expressing their concern for their children and
grandchildren’s future. Another way in which women traditionally contribute to social
action is by offering a safety zone for the other activists or victims that they are protesting
for. This behavior was also observed with the militia women one example being their
presence at and support of the Ruby Ridge stand-off. Almost half of the militia women
interviewed were active at the stand-off, bringing the Weavers food and clothing and
giving food to the protestors. Authorities regard this type of contribution to social protest as harmless and the women recognize this realm of their power with the movement.

As noted by many researchers, globally women are successful at disguising their political involvement by participating and volunteering in social services (Ibid., 28). This is not to suggest that the women are not sincere in their volunteer efforts, but as viewed by authorities this places them in a submissive and gentle, passive appearance. "The fact that basic political science texts have generally excluded women’s community, volunteer, and protest activities from political analysis, contributes to the perpetuation of women’s political invisibility and powerlessness" (Clark and Clark 1996: 9-10; West and Blumberg 1990: 28). What one can detect is that when women do assert their concerns publicly rather than maintaining their opinion in the household they are often criticized from all angles of their social environment including their families, media, and authorities (Neal and Phillips 1990). Many of the women that I interviewed even expressed themselves as being very outspoken for being a woman involved in the Militia Movement. However, the men who express the same rhetoric publicly are seen as doing their duty to their families and society.

Other ways in which the militia women are politically active in their communities is by letter campaigning against certain bills that they do not agree with regarding education, health care, and gun restrictions. Two of the women that I talked with maintain a constant relationship with their state governor’s office by phone calls, letters, and faxes expressing their opinion. One of the women said that the governor’s office faxed her a copy of an initiative regarding single-mom health care and living arrangements asking her to comment
and showing that they had ratified certain changes that she had suggested.

Interpreting Militia Women’s Ideologies

Organization, Movement, or Community Action

The militia women that I interviewed were perplexed by my reference to their involvement in an “organization” or social “movement,” specifically the Militia “Movement.” It was difficult for them to see how I was connecting their community action with terms that usually refer to a national arrangement with one or more leaders and various chapters across the country.

By organization social scientists mean a relatively stable patterning of relationships within the movement. To say that a movement is organized or has an organization also implies that it has boundaries, that a discourse and a set of practices distinguish people in it from those who are not in it, even if the latter are sympathetic to its goals (Garner 1996: 25).

Perhaps a less structured form of a social movement the following definition applies to the Militia Movement. Social movements:

are typically composed of several groups or organizations by a communications network; some sort of leadership, however informal; at least some adherents who belong to no movement organizations but agree with some, many, or all movement goals (i.e., “fellow travelers”); and at least some shared definitions among movement adherents concerning the nature of the strains or problems confronting them and the changes desired to rectify these (i.e., “consciousness”) (Chafez, Dworkin, and Swanson 1990: 303).

One of the Militia Movement’s main strengths is its networking strategies through e-mail, regular mail, web pages, fax, short-wave radio, phone calls, word of mouth at meetings and expositions. There are a few significant “leaders” in the movement who
have rallied the people and are often featured as lecturers at expositions, including John Trochmann of the Militia of Montana and Mark Koernke from the Michigan Militia.

Although there are various militia organizations across the nation they are powered locally and share a number of beliefs with the rest of the militias, most importantly that the people of United States are being lied to and taken advantage of by the American government. This "consciousness" has led the various members to respond and act in similar ways.

Grounding Movement Through Collective Action

Social movements apply different strategies to their functioning to influence others' beliefs even before the members consider themselves to be social actors in a movement. In order to achieve the first step which is often to rally a group of people, an event will unite these potential movement compatriots. Collective behavior "demonstrations are steps toward the formation of more stable and organized movements, perhaps 'early warning signs' that structural strains are being experienced and dissatisfaction is growing. They bring people together physically, create an awareness of common grievances, and form the basis for more organized action" (Garner 1996: 55). The Ruby Ridge incident with the Weaver family was the sound-off to the formation of the Militia Movement as well as the surfacing of many Christian Patriots. The collective action and protest at the siege created a potential alliance for many Far Rightists and several meetings were the result including the Estes Park Meeting in Colorado.
Militia Movement Responsibilities: For the American People

The foundation of the Militia Movement's ideologies are based on preparing and educating the American people about suppressed government information that is damaging this country's well-being. As many of the women expressed they themselves are "prepared for the worst and hope for the best." The militia women believe that by educating the people the whole society can prevent another Waco or Ruby Ridge incident from taking place therefore creating "peaceful solutions" between the American people and their government. They believe that collectively the American people need to protect the original Constitution and prevent the "New World Order" Communistic take-over in order to maintain the United State's independence and power.

Most of these women expressed an initial fear of their involvement in the Militia Movement but refuse to live in fear now because it weakens a person's will to achieve. They are dedicated to this lifestyle of strong convictions in patriotism and do not see an uneventful life as a "government slave" as ever being an option. Most importantly to them is their actions as a protection plan for their ancestral future generations' free will.

The Beginning Identity of Militia Women

Reasons to join the Militia Movement varied among the women. Two of the women joined the militia after being introduced to the ideologies by their husbands, four of the women discovered that they shared similar grievances with militia members on their own, and one woman and her husband joined at about the same time but she said that she knew something was going wrong in our country since she was warned in the sixth grade.
but did not follow politics until she began raising her family.

There is a strong parallel between the women who were introduced to the movement by their husbands and the way they talked about their beliefs. These women tended to discuss how their husbands thought about certain issues and said how he would be a better person to ask these questions. Only after prompting and explaining that I was interested in their point of view did the women begin to offer their own opinions. Contrary to this response, the other women who claimed this identity on their own were very assertive about discussing their views and did not speak about their husbands’ beliefs until they were asked about them.

Aside from reflecting on warnings about our government’s tyrannical behavior and/or Communist infiltration in our society, all of the women mentioned certain events that acted as the final determinant in their identification with militia ideology. These events ranged from Ruby Ridge, Waco, Gordon Kahl shootout, and one woman recently discovering that she and her natal family have been directly been affected by the Nuclear testing in Nevada. All of the women identified with Ruby Ridge claiming “it could happen to me.” This is one of the main reasons to join a movement to take preventative measures.

Some of these women talked about their spirituality as a reason to belong because they were guided to lead this path in life. All of the women talked about their sense of patriotism to live and die for their country. One of the women quoted her husband, “What’s the use of living like a slave, I’d rather die free.”
Getting “Back to the Basics”

A common desire expressed by all of the militia women was their idea of getting “back to the basics.” By this they meant a life where the government had little or no jurisdiction over the American people or their daily lifestyles. To them this was the American where every man worked to support his family and his job was not threatened by Affirmative Action, women’s liberation, or a corporate take-over. When discussing this process of the “Golden Age myth” William Beeman stated:

their Golden Age harks back to a time when being white, male and having a gun conferred instant status in American society. They idealize values that most U.S. citizens identify as synonymous with American life — independence, freedom, and individualism. Above all, they hate restrictions imposed by outsiders on their actions and use of resources, and fiercely resist any attempt to regulate the moral and ideological education of their children (1996: 43).

This “Golden Age” philosophy ties in well with the rural communities. The militia women have always viewed the cities as being corporate areas where they avoided any kind of association. Now it seems that with farm foreclosures and land regulations these rural people are being regulated by the “city folk.” They feel that their individual freedoms are being intruded upon by people who have no right to tell them how to live their lives. “And they blame urban bureaucrats especially for this debasement of American life — the people who seize land for public works, prevent logging or farming on wetlands, and regulate the monetary and market systems that oppress the primary producers of the country, all live and work in cities” (Ibid., 44).
Family Life

Throughout the militia women's talk and action, family was always expressed and cherished as the main strength in their movement. All of these women were raised in rural areas where family experiences were the main cultural experience of their lives which caused major influences on thought and development of their ideologies. Just as these women carry many told tales with them that were taught to them by their parents, they are passing these along to their children. With these women feeling that their family structures are being jeopardized they are pressured to defend the only foundation in their lives that has been constant. The pattern of life that has been passed down to them by their ancestors is now being challenged as they struggle to teach their children the importance of family as the grander social system is drastically changing the role of the family unit.

Six of the militia women are oldest children who have experienced a life of immense responsibility and burden simultaneously. With three of these women being raised by their fathers alone, they assumed the maternal role to the rest of their siblings. The other women who were raised by two-guardian households with both biological parents or a step-parent also felt that they had a great deal of commitment to their family's well-being. With one woman being the youngest and raised only by her mother, she witnessed her mother's strength and endurance that she eventually would mirror in her life as a single mom.

Educating Within the Family Unit

Calibrating with their focus on freedom and independence and the protection of
their children's future, most of the militia women interviewed had home schooled or plan
to home school their children. This action is their form of protesting the U.S. Public
Education System. Especially living in a rural area and having raised large families, some
of these women have greatly impacted the decrease in funding to their local public schools
by taking their children out of the system, and they are well aware of this.

Their reasons are many but founded on the belief that the education system is
based on misrepresentations of the true history of the political structure in the U.S. By
not sending their children to public schools, these women are instilling in their children
that something is wrong with the system and that they are being safeguarded by their
close-knit family. Home schooling has been a strategy used to strengthen their family
units as well as to initiate trust in family values which are passed on to the children. By
building ardent family units the militia women believe that their families will remain
invulnerable throughout their conflicting struggles with the larger societal structure in
which they live.

There is a representative connection with these women shielding their children
from the education system and their experience in the system. They believe that they have
been lied to, and a few of them were directly warned by their teachers against
Communistic infiltration into their society. All of the militia women described how they
had experienced and witnessed the fear in people caused by Communism. Since they have
had these negative experiences in the school system, they do not want their children to be
weakened by the fearful. These women believe that, by the government's permeation of
Communist practices in early childhood development through public schooling, their
children will not realize that it is wrong and that they will develop into slaves of the U.S. government. They believe this to be the mission of “Goals 2000” which is international public education under the “New World Order.”

One of the women, Marie, had explained how she was instructed as a teacher under progressive education acts to discontinue teaching religion in the classroom. This negative alteration in public education was viewed by all of the women as a means to deteriorate American citizens’ morals.

Religious Guidance

*The Bible* is a highly influential component in the lives of the majority of the women that I interviewed. Their reasons to act were often brought back to *The Bible* encouraging “this” behavior, the scriptures telling them what to do, the higher power’s plan for their life, and the urgency of moralistic behavior. Often, behavior that may not be desirable to the larger society is justified by the militia women because of their dedication to the movement and their ideologies. This is a sense of martyrism that allows them to challenge the desired non-resisting behavior in society (Beeman 1996: 46).

The militia women come from a plethora of religious backgrounds including: Catholicism, Lutheran, Mormon, Protestant, Pentecostal, and Fundamental Christianity. All of the women subscribed to at least one of these religions at one time in her life. Currently, four of the women claim no affiliation with a church and refer to themselves as basic Christians, two of the women group themselves with Christian Identity beliefs, and one woman is a Mormon.
The reason that the non-denominational women have chosen this path is because they do not feel a desire to identify with a specific church. One of these women discussed how religion and the Militia Movement should be kept separate because so many people come to the movement from different affiliations and that the militia's goal is not to fight for one denomination's beliefs over another's. She also felt that by identifying herself with a specific denomination, you can put a wall up between you and other American citizens and the point of the Militia Movement is to bring all of the citizens together.

Christian Identity was not as prevalent among the militia women as was initially presumed therefore a brief overview will be sufficient. These beliefs regarding apocalyptic prophecy and anti-Semitism were often expressed by the women who identified with Christian Identity as well as the Mormon woman, but they were not reflected in the "Christian" women's talk. The "Christian" women thought that there may be a revolutionary war between the American people and the government, but they could not predict when and did not believe that there would be a total cleansing of the planet.

**Gendered Roles**

**The Anti-Feminist Woman**

Regardless of religious belief, all of the woman adhere to the words of God regarding their role in society as a woman. Each militia woman expressed the woman's role to be that of her husband's "helpmate," but did not infer this role to be submissive. The women are especially involved in maintaining the family structure. The women believe that the men and the women are each other's support system and that one could not
survive without the other’s assistance in their relationship. They do not feel that they are equally capable of doing “a man’s job,” comparing mostly male and female strength differences. The women do not feel oppressed by the men because they think that they are getting their opinion out through their men’s actions. What they feel is necessary will happen; it is just that the man gets to speak their beliefs.

The militia women disregard feminism as hurtful toward the family structure and blame it for one of the liberal reasons for the family’s collapse. Ironically, their impressions of the feminist movement have resulted from the media’s portrayal of the radical feminist in such protests as bra-burning. Feminism is the antithesis of The Bible’s portrayal of the preferred female role in family and society, according to the militia women. They believe that women fighting for men’s jobs is highly representative of feminism and that it is weakening the family structure because of the uncertainty it is causing to men’s egos. The government’s crippling family foundations is in accordance with the “New World Order” claim the militia women. Although they express anti-feminist feelings, they do support women who are providing for their families on their own, as a few of them have had to. These women understand that contemporary society calls for both parents to work, but they prefer the men to have more of this responsibility.

**Man: Husband, Provider, Father, Leader**

The desirable man for these militia women is one who is responsible and protective of his family’s well-being. As scripture had dictated to these women, he is the provider of food and shelter to his family; anything more is a blessing that he is generous to give.
Elena stated it simply as her gratitude with her husband’s loyalty, religious mannerisms, absence from drinking and smoking, good provider, and a supportive husband and father.

As the protector of his children he is not as closely involved with raising them as the women. Some of the women expressed how they have different ways of dealing with children’s development that is most suitable to the child’s well-being, such as patience and offering emotional support that the man is not suitable to do. Others discussed how their husbands were good about taking care of the children when they were not able to due to illness or other commitments — the idea of filling-in for one another. Raising children is/was a tiring and gratifying experience for these women and they said they would never trade the experience in for the man’s job.

The man is the speaker of the household and needs his wife’s support to remain strong. However, the women do believe that in case of the man’s absence that the woman must assume that role. The women tended to originate their opinions of the male and female roles from The Bible but as they talked they attached exceptions to many of the “rules.”

Racial Implications in Militia Ideology

“Race” was the one topic that really illustrated a division in the militia women’s views. All of the militia women discussed how it was not the Militia Movement’s agenda to promote their “race” or degrade another one’s “race,” however, some of them conceded to their beliefs of certain racial ideologies that are often considered to be “racist” in American society. Acknowledging the negative connotations associated with
the identity of being a "racist" the women who perceived "race" as a major faction in their belief system referred to themselves as "racialists."

All of the women expressed deep contempt toward the welfare system and affirmative action. They feel that these agendas are overthrowing our country by forcing the superior intelligence to move along at the same pace of the average American—the same way that they regard the education system. They believe that the welfare system has caused many Americans to become lazy, dependent, and fearful citizens. Most of the women believe in equal opportunity but they think that Affirmative Action is preventing this from ever happening.

Many of the women were perplexed as to why Americans are so fixed on considering people as "racist" just because they remain within their "racial household." They believe that every person who is married to a person of their "racial household" made that choice to remain within their "race" and that it is instinct to do so. Two of the women expressed "equal but separate" social spheres between the "races" because God desires all peoples to remain and procreate within their own racial households. The others said either that the other "races" were not equal and should not be mixing or that they did not care who was together with whom as long as they were in a loving and moral relationship with one another.

The concept of "racial purity" was talked about by four of the women. They connected liberals to the idea of admixture as their goal to mongrelize the United States. With mongrelization occurring, the country as a power is viewed as becoming weaker which will cause vulnerability to Communist takeover. One of the women blatantly said
that Whites should not intermix with the "other races" because the Whites are superior in intelligence and admixture would only weaken them as a civilization.

It was difficult to decipher why some of these "racial" beliefs were so fundamental in some of the women's talk whereas others dismissed it as an unimportant topic. When asked where they learned these beliefs, all of the women referred to parental influence and their upbringing in some way.
CHAPTER SIX
CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates the importance of women as social actors in the Militia Movement. By narrowing the gap in social movement understanding, this research refutes traditional stereotypes and assumptions that men's actions and ideologies are the model behaviors for all movement members. My data support that, despite exclusion of the women's perspective, women are contributing to the Militia Movement's goals.

It is important that we understand all of the factions of a social movement, by examining women's and men's perceptions, no matter how subtle one's actions may appear. Also, researchers need to examine "behind the scenes" social actors. In order to understand the purpose and goals of the Militia Movement one has to learn about the details of the movement that the members are involved in, rather than be satisfied with the projected images based on rhetoric. "Traditional (and maie-centered) definitions of politics that focus on work places, electoral contests, courts, and organized voluntary associations ignore the political effects of actions and organizing in neighborhoods or through kin and informal networks" (Blee 1991:3). To understand this movement, researchers must undertake studies that encompass all members rather than remain blinded by the "leaders" talk.

This research has been conducted to dispel the distorted public images that Americans have regarding the Militia Movement, as a result of media sensationalism, by increasing our knowledge regarding the woman's role. When a topic has been previously
unexplored in the academic world, we are forced to rely on media discourse to begin our research. It is important to realize that this information is not fully credible and that we should pressure journalists to raise their standards. Although we may differ in our methods and purposes of research, all of us should be searching for the truth and presenting it in a factual manner.

I have learned from these women how they explain their guiding factors in identifying with the militia through their life experiences. Whereas the life history method is a sense of empowerment for these women, the concept of eliminating oppression is neither imported nor desired. I clearly did not want to impact these women's ideologies, I wanted them to tell me what is most important to them as women and as Americans. I used life histories to portray the women's experiences in the movement which included their perceptions of identity and power, how they acquired the dominant ideologies, and the strategies they used to carry-out their beliefs.

By giving the militia women a voice through academia another aspect of the Militia Movement is learned, thus contributing to an all-encompassing understanding of this social movement. It is important that researchers view women and men as social actors in social movements. Both of their perspectives are essential to our comprehension regarding their place in the trajectory of our society's structure and its constant change through conflict.

Whereas the men are speaking in the public sphere about their political and social ideologies the women's strategies are more subtle but are equally important. These women's strategies cannot be downplayed and rejected as social protest simply because they are not viewed and represented in the public light. As they are unfolding their
ideologies onto the American people, whether it is through letter campaigning or resisting the public school system, militia women are expressing their grievances with American society and its government officials.

Women's roles in social movements cannot be undermined because they are not mimicking the men's behavior. By protesting through other avenues, the women are displaying their specific ideologies in addition to the dominant ideologies that they learned in the movement. Researchers need to acknowledge the women's action as a different expression of protest, not necessarily a subordinate one. Our understanding of gender roles in movements will be enhanced once researchers stop contributing to the women's powerlessness by not talking to the women.

Understanding where the social, political, and ideological frameworks of this movement have originated and how these ideologies are affecting this country concerns all American citizens. Discontent with the American government has resulted from a number of events where government officials are believed to have acted incompetently and illegally, according to the militia members. Tragedies such as Ruby Ridge and Waco have caused a paranoia to spread among many self-sufficient people who object to the American government influencing their daily lives. These people are prepared to defend themselves because they believe that someday they may be in the same situation as the Weaver family or the Branch Davidians.

Militia oppositions also encompass many controversial issues that are being debated currently among the various political parties. These issues include: Affirmative Action, environmental issues, welfare legislation, and isolationist policies. The frustrations
that these militia women have expressed relate to the modernization of patriarchal power. They are resisting the overall changing societal structure that is constantly evolving. Their belief that the American government has turned the American people into "sheeple" is very similar to Michel Foucault's discussion of "docile bodies." Foucault explains that, "A body is docile that may be subjected, used, transformed and improved" (Foucault 1995: 136). He theorized about the three main disciplinary methods that societal powers use to create "docile bodies." A "scale of the control" is used to target the individual rather than groups of people; this approach is subtle in that it influences the individual's thoughts and movements. The "object of the control" is how efficient the power can make these "docile bodies" with regards to economic expansion, and, "modality" is the process of constant coercion (Ibid.) The outcomes of "docile bodies" are not the only things being controlled; the steps and processes that lead to these outcomes are manipulated by societal powers as well (Bartky 1992: 103). "The human body was entering a machinery of power that explores it, breaks it down and rearranges it" (Foucault 1995: 138). Foucault refers to this processing as the "political anatomy" and "mechanics of power" that forcefully develop these "docile bodies" (Ibid.).

The militia women believe that they are treated as outcasts to society so the government can keep a closer surveillance of their activities. This suspicion of being watched replicates how Foucault views the prison structure as having been incorporated into all societal institutions. Foucault examines Bentham's Panopticon as being the dominant power's way to constantly influence one's thoughts without offering them any chance for rebuttal. "Hence the major effect of the Panopticon: to induce in the inmate a
state of conscious and permanent visibility that assures the automatic functioning of power. So to arrange things that the surveillance is permanent in its effects, even if it is discontinuous in its action...” (Foucault 1995: 201).

The militia members are on the defensive because they feel that their individual freedoms are being threatened, and they are willing to fight for their beliefs that the government is supposed to be “by and for the people,” not a power that controls the people. By further restricting militia members, (i.e. by passing more gun laws), the government is not improving their relationship with the Militia Movement. Threats made from either side are not going to resolve the conflict that is growing between a considerable amount of U.S. citizens and the American government. Further research of the Militia Movement can aid in our understanding of the members’ ideologies thus preventing government officials from acting as a reactionary power. By learning about this movement before any more incidents occur, the government and the American people will benefit by supporting communication with militia members.

With the majority of this research’s issues having been previously unexplored, this examination provides a foundation for further scholarly research on the Militia Movement. This initial relationship between militia members and academics can aid in the continuation of studying militia women and the entire Militia Movement, therefore offering a clearer understanding of their motivations.

There is a great deal of research that still needs to be conducted on the Militia Movement. Even our perceptions of militia men have been formed and tainted by the media and need to be examined academically so that an in depth review may uncover the
sources of the men's motivations as related to their life experiences. A grander scale of research regarding the Militia Movement is necessary to measure their various levels of success or failure as an influence in American society.

By considering a militia member's age, one may note a difference in motivations that will deepen our understanding of how historical events have influenced contemporary American ideologies. By reflecting on one's personal experiences and how they were influenced by their ancestors, researchers may uncover a trend of belief formations and ideologies.

A comparison of rural and urban ideologies and motivations is necessary to determine how their strategies are affected by their surrounding social, economical, and political environments. Considering that rural militias express irritability because they think that urban corporations are beginning to infringe upon their "simple" way of life, it would be advantageous to compare rural and urban ideologies to learn what is binding militia ideology across demographic boundaries. We need to explore how urban militias are perceiving their living environments and examine what contentions they express differently from rural militias.

Further theoretical explorations include power and domination with regards to resistance movements. Through analysis of gender and class, I am interested in uncovering how militia members are feeling oppressed. By examining this movement through an economic lense, I intend to determine how rural and urban militia members' experiences are similar in terms of economic representation. By examining gender in the movement, I want to analyze how the social processes that these members are
experiencing are producing, challenging, or confirming gender categories. Militia members expressed contention with how contemporary society expects women to participate in the work force. Although they are protesting these changing roles in society, they are being pressured to contribute in accordance with contemporary expectations. I want to explore how their participation in the labor force is tampering with their feminine and masculine ideologies.

This research can be used as a link to studying the Militia Movement and the Far Right Movement, especially regarding the theoretical, methodological, and ethical approaches. By talking and interacting with these movement members, researchers can assist in bridging the gap between our understanding of social movements and the importance of gendered-roles within these movements. Through first-hand study with social movement members, we can learn about their perceptions through their life experiences, movement ideology, talk, and social action.
End Notes

Chapter One

1. David Bennett (1995) acknowledges that there is a significant number of women in the Michigan Militia and he discusses Linda Thompson, a nationwide distributor for militia propaganda, most notorious for her video, “Waco: The Big Lie.”

2. David Bennett (1995) and Neil A. Hamilton (1996) discuss leaders in the Militia Movement. Although the women play a significant leadership role in certain organizations, they only refer to the woman as “his wife,” give one woman’s name, and return to their discussion of the men. Hamilton (1996) did include one biography of a woman militia member out of the fourteen biographies that he included in his book, *Militias in America*.

3. During my interviews, some women talked about their participation in the “patriot web.” This web symbolizes many overlapping patriot ideologies that are abound in the Far Right movement. This web thrives on the idea that there are many patriots striving for the rebuilding of this country’s morals and that if a portion of this web is “taken out” by the government the other factions will still remain strong in their own endeavors.

4. The Constitution defines the militia as consisting of “all able-bodied males at least seventeen years of age and...under forty-five years of age who are...citizens of the United States and of female citizens of the United States who are commissioned officers of the National Guard.” I use the term “active” militia members when referring to those who subscribe to Far Right ideologies. My interviewees, when talking, distinguish between members of the militia and “active” militia members.

5. One of my interviewees suggested that I needed to discuss the Religious and Racist Left in conjunction with the Religious and Racist Right. She said that many times people get the two supposedly battling sides confused. In order to remain focused and risk-free of causing any more confusion about the Far Right, I have decided to overlook the Far Left for this study. For examples of Far Right and Far Left groups that share similarities in structure and motivation, see Lyman Tower Sargent’s *Extremism in America* (1995).

Chapter Two


7. Some treated me as a young child like I was wearing common-sense blinders.
8. Rudolf Herberle (1951) refers to these tactics of targeting government authorities or the general public political action and direct action in Social Movements.

9. James A. Aho disclosed to one of his colleagues that one of his regrets in studying Christian Patriots was that he did not talk to any of them women. Aho conducted over two hundred interviews.

10. Also, see Claudia Koontz (1987) for the women’s perspective of Nazi life.

11. On February 26, 1997 at the University of Montana-Missoula, I attended a lecture that presented two speakers on anti-government groups. Rick Beamun from University of Pennsylvania discussed the Whiskey Rebellion of 1794 and traced contemporary militia complaints of the government to agrarian radicalism. On the other hand, Gary Nash from University of California at Los Angeles acted out a dialogue between Daniel Chey (and his cause for rebellion in 1786 in Massachusetts) and John Trochmann of the contemporary Militia of Montana. Nash took to the extremes both of the radicals stories and situations arguing that there is no relationship between the two men and their griefs because of historical circumstances. Other social scientists who attended the lecture were equally split as to the claims of whether or not the contemporary Militia Movement makes honest connections with the early militias.


14. a) For example, the Militia of Montana has produced a video “Morris Dees,” of the Southern Poverty Law Center which discusses how Dees made verbal attacks against a militia family, fools Americans into supporting his organization and robs them, and how he is an adulterer whose wife “divorced him because her not so-loyal husband forced her to watch him commit homosexual acts on their tenth anniversary in the famous Watergate hotel” (Militia of Montana, Preparedness Catalog 1997: 26). Human Rights groups such as the Anti-Defamation League prepare Far Right profiles which list criminal activities and insinuates alliances between most of the Far Rightists. In a conversation that I had with a leader in the Montana Human Rights Network, I was told to talk to a woman because she has a history with a lot of the men in the Militia Movement, implying promiscuity. These conflicts and defamation of each other’s character does not just happen between the enemy groups, disgust with other militia members’ actions had been expressed to me on a number of occasions (i.e. disapproval of Republic of Texas’ Rick McLaren was a common theme). b) The majority of the information that is distributed by Human Rights groups to the public, government, and police precincts is based on media headlines and independent
political analysts’ research.

15. See bibliography regarding the Coalition for Human Dignity for examples of Human Rights groups’ literature, as well as Ken Toole’s advice regarding local militias.


17. Whereas my initial key interviewee assisted me in gaining entrance in the Militia Movement I was not as successful with attending ceremonies. The militias members that I talked to were not as formalized as other Far Right groups, including Aryans Nations. Whereas Aryan Nations in Hayden Lake, Idaho holds its own church services and has ceremonies, including youth conferences each spring, the militias did not have a constant ceremony planned.

Chapter Three


20. See also “Ladies of the Association,” WMQ, 1st series, VIII (1899), 36.

21. Prominent Americans who feared the supposed union of Blacks and Communists were Senator Joseph McCarthy and J. Edgar Hoover.

22. See Hamilton (1996) for a chronological description of other Far Right groups that emerged in the 1970’s and 1980’s such as, the National Caucus of Labor Committees, the modern Ku Klux Klan, the White Aryan Resistance, the Order, and Aryan Nations.

23. This theory was expressed by all of my interviewees.

24. I attended the Self-Sufficiency and Prepared Expo in Spokane, WA in January 1997. There were many speakers who expressed these beliefs including John Trochmann. Also, I attended a lecture that John Trochmann gave at the University of Montana on March 31, 1997.
25. See Abanes (1996) for a discussion of why government officials were pursuing Randy Weaver.

26. A few of the militia members that I have talked to expressed their dislike for the words, “martyr” and “martyrism.” I explained what I meant by a “martyr,” and that I was not using the word for the negative connotation that has become of it. For lack of a better term, I am using martyrism to portray the impact that these events have had on militia members’ ideologies. Events and certain members of the movement were constantly brought into conversations by the interviewees. Many times members use these events as a tool to express their distrust for the American government.

27. The Michigan Militia officially organized in 1994 as a result of these events.

Chapter Four

28. “Sheeple” is a term often used by members in the Far Right Movement to describe people who follow whichever route is easiest, are too lazy too take a stand and voice their own opinions, and fear therefore they obey.

29. See Chapter Two for a thorough description of Gordon Kahl and his experiences with government, and their effects on the Far Right Movement.

30. The name, Yahweh, is Celeste’s interpretation and name that she feels comfortable with when referring to her God. This name is commonly used to identify God in the Christian Identity Movement, as Yashua is used to identify Jesus.

31. According to Marie, a kitchen militia is a fax network of women who are worried about the “Goals 2000” program being installed in the public school system.

32. This literature is commonly found at gun shows and through the educational militias who provide mail-order service.

33. The definitions of internal and external rivals pertain to William Beeman’s discussion of internal and external enemies but my interpretation of militia rivals does not necessarily reflect Beeman’s viewpoint.

34. The Southern Poverty Law Center, located in Alabama, is most notable for bring Ku Klux Klan members to court and shutting down United Klans of American and White Aryan Resistance.

35. See Chapter One for a discussion of this meeting.
Bibliography


Coalition for Human Dignity.
Portland, Oregon.


Meredith, Lynne. 1994. "Vultures in Eagle's Clothing." We the People. Huntington Beach, CA.

Montana Human Rights Network.


Toole, Ken. 1995, November. “What to Do When the Militia Comes to Town.” New York: The American Jewish Committee.


