

# Participatory Democracy: The Bridge from Civil Rights to Women's Liberation

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## Abstract:

This paper explores the connection between the participatory democracy which characterized the tactics of the Civil Rights Movement and the participatory democracy which colored the events of the Women's Liberation Movement, occurring in the 1970's-1980's. This paper commences by interpreting the definition of "participatory democracy," from the perspective of Civil Rights leaders, historians, and political theorists. Using these persons' definitions of participatory democracy, which are translated into their texts as both abstract definitions and concrete historical events, these two social movements are coalesced. This paper describes the participatory democracy of the Civil Rights Movement as the bridge from civil rights to modern women's liberation. Throughout the paper, the Civil Rights Movement is regarded as the precedent that opened the doors for the Women's Liberation Movement. The research for this paper has been derived from a myriad of sources. Among the works examined are: narrative histories of both the Civil Rights Movement and the Women's Liberation Movement, written by participants of these two movements, texts describing the employment of participatory democracy in European social movements, and the works of political theorists, those of whom have dedicated their research to explaining the phrase "participatory democracy." This paper focuses solely on the most recent aspects of the Women's Liberation Movement, which began within five years after the apex of the Civil Rights Movement. Attention is not given to the attainment of women's suffrage in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, as the timeline of the paper begins with the Civil Rights Movement.

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## Introduction

How has the status of certain groups in our society evolved in the course of forty years? African-Americans will cite the benefits reaped from the Civil Rights Movement, a lengthy and arduous battle fought by both African-American males and females, in an attempt to acquire more desirable treatment. Career women may cite the advances made in the workplace and in higher education institutions, namely equal opportunity employment laws, sexual harassment policies, maternity leave, equal pay, and affirmative action programs. The links between the Civil Rights Movement and the women's liberation movement cannot be denied, as the two movements are inextricably linked by the democratic tactics employed in both movements. Perhaps, the most important link between the Civil Rights Movement and the women's movement is the democratic concept of "participatory democracy." A concept adopted by Civil Rights leader Ella Baker known as "participatory democracy" found its way into the women's movement. Participatory democracy can best be explained as the bridge connecting the goals of these two movements, as well as the bridge which solidified the achievement of greater rights for both minorities and women.

## Structure of Paper

This paper commences with a broad definition of participatory democracy as it relates to the execution of various social movements. Next, this paper discusses Civil Rights activist Ella Baker's interpretation of participatory democracy as well as how Baker infused elements of participatory democracy into the structures and ideologies responsible for the success of the Civil Rights Movement. Examples of participatory democracy's role in the Civil Rights Movement are analyzed. Finally this paper examines how participatory democracy served as a bridge linking together two social movements, the Civil Rights Movement with the Women's Movement. The ideologies and structures inherent to the Women's Movement are compared and contrasted with the ideologies and structures that characterized the Civil Rights Movement, particularly the ideologies and structures promoting participatory democracy. This section of the paper analyzes the ideologies and structures characteristic of separate racial and socioeconomic groups of females participating in the greater Women's Movement. The separatist structure of the women's groups encompassing the Women's Movement is contrasted with the non-separatist structure of the Civil Rights Movement groups. Finally, this paper concludes by tying

together the two social movements' dependence on participatory democracy as a means of initiating social reforms.

## Defining Participatory Democracy

Participatory democracy means exactly what it says. The origins of the two constituent terms, the Latin *partis* and *capere* and the Greek *demos* and *kratein*, which compose the words "participatory democracy" can be translated into English as "taking part in rule by the people" (Cook, p.2) According to political theorists, participatory democracy embraces two main ideas: a decentralization of authoritative decision-making and a direct involvement of amateurs or non-elites in the political decision-making process. Proponents of participatory democracy argue that citizens' direct participation in the political process serves to make men and women better citizens. More importantly, they argue that citizens' direct participation in the political process will lead to political decisions which are more beneficial to the non-elites involved (Cook, p.7).

Past political theorists from Alexis de Tocqueville to Frantz Fanon have argued in favor of direct participation believing that it will serve as an educational experience to all people involved, shaping their beliefs, attitudes, and values (Cook, p.7). An enhanced political efficacy, or man's sense of his ability to effectively alter his environment through political participation, appears to be political theorists' greatest argument for the case of participatory democracy. Cook characterizes today's age of business and bureaucratization as a complex age which makes common men people feel powerless and leads them to be apathetic. Cook defends participatory democracy by stating, "Only a change in the decision-making patterns can overcome this sense of powerlessness and the resultant apathy; for it is not by occasionally voting for authorities in the isolation of a curtained booth, but by actual engagement in making authoritative decisions in concert with persons like himself, that will serve to reinforce the average man's appreciation of his own political capacities (Cook, p. 8).

## Ella Baker's Endorses Participatory Democracy

Civil Rights activist Ella Baker used participatory democracy at the height of the Civil Rights movement to demonstrate a black mass' desire for transformation of the status quo way of life in the South. The tenets which composed Baker's ideal of participatory democracy are

reflective of the tenets of participatory democracy that are articulated in Cook's book by earlier political theorists such as de Toqueville and Aristotle. The Ella Baker definition of participatory democracy which fuelled the successes of the Civil Rights movement includes three main ideas: grassroots involvement of people throughout society in the elitist decisions which have dominated their lives, absence of emphasis on a hierarchy or one celebrity leader as the sole leadership for the movement, and a call for direct action by all involved as an answer to present and past oppression by the majority, white race ( Mueller, p. 52). Much like the definition of participatory democracy articulated by political theorists, Baker stresses the importance of mass mobilization and grassroots action executed by the amateurs, often affected by the decisions devolved from the centralized elites, as well as a reduction in decisions made by elites.

Baker won civil rights for blacks by staying loyal to the concept of participatory democracy. Early on Baker spoke out against the celebrity of Martin Luther King, Jr. during the movement. She felt the emphasis on one leader's work negated the democratic character of the movement, reflected in the massive groups of blacks who organized voter registration drives at the local level, staged sit-ins at white restaurants, and gathered regularly in local churches to plan movement strategy. Just as political theorists praise participatory democracy's ability to enhance the common man's political efficacy, Ella Baker also appreciated participatory democracy for its ability to empower common people to seek social change. Baker found Martin Luther King, Jr's "charismatic ministerial leadership" to be at odds with enhancing citizens' political efficacy (Mueller, p. 62).

The grassroots activism Baker promoted throughout the Civil Rights Movement found its way into the employment of noteworthy tactics responsible for the movement's success. Baker continually emphasized the importance of developing black people's resources and institutions. During her tenure as an employee of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference in the 1950's, Baker traveled to local communities setting up drives to get blacks registered to vote in the South and meeting with ministerial leaders to encourage the presence of reading and writing classes within the church that would provide blacks with the skills necessary for voting (Mueller, p. 58).

Mass meetings became the best tool for drawing together all of the African-Americans within a community on a regular basis. African-Americans would meet in their local churches for worship as well as strategy

sessions, as they ironed out the details of future tactics to be employed in the movement. Mass meetings could be educational as well as sacred. Sometimes speakers from other surrounding areas would come to distant churches and discuss the progress of the movement. Medgar Evers, a frequent and popular speaker in Greenwood, would bring word of the occurrences in Jackson, Mississippi at the local NAACP office (Payne, p. 259). The meetings seemed to promote community and break down any feelings of isolation formerly experienced by the African-Americans in attendance. The speakers from other places who appeared at diverse local Civil Rights mass meetings reinforced the local citizens' sense of being part of a bigger movement than what they saw in their local community; they encouraged them to keep up the fight by organizing again and again at the grass-roots level.

Ella Baker's pet group, the Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee, believed in motivating people at the grassroots level through recognition at mass meetings (Payne, p. 259). Charles M. Payne, the author of I've Got the Light of Freedom, writes, "At mass meetings in Greenwood, Mississippi, local activists might find themselves sharing a platform with heroes like Medgar Evers or Dick Gregory, or later with Harry Belafonte or Sidney Poitier, or perhaps even Martin Luther King, Jr., himself (Payne, p. 260). Other ways participatory democracy encouraged action was through public pressure and consciousness-raising. At a Greenwood, Mississippi meeting a local leader asked all of the African-Americans who had registered to vote earlier in the day to raise their hands. After giving a short pep talk on the importance of registering to vote, he asked all of the persons who had not raised their hands to follow him to the courthouse the following day to register to vote (Payne, p. 260). There was significant pressure to attend such mass meetings. Canvassers went door to door throughout their local communities passing out handbills that advertised the next mass meeting in which Civil Rights tactics would be discussed. This local pressure, along with the positive feeling of being included in an honorable cause, incited direct action at the local level from blacks representing all walks of life. Additionally, local movement participants encouraged others to remain in the fight for civil rights by engaging in consciousness-raising. At weekly mass meetings, local members of Civil Rights groups would take turns sharing personal stories of the injustices they had endured from whites. This politicization of personal problems linked Civil Rights participants together in a mission to transform their personal injustices into healthy, political reforms.

## Riding the Wave of Civil Rights Legislation

By 1964, with the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, a plethora of the Civil Rights activists' goals had come into fruition. A Voting Rights Act in 1965 struck down the undemocratic voting practices that had formerly been rampant in the South, in particular in Mississippi, where southern blacks were denied the right to vote if they could not appropriately understand a clause of the state constitution. The Civil Rights activists' adherence to the concept of participatory democracy brought fruits to the African-American population in the form of anti-discriminatory legislation. Piggy-backing off of the achievements of the Civil Rights activists, women, another second-class group in society, rushed to reap the rewards of the Civil Rights movement. Capitalizing on the reforms initiated in the Kennedy and Johnson administrations, women mobilized to initiate their own liberation movement.

At the height of the Civil Rights movement, women such as former First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt and Esther Peterson, communicated their sense of an inferior status in society to officials like President John F. Kennedy. Democratic Party activists like Emma Guffey Miller and Eleanor Roosevelt criticized Kennedy's lack of female appointments to his administration (Hartmann, p. 50). Kennedy tried to silence these women's criticism by forming a Commission on the Status of Women. Participating on Kennedy's Commission was Civil Rights activist Pauli Murray. Murray believed that just as the Fourteenth Amendment of the Constitution could be interpreted to advocate against racial discrimination, it could also be interpreted by the Supreme Court to prohibit sex discrimination (Hartmann, p. 52).

The first legislation women used to piggy-back off of the Civil Rights reforms was Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Southern members of Congress, who were eager to not see the prohibition of discrimination of race in employment matters, supported women's efforts to add the prohibition of discrimination of sex to the legislation. Anticipating a killing of this revised, loaded bill, Southern congressmen vocalized their support of the "sex" provision of Title VII. Much to their chagrin, Title VII garnered enough votes to pass with the inclusion of both a "race" provision and a "sex" provision prohibiting employer discrimination against these two groups.

## Crossing the Bridge- Linking Movements

Advancing women's liberation was not limited to women's attempts to be included in Civil Rights legislation, women also adopted some of the popular participatory tactics of the Civil Rights movement. Women found value in Civil Rights tactics such as sit-ins, marches, grassroots campaigns, and consciousness-raising. Participatory democracy became the invaluable bridge linking the accomplishments of Civil Rights to the desires and goals of women's liberation activists.

### Participatory Democracy in the Women's Movement

Previous participation in the Civil Rights movement fuelled many white females' involvement in the women's liberation movement. In 1960 the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee was formed by a group of black southern college students seeking to end racial segregation in the South. During the early 1960's, large numbers of white male and female college students spent their summers advocating for civil rights in the South. White, female college students fought alongside men in the Civil Rights movement only to find that they, too, were victims of discrimination.

In an anonymous paper presented at an SNCC retreat in November 1964, white women wrote, "It needs to be known that just as Negroes were the crucial factor in the economy of the cotton South, so too in SNCC, women are the crucial factor that keeps the movement running on a day-to-day basis. Yet they are not given equal say-so when it comes to day-to-day decision-making" (Polletta, p. 155). This paper listed a series of indignities including women's exclusion from important SNCC meetings or being relegated to taking minutes or performing clerical duties rather than being afforded committee chair positions. Hole and Levine write in Rebirth of Feminism that the female members of the SNCC were ostracized from policy-making. Rather than making policy, these females served as a "sexual supply for their male comrades after hours" (Hole and Levine, p. 110). Females in the Civil Rights Movement were conscientious of the irony stemming from their participation in the movement, namely that "the price for participating in a battle for someone else's equality was the loss of one's own equality" (Hole and Levine, p. 110).

The women in the SNCC serve as an important link between the Civil Rights Movement and the Women's Movement. Participation in

the Civil Rights Movement empowered SNCC women to challenge their inferior status to men by affording these women the opportunity to articulate their opinions. Although men did not respond to women's calls for abolishing their second-class status, women in the reform movement possessed a confidence and candor their sisters back home lacked. The authors of Rebirth of Feminism speak of the SNCC women's participating by stating, "You are allowed to participate and to speak, only the men stop listening when you do" (Hole and Levine, p. 111). The environment of reform surrounding the female members of the SNCC only encouraged these women to pursue more reforms. Once these women realized that they possessed the skills necessary for initiating reform, they began to resent performing the mundane tasks reflective of their second-class status. Polletta writes that "it was this contradiction that generated an incipient female consciousness (Polletta, p. 155).

Following the Civil Rights Movement, in the late 1960's, women's consciousness-raising groups began to spring up across the country. Analogous to the civil rights groups formed throughout the South in small towns, women's liberation groups were intimate, informal, and egalitarian, lacking one central leader. Baker's definition of participatory democracy found its way into the organization and administration of these women's liberation groups. Much like African-Americans, white women had been denied opportunities to learn leadership skills. Female consciousness-raising groups, organized at the grassroots level, served to provide women with valuable leadership skills. Heather Booth, a former white participant in the SNCC, recognizes the importance of participatory democracy to the women's liberation groups when she says, "Women had been so blocked from positions of authority that they needed to learn those skills" (Polletta, p. 160). Women's groups enhanced their members' political efficacy by allowing members to make decisions jointly, rotate leadership positions, and take turns articulating the group's position to the public. Women's liberation groups advocated members' realization of their full potential as well as sisterhood and equality. Like the Civil Rights Movement activists, women helped each other recognize their full potential by engaging in consciousness-raising (Polletta, p. 161).

The SNCC summer volunteers introduced consciousness-raising to the women's movement. Much like Civil Rights Movement activists shared their personal stories as a means of developing trust and intimacy among other activists, women participating in the liberation movement utilized consciousness-raising for an analogous purpose. For women,

consciousness-raising was a means of eliciting personal experiences before moving on to an action plan. Consciousness-raising in the female liberation movement emphasized the democratic nature of the movement by forcing interaction among members through a sharing of personal stories as well as through collective decision-making (Polletta, p. 161). Women's liberation members resented hierarchy and celebrity leadership for the same reason as Ella Baker. They knew that singling out members in the movement for particular recognition would erode the main foundation of the women's movement, its inclusion and celebration of common women.

### Theory Driving Participatory Democracy

Ella Baker's concept of participatory democracy reinforces earlier philosophers' theories about the benefits of grassroots participation. Aristotle and Alexis de Toqueville, two early political theorists, envisioned a government more responsive to its constituents' needs via citizens' active participation in decision-making processes. Cook writes in Participatory Democracy, "The idea that political participation can have an intrinsic as well as an instrumental value, that it can be an important factor in human growth and development, has often been ignored by modern "democratic elitists" who applaud the apathy and noninvolvement of ordinary people as essential for political stability" (Cook, p.7) It is often argued that a citizen's political efficacy matures with his sense of feeling involved in the governing processes. The citizen is likely to continue his political participation if he feels that he possesses the skills and characteristics necessary to initiate change in the status quo. Similarly, a citizen may engage in reform movement work if he believes two things: that he possesses the characteristics necessary to initiate change and secondly, that other participants within the movement desire his participation.

Baker's participatory democracy sparked individual citizens' participation in the reform movement by first providing citizens with the skills necessary to participate in the movement. The voter registration drives, literacy classes, sit-ins, and marches all contributed to participants' self-esteem and their perceptions about their self-worth, in particular their worth as citizens in a democracy. Baker did not envision accomplishing civil rights reform without educating all participants about what they could bring to the movement. Similarly, the Women's Movement embraced the concept of participatory democracy, believing too, that with heavy participation from the bottom rungs of society on up, citizens would be able to initiate greater reforms by understanding what

personal stock they would have in those future reforms, namely more rights and more educational and employment opportunities.

Neither the Civil Rights Movement nor the Women's Movement simply asked citizens to go to a voting booth and vote a particular way; each movement provided its participants with necessary skills that would empower these participants to have sustained involvement in politics. The greatest gift that participants received from the participatory democracy of both the Civil Rights Movement and the Women's Movement is their enhanced political efficacy, which later empowered them to participate in other notable reform movements such as the Welfare Reform Movement and the Gun Control Movement.

### A Shared Call to Arms

During the beginning of the women's liberation movement, women were divided into two camps, a conservative camp and a radical camp, with the radical camp dominating the women's liberation movement. Women who had been involved in the Civil Rights Movement drifted towards the radical camp, using a myriad of the tactics employed in the earlier Civil Rights Movement to demonstrate for women's liberation. The radical wing of the Chicago Women's Group included a division called the Women's Radical Action Project which used sit-ins reminiscent of those used in the Civil Rights Movement to pursue women's liberation in 1969 (Hole and Levine, p. 115). Links between the Civil Rights Movement and the women's liberation movement attracted women to the women's movement who had formerly served in the Civil Rights Movement. Females participating in the Civil Rights Movement identified with the subjugation white females experienced from white males since they too had been treated as second-class citizens, inferior to both black and white males. A white, female participant in the Civil Rights Movement expressed the common second-class status shared by both white women and blacks when she spoke of her observations in Mississippi at the height of the Civil Rights Movement, saying that she learned from blacks that "I wasn't so free myself, and I began to worry about that" (Hole and Levine, p. 116).

Feminist scholars have traditionally concentrated on organizational structures within feminist organizations, often neglecting a study of the structural organization of groups not identifying themselves nominally as "feminist" organizations. A myriad of these organizations,

in particular the black women's organizations, often "employ feminist values, practices, and outcomes" (Barnett, p. 201). Scholars neglect the origins of participatory democracy when they study only nominal women's organization structures. The emphasis on participatory democracy that became the hallmark of the Civil Rights Movement began with black women's political activism. Black women organized at the grassroots level in their sororities, churches, and local branches of the National Association of Colored Women. While black women's experiences may be unique due to their dual oppression, as both blacks and females, scholars often overlook their experiences as women. Feminist scholars presently recognize the need to broaden the focus on women's organizational structures to all organizations employing feminist values, practices, and outcomes. Barnett's essay entitled, *Black Women's Collectivist Movement Organizations: Their Struggles during the Doldrums*, argues that black women's movement organizations, including those formed during the Civil Rights Movement, served as models for future white women's liberation organizations. Barnett writes that "the emphases on participatory democracy, community, collectivism, caring, mutual respect, and self-transformation that have been viewed as distinctive characteristics of White women's organizing in the late 1960's and 1970's" appeared in "Black women's political activism and organizing several decades later" (Barnett, p. 203). Feminist scholars view white women's refusal to acknowledge the black women's earlier contribution of participatory democracy to the Women's Liberation Movement as evidence of white women's inability to recognize the "diversity and multiplicity of women's experiences and women's consciousness" (Barnett, p. 203).

### Black Women's Organization Structures

White female organization leaders failed to acknowledge the grievances originating from women of diverse racial backgrounds as well as fellow white females representing backgrounds contrasting with their own. The participatory democracy characterizing the Civil Rights Movement celebrated participation from African-American women drawn from all socio-economic and educational backgrounds. Although African-American women tended to join separate civil rights organizations comprised of women from their own social class, the movement included participation from a multitude of African-American women representing each segment of the African-American population. Poorer African-American women acquired the same grassroots leadership skills as affluent African-American women. The women's wing of the Civil Rights Movement included two groups, the Women's Political Council

(WPC), composed of middle-class and professional African-American women, and the "Club from Nowhere" (CFN), composed of poor, working-class African-American women. While the groups included significantly different populations of women, the organizational structures of each group promoted participatory democracy.

The operational structures and tactics employed by the African-American women belonging to the two most noteworthy female civil rights organizations, the WPC and CFN, adhere greatly to Ella Baker's definition of participatory democracy. Each group resisted too much hierarchical organization and embraced mass mobilization of resources at the grassroots level. Composed of mostly maids, housewives, and beauticians, members of the CFN organized at the local level by boycotting buses and walking to work. The more affluent WPC, composed of a membership including black professors, physicians, and lawyers, also engaged in the bus boycott along with poorer female organizers from the CFN. Other grassroots movement tactics employed by the WPC included voter registration drives, letter writing, and citizenship education and training (Barnett, p. 205).

#### **Participatory Differences between White and Black Women's Organizations**

White women denied black women the opportunity to participate in their political clubs and associations. White women's vision of participatory democracy ignored the root "dem," meaning all people, if those people happened to be black. Black women organized their civil rights organizations to fight racial segregation by Whites as well as gender segregation by black males. The permeability of class boundaries among women in the black community can be seen in the overlapping memberships of the black female activists. African-American women could often float between the varying groups; several women possessed membership in both the WPC and the CFN. With most of the activist work occurring in the churches, a sense of community easily developed that contributed to the overall nonhierarchical and democratic nature of the Civil Rights Movement. Empowerment is often cited as the greatest gift black women acquired from the nonhierarchical structure of the movement. All black women, including both the poor and the rich, developed a sense of self-confidence from the participatory democracy of the Civil Rights Movement that afforded them successes in future social movements, including the welfare movement of the 1960's, led mainly by poor, black women, and the women's liberation movement of the 1960's and 1970's.

#### **The Separatist Element of the Women's Movement**

White women's participatory democracy has a more separatist nature than the participatory democracy practices of African-American women. While several groups of white females organized in favor of women's liberation, the separate groups can best be characterized as fragmented factions that did not rally together with a united voice. In its infancy, the National Organization for Women (NOW) included mostly college-educated women and career women. A sample survey of NOW members taken in 1973 demonstrated that only seventeen percent of NOW members listed housewife as their primary occupation. Over sixty-percent of NOW's membership in 1973 had earned a college degree. Over thirty percent of its earliest members possessed advanced degrees (Freeman, p. 92). Among the problems experienced by the women's liberation organizations, due to their decentralized and fragmented organizational structure, were discrimination and political inefficacy. Those women who did not fit into NOW, either because of their lack of education, occupation, socio-economic status, or race, endured discrimination when they sought participation in NOW (Freeman, p. 128). Competing feminist groups like the Women's Equity Action League targeted diverse groups of people who did not subscribe to some of NOW's more radical ideas like the right to abortion, and in some cities the issue of lesbianism. Working women who had not earned college degrees felt more comfortable forming their own feminist organizations.

Unlike the African-American females, white women erected barriers within their own groups, barriers which precluded women from being able to penetrate into several groups. White women's feminist organizations encouraged grassroots involvement and lack of hierarchy within individual, fragmented groups of women, but Baker's idea of a participatory democracy, in which everyone could be empowered to mobilize for a given cause and be treated as an equal, did not prove true in the multitude of competing women's liberation organizations erected in the 1970's. Particularly, at a national level, these organizations could be extremely divisive, particularly about issues such as gay rights and abortion, as well as hierarchical, with established rules and elected leadership.

At its 1973 annual convention, NOW established a task force to address lesbianism and passed a resolution declaring that women have the right to develop their "full sexual potential" (Freeman, p. 99) Of the 600 women in attendance at the convention, very few wished to support

lesbianism, worrying that it would tarnish NOW's reputation, making NOW seem more radical. However, the lesbian resolution passed as a civil rights issue and a women's rights issue at the convention after three years of heated discussion among NOW members, especially between radical NOW members and moderate NOW members, who tended to be older than their college-age radical counterparts.

### Structural Scenarios in the Women's Movement

Freeman describes NOW's problems as structural rather than ideological. The adoption of the lesbian resolution by members of NOW suggests that members with varying ideologies could suspend prejudices to come together for the common cause of promoting women's rights. However, structurally, NOW, as well as other women's organizations, faced what Freeman describes as the "classic dilemma" inherent to most social groups. NOW members struggled to maintain national coordination with grassroots participation. The hierarchical structure necessary for altering the women's social institutions conflicted with the concept of participatory democracy necessary for pursuing the "democratic nature" of NOW's goals (Freeman, p.100).

The "classic dilemma" women's groups faced can be explained by structural models proposed by Robert Michels in his book, Political Parties (Freeman, p. 100). Once an organization obtains some type of status in society, a centralized structure emerges. The bureaucrats have a vested interest in retaining their position in society, as well as the status of their organization, through the goals they set. Freeman speaks of the structure and lack of structure which encompass the "classic dilemma" as being a "curious protean medley of structure and spontaneity" (Freeman, p.101). The hierarchical structure and habit which classify bureaucratic organizations are not conducive to social movement organizations that lack financial resources for rewarding their membership and must utilize other incentives. Social movement organizations must attract membership by offering varying incentives, such as what Freeman terms "solidary" incentives, specifically friendship, respect, and prestige, and "purposive" incentives, such as the "value fulfillment," one's values are fulfilled by being in a specific social organization (Freeman, p.101). Freeman cites a social movement's primary resource as the "commitment of its members" (Freeman, p. 101). NOW's successes can be explained by its "solidary" and "purposive" incentives, both of which promoted participatory democracy's bottom-up leadership and resisted the hierarchical structure associated

with bureaucratic organizations.

### "Purposive" and "Solidary" Incentives in the Civil Rights Movement

The same "purposive" and "solidary" incentives which characterized the participatory elements of the women's liberation movement also contributed to the democratic nature of the Civil Rights Movement. At the time that Ella Baker promoted the concept of participatory democracy, she used "purposive" and "solidary" incentives as means of encouraging her fellow citizens to join the social organizations behind the Civil Rights Movement. Churches served as one of the greatest democratic symbols behind the Civil Rights Movement, since they promoted the "purposive incentives" of getting involved. Through weekly meetings at the church, voter registration drives, and walks to work, African-Americans developed camaraderie and respect for each other. Freeman speaks of women initially being motivated to participate in the women's liberation movement by "solidary" incentives, in the form of friendship and respect, but later realizing the "purposive" and "value fulfillment" incentives once legislation had been passed and they understood the greatness and significance of having participated in the social organization. Similarly, most African-Americans joined the Civil Rights Movement unsure of whether their goals for freedom and additional rights would ever come into fruition. Only after the Civil Rights legislation passed did participants in the movement fully realize the purpose behind their participation.

### Ideological Differences Among Separate Female Populations

Feminist scholar Jo Freeman states in her book, The Politics of Women's Liberation, that women's liberation groups suffered more from structural problems than ideological ones. Contrarily, Janet Flammang, author of Women's Political Voice, explains the gross differences in ideology possessed by women of varying backgrounds, that inhibited women of differing ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds from organizing together, as more divisive than structure. Diverse histories and privileges made it rather difficult for women of varying ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds to agree on a myriad of elements on the feminist agenda.

Following the Civil Rights Movement, African-American women faced the problem of having a dual identity, that of being a second-rate citizen as an African-American as well as a female. The dual jeopardy of



being black and being female did not permit black women to identify completely with either white women or black males. Black women faulted capitalism for oppressing the black population by forcing black men to work as low-wage, unskilled labor while black women worked in the kitchen for their white masters (Flammang, p. 331). At the conclusion of the Civil Rights Movement, black women took a different path from white females. They chose to help black males acquire the rights and privileges that had been denied to them for so long. Black women chose to form their own women's liberation organizations, so that they could engage in consciousness-raising sessions which acknowledged their dual identity, as members of two ostracized groups.

Even the black feminist organizations tended to be less separatist in their membership, therefore much more inclusive, than their white female counterparts' liberation organizations. In 1975, Jo Freeman reported that the National Black Feminist Organization (NBFO) membership was much more "heterogeneous than that of any other feminist organization, including women from a wide range of ages and occupations" (Flammang, p. 332). The National Black Feminist Organization's Statement of Purpose resented media portrayals that depicted the feminist movement as a white, middle-class females' movement. African-American feminists identified more with women from other minority groups than did white women. Alma M. Garcia cites four similarities that united African-American, Asian-American, and Chicana females. Among the chief reasons for an alliance among minority women was these groups' definition of feminism as a "struggle against the multidimensional inequality of race, class, and gender" (Flammang, p. 332).

### Lower-Class Women's Dilemma

Similarly, lower-class white women participating in the liberation movement isolated themselves from middle-class participants, because they felt these women lacked empathy and understanding of their suffering. Lower-class women felt women's continuous analysis of their feelings was a luxury. They resisted white, middle-class women's efforts to assert that their education and skills resulted from their hard work. To lower-class women, white, middle-class women's successes resulted from their class privilege. To be able to build coalitions across class lines, middle-class women had to convince lower-class women that they shared the same privileges and skills (Flammang, p. 323). Only ten percent of lower-class working women strongly supported the women's liberation movement, insinu-

ating that white, middle-class women failed in their mission to demonstrate to their lower-class sisters the existing similarities between the two socio-economic groups. Working-class women resented many of the messages originating from the middle-class women defining the goals of the women's movement. They did not wish to be criticized for being married; nor did they appreciate the negative media images of female liberationists as "bra burners" and "man haters" (Flammang, p. 324). Most importantly, lower-class women did not feel that they lived in the type of privileged environment, inherent to white middle-class females, that would allow them to shed their traditional lifestyle as wives following the orders of their husbands. Lower-class women's ambivalence about their role in the home versus their ability to go out into the workplace during the day hampered their desire to join the women's liberation movement.

### Conclusion

Clearly, participatory democracy played a paramount role in both the Civil Rights Movement and the second wave of the Women's Movement. Female activists in the Civil Rights Movement, including both white and black women, transferred the participatory nature of their social movement to the women's movement, making participatory democracy a theme of both movements. However, differences in ideology among the myriad of diverse groups of females participating in the Women's Movement triggered the formation of varying organizational structures among the many groups. Some groups, such as the minorities' liberation groups, like the National Black Feminist Organization, better reflected the organizational structure of bottom-up leadership promoted by Ella Baker during the Civil Rights Movement, while groups such as the National Organization for Women struggled to not create bureaucratic organizations at the national level that promoted hierarchical leadership over grassroots leadership. The separatist nature of the Women's Movement can be attributed to the multitude of diverse groups of females, from females of different ethnic and racial backgrounds to women of different socio-economic strata, encompassing this one movement. Elements of participatory democracy appear within each enclave of women encompassing the greater Women's Movement. Therefore, the participatory democracy which served as the bridge connecting the Civil Rights Movement to the second wave of the Women's Movement must be acknowledged as Civil Rights Movement's greatest contribution to the Women's Movement.

Barnett, Bernice McNair. *Black Women's Collectivist Movement Organizations*. In Feminist Organizations. 1995. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Barnett's article in Myra Marx Ferree's book, Feminist Organizations, defines the ideologies and structures of two influential black women's organizations. This article explains the great extent of black women's participation in the Civil Rights Movement by comparing and contrasting the objectives and characteristics of two distinct groups of black women, affluent black women and low income black women, who organized at the grassroots level to push civil rights, as well as some women's issues. Just as Janet Flammang's book, Women's Political Voice, dedicates attention to the different socio-economic factions of white females pushing for women's liberation in the 1970's, Barnett's article, "Black Women's Collectivist Movement Organizations," addresses how black women belonging to contrasting socio-economic groups embraced the concept of participatory democracy. Both Flammang and Barnett's work demonstrate the separatist, although democratic nature, that pervaded both the Civil Rights Movement and the Women's Liberation Movement encouraging women to unite with other women whose ideologies and backgrounds more closely mirrored their own.

Cook, Terrence E. Participatory Democracy. 1971. New York: Harper & Row Publishers.

Cook, a social scientist, has written Participatory Democracy, a book about democracy, with the intention of answering one central question. He wishes to know if participation should be expanded to acquire more democracy. Cook explains that "participatory democracy" should concern everyone, from those in the courts to those in the streets. As Cook writes this book, he acknowledges that a debate is in progress on the prospects of "participatory democracy," and hopes his book will initiate a starting point for everyone to participate in this dialogue. Cook defines "participatory democracy" as power from the bottom-up, much like other authors included in this annotated bibliography have done, in particular Mueller, Grant, and Kocks. Cook's dialogue about "participatory democracy" differs from these authors' dialogues since his does not only focus on its usage in one movement or one country. Cook examines a myriad of social movements in diverse countries as he both describes and argues the merits of "participatory democracy." Cook's book proves fruitful to this research topic because he too focuses on groups within the Civil Rights Movement who believed in "participatory democracy." In addition to focusing on one social movement of interest and how it employed "participatory democracy," he allows for his readers to formulate comparisons of "participatory democracy's" usage across several political and social movements. Since this research aims to judge to what effect tactics employed throughout one social movement contributed to the success of another, Cook's cross references in Participatory Democracy to several movements will encourage direct comparisons between the two movements being studied in this research, namely the Civil Rights Movement and the second wave of the Women's Movement, defined as the Women's Movement post-Civil Rights era.

Flammang, Janet A. Women's Political Voice. 1997. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Flammang, a leading feminist scholar, challenges the democratic nature of the Women's Movement. In Women's Political Voice, she explains the difficulties that women originating from diverse socio-economic and racial backgrounds endured when trying to define their ideologies in a social movement defined by privileged, white women who could not relate to their groups' suffering as well as their disparate ideologies. Flammang's work highlights the separatist nature of the Women's Movement. Unlike the Civil Rights Movement, in which most participants had at least endured the hardship of racism together, white women came from different places and sought bonds with women whose backgrounds most closely resembled their own. Flammang's work allows one to see fragmented participatory democracy, when analyzing the organizational structures and ideologies of the varying feminist groups under the umbrella of the Women's Movement, while also drawing significant distinctions between the structures and ideologies present in the Civil Rights Movement and those at work in the Women's Movement.

Freeman, Jo. The Politics of Women's Liberation. 1975. New York: David McKay Company, Inc.

Freeman is a renowned feminist scholar who participated in the Women's Liberation Movement. Her works such as The Second Wave and The Tyranny of Structureless are often cited by the following authors as contributing significantly to their research of the second wave of the Women's Movement. In The Politics of Women's Liberation, Freeman explains the "classic dilemma" of the women's movement as being a conflict between bureaucratic, hierarchical national governing structures and democratic grassroots structures. Freeman uses the model of political scientists Weber and Michels to explain the bureaucratic governing structure which often threatens the democratic component, namely the use of participatory democracy, in social movements. Incentives that accompany social movement participation can be classified into three groups: purposive, value-fulfillment, and solidarity. Freeman's attention to these incentives, which historically affect social movements by encouraging people's participation in these movements, sheds light on the "participatory" democratic nature of the women's movement which motivated a myriad of diverse women to join the movement.

Grant, Joanne. Ella Baker: Freedom Bound. 1998. New York: Wiley and Sons.

Grant became acquainted with Ella Baker in 1960 at the founding conference of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, an organization to which both women served as co-workers for several years. Grant's Freedom Bound serves as a tribute to the bottom-up organization of the Civil Rights Movement that Ella arduously promoted. Grant aims to shed historians' past convictions of the leadership behind Civil Rights as the work of a few heroes. Grant uses Ella Baker's personal story to explain the bottom-up leadership that made the Civil Rights Movement such a success. With discussion of Ella's opinions of the Civil Rights Movement, Grant demonstrates the ideals behind the concept of "participatory democracy" as ideals that both alienated Baker from the movement's celebrated leadership and spurred the movement's success. Grant defines Ella's concept of "participatory democracy" by highlighting events in Baker's life and her responses to them, in particular her strained relationship with Dr. Martin Luther, King, Jr., who she felt inhibited grassroots involvement. While Mueller, another annotated author, provides a short definition of "participatory democracy" with few examples of its occurrence, Grant's Freedom Bound repeatedly highlights examples of "participatory democracy." These additional examples of "participatory democracy" allow for greater understanding of the origin of the popular tactics that later appear in the second wave of the Women's Movement.

Hartmann, Susan M. From Margin to Mainstream: American Women and Politics Since 1960. 1996. McGraw-Hill.

Hartmann uses From Margin to Mainstream to contribute to a series of books entitled Critical Episodes in American Politics designed to illuminate significant periods throughout American history. Hartmann's literary audience includes students studying the evolution of women's political involvement. The beginning of Hartmann's book focuses on the events of the Civil Rights Movement, including particular attention directed at Ella Baker and her mobilization of activists at the grassroots level during the Movement. Following Hartmann's discussion of Civil Rights, Hartmann addresses the second wave of the women's movement which piggy-backed off the Civil Rights Movement. Woven into the threads of the second wave of the Women's Movement are threads of the Civil Rights Movement, including specific elements of "participatory democracy" that are described by Mueller, another author included in this annotated bibliography. Hartmann's From Margin to Mainstream demonstrates just how the Women's Movement piggy-backed off the Civil Rights Movement by adopting similar tactics, such as the grassroots involvement, picketing, and sit-ins that during Ella Baker's time were examples of "participatory democracy."

Hole, Judith and Levine, Ellen. Rebirth of Feminism. 1971. New York: Quadrangle Books Inc.

Hole and Levine's Rebirth of Feminism links the Civil Rights Movement with the Women's Movement by discussing the infusion of Civil Rights Movement participatory democracy into the Women's Movement, early on through female black and white activists who participated in the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee during the Civil Rights Movement and later helped

initiate the Women's Movement. Hole and Levine allude to the black women's "dual jeopardy" identity that Flammang discusses in her book, *Women's Political Voice*. Hole and Levine address how during the Civil Rights Movement black women realized their abilities and capabilities in such a way that they broke off into consciousness raising groups and discussed society's ill treatment of them as not only members of a second-class race but as members of a second-class gender group. The second chapter of Hole and Levine's book confirms the existence of the participatory democracy practices which Grant's earlier mentioned biography explains as characterizing the Civil Rights Movement.

Kocks, Dorothee K. *Acting Locally, Thinking Globally: Ella Baker and a Politics of Identifying. In Dream a Little: Land and Social Justice in Modern America*. 2000. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Kocks, a professor at the University of Utah, uses landscapes to elaborate Americans' dreams for social justice. Kocks' *Dream a Little* examines geographic locations that encourage these dreams including the West, family farms, and the local community. Ella Baker symbolizes the great role local communities play in a democracy. Kocks describes Baker as a "localist," someone who developed a philosophy of community that beginning with the location of the people. Baker's distrust for big government and devotion to local politics as a setting in which to promote democratic ideals are the cornerstones of "participatory democracy." Kocks emphasizes Baker's contributions to democracy in a chapter entitled "Acting Globally, Thinking Locally." Kocks' description of Ella Baker's contribution elaborates on the descriptions offered by annotated authors Mueller and Grant. Kocks' chapter on Ella Baker provides more examples of tactics Baker used throughout the Civil Rights Movement to achieve equality, tactics whose presence in the second wave of the Women's Movement may become more visible following an understanding of Kocks more elaborated description of Baker's employment of "participatory democracy."

Mueller, Carol. *Ella Baker and the Roots of Participatory Democracy. In Women in the Civil Rights Movement*. 1990. New York: Carlson Publishing. pp. 51-70.

Mueller defines "participatory democracy" as a fusion of ideas emphasizing political involvement and organization at the grass-roots level, absence of one solid leader or hierarchical structure, and a call for direct action as a result of fear and alienation. Mueller attempts to convince students of Civil Rights history that participatory democracy did not originate with the student leaders in the Students for a Democratic Society. She argues that Ella Baker first articulated the concept of "participatory democracy," with later Civil Rights participants, including the students, adopting the same concept. Mueller's work provides both the definition and origin of the "participatory democracy" which contributed to the success of the Civil Rights Movement. By examining the elements of Baker's "participatory democracy," it becomes possible to understand to what extent grassroots involvement and mobilization in later social movements, such as the Women's Movement, either deviated or conformed to Baker's definition of "participatory democracy."

Polletta, Francesca. *Freedom is an Endless Meeting*. 2002. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Polletta, a professor of sociology at Columbia University, focuses on both the Civil Rights Movement and the second wave of the Women's Movement as she examines the role democratic ideals play in social movements. Like Mueller, another annotated author, Polletta does provide a description of "participatory democracy." However, Polletta's definition reflects the definition formulated by white members of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee with less emphasis on Ella Baker's involvement in the formulation of the definition. Polletta's examples of women's massive participation in the Women's Movement highlight the significant impact the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee's definition of "participatory democracy" had on the organization of future Women's Movement groups. Like the Civil Rights Movement, women promote equality among each other by discouraging one-spokesman leadership. Polletta's book has great meaning to this research project because it really demonstrates how the Women's Movement piggy-backed off of the Civil Rights Movement through its incorporation of a myriad of organizational ideas that originated from the Civil Rights Movement.

## Conceptualizing the Mustard Seed of Democracy

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### Abstract

Charles Van Doren, in *A History of Knowledge: Past, Present, and Future*, identifies "the triumph of democracy"<sup>1</sup> as one of the defining characteristics of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. He assuredly predicts that even China will succumb to the wave of democracy.<sup>2</sup> He tells the story of how in 1989 dissidents proudly erected a replica of the Statute of Liberty in Tiananmen Square. While it was subsequently pulverized by the authorities, the visionary gesture and "the hope that the statute symbolized... was not."<sup>3</sup> Van Doren and his mentor, the philosopher Mortimer Adler, further argue "democracy is the only perfectly just form of government."<sup>4</sup> That is a sweeping statement, and it is one that we will not attempt to digest in this brief study of democracy.

Although we will not wrestle with the "justness" of democracy, we do hope to examine Van Doren's point regarding the proliferation of democracies in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. Why have 120 countries,<sup>5</sup> or more specifically the citizens<sup>6</sup> of those countries, chosen democracy over authoritarian rule? How did these disparate states<sup>7</sup> start the difficult transition towards democracy? Once nation-states have decided to move in the direction of democratic rule, how do they, vis-à-vis procedures, institutions and people, strengthen the chosen governance model? In short, this paper attempts to elucidate governance theories that address those important questions, and to recognize the *dynamism* therein.

This paper also sketches specific factors that facilitate a country's movement towards democratic consolidation. It maintains that not only is there a hierarchy of factors that foster the emergence and solidifying of democratic rule, but that there is also a horizontal component between the stakeholders, namely academics, practitioners, and government officials. The difficulty, of course, is identifying the precise association (along a causal-correlative continuum) between the factors and the faces in democratic