THE LEGEND OF OPAL MANN: RESISTANCE TO GENDER SEGREGATION IN THE GLASS INDUSTRY

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The Owens-Illinois glass factory in Huntington, West Virginia began automated production of bottles in 1914 and then ceased production in 1993. A year later, the Oral History of Appalachia Program at Marshall University sponsored the collection of interviews of several former employees of the factory[3]. The life histories reveal a compelling story of gender-segregated work and unions and one woman's resistance to the company's institutionalized policy of gender discrimination.

My original intention was to use these histories to investigate the way in which gender, race, ethnicity and class overlapped to explain the experiences of factory workers. As my research proceeded I became focused on understanding how social movement concepts explain the change in employees' expectations within the company and the decision to resist perceived discrimination, especially on the part of women. I also contribute to the understanding of how social statuses are affected by a paternalistic environment and make it likely whether collective resistance will develop. This is still a work in progress and my conclusions are general.

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[3] The Oral History of Appalachia Program was established in 1972 in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at Marshall University and copies of the oral history collection are also available in Marshall University's Morrow Library, Special Collections Department. Funding for the Owens-Illinois histories came from the West Virginia Humanities Council and Marshall University. They were collected under the direction of Barbara Ellen Smith.

Appalachian Women's Voices and Standpoint Feminism

As Barbara Allen (1992:606) suggests, "The stories that people tell in oral history interviews can thus suggest key elements of categories of experience around which their memories are organized and their historical consciousness shaped." Oral histories provide sociological data that is different from more mainstream quantitative research and is especially useful for providing a voice for those individuals who tend to be neglected -- in particular, women and minorities.

Additionally, I believe that my own statuses and consequent experiences shape my interpretation of the data, especially my gender, and I am especially utilizing that particular lens in my analysis. One of the terms for this kind of research is "standpoint feminism" or "standpoint theory" (Sandra G. Harding, 1991; Patricia Hill-Collins, 2000; Dorothy Smith, 1990). Standpoint feminism is deliberately subjective, assuming that objectivity is not possible nor is it warranted in doing research; that the assumption that a study is objective merely reflects and reinforces gender inequality. A standpoint perspective is designed to expose those power relationships that exist between people of different statuses, particularly between men and women, but it can be applied to the unequal relationships between other groups.

For example, Dorothy Smith (1990) in *The Conceptual Practices of Power* says that Sociology especially tends to remove its analysis from the real subjective world. She quotes a report from a sociological study on violence: "`There are two kinds of domestic violence for which we would like to estimate future rates and thus two kinds of problems that make such estimates very difficult, if not impossible. The first kind is individual violence -- murders, suicides, assaults, child-beatings -- and the second is collective violence -- riots, civil insurrections, internal wars and the like.'" Smith then criticizes the passage in this way: "The above passage identifies no agents; the presence of women and men and children as subjects in this relations of violence are

suppressed, the presence of the oppressed in riots, civil insurrections , and so forth are obliterated. The other side, the representatives of the state, do not do violence; police, national guard, military -- their forms of physical coercion are not identified. The mode is objectified. Who acts and how disappears. We cannot see what is going on."

Similarly, social analysis overlooks women's contributions and women's situations and what women think about these.

There has long been a tradition of research into the marginality of folks and how that shapes their perceptions. Women remain marginalized to a degree with regard to political status, economic status, and social status. For example, women still earn an average of 76 cents for every dollar men earn. We have never had a woman president in this country, women are underrepresented in Congress, and women frequently are channeled into low-status traditionally female jobs.

Likewise, Barbara Smith (1998) points out the dearth of analysis of women's participation in the history of Appalachia, claming that it "is a drama written largely by and about men. Farmers, landowners, bankers, coal miners, coal operators, lawyers, politicians -- the cast of historical actors has been an all-male revue."

In 1968, Jacqueline Dowd Hall analyzed women's involvement in leading labor struggles in Tennessee in 1929. In her piece she assumes women to be actors with real agendas, making real challenges to authority in a labor struggle. However, in reports of women's participation in this textile workers' strike, they were illustrated as barefoot and in sunbonnets, portrayed as passive objects rather than active subjects. Shaunna Scott also found in 1994 that women in a Pentecostal church were able to challenge the patriarchy within the church when they acquired jobs. In my own research (Campbell, 1995), I found urban Appalachian women migrants' ties to place were tempered by their access to resources in an urban environment. Thus, in addition to wanting to discover

cultural resources of women I explored the way in which access to material resources shaped the likelihood of women challenging power differentials.

Oral History and Grounded Research

I analyzed the data using a grounded theory approach (Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss, 1967). Grounded theory has a particular place within sociological methodology and, in particular, is an inductive, rather than a deductive approach. [4] It meshes well with a standpoint perspective. Individuals reveal through interviews what they're thinking, how they "know" their world, and then the analyst conceptualizes what the actors know. In grounded theory, the specific characteristics of subsequent respondents are defined in the process of sampling and analysis rather than prior to conducting the research. This process is called theoretical sampling.

Codes are developed in the process of analyzing the data (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). As the analysis continues the codes are refined and categorized. Ultimately, the study begins to focus on a specific code or what is called the "core variable". Since the histories were gathered prior to my study, they constitute a selective sample. However, I deliberately examined the female respondents first and in more detail because my research question was to what kind of resources (political and economic, in particular) do women have access and how does that access, or lack or it, affect their lives. I went from there to compare with male respondents and I included a few interviews from other oral history projects.

I believe that the Owens-Illinois interviews were collected utilizing a modified grounded theory approach designed within a feminist framework. I base my conclusion on the kinds of questions that were asked of the interviewees. They were asked about perceptions of discrimination, whether they were familiar with challenges to

discrimination, and about their own participation in challenging inequality. I think it is important to note that the interviewers were both female.

There were approximately thirty-five usable oral histories collected from the former of employees of the Owens-Illinois glass bottle factory in the summer of 1994.[5] The respondents were asked questions about their background such as how they came to work at the plant, what department they worked in, how long they had worked there, their age, marital status, whether they had children, and so on. They were also asked about their involvement in their union, whether they had family working at the plant. In this way, the respondent's various statuses and social networks are determined.

There are twelve women (two are African-American), twenty-three men (one of whom is African-American), including two former union presidents, the plant manager at the time of the closing, and two Marshall University professors who analyzed the story of Owens-Illinois. Eight-two percent of the respondents were hourly workers, the average age is around seventy-one.[6]

All of these interviews are available for public use. But since I am making some assertions about the respondents' specific meanings. I am not revealing their names here except for one individual. I name Opal Mann[7] because her lawsuit against Owens-Illinois in the 1960s formed a centerpiece of the original study and of my own analysis.

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[4] Martin Bulmer (1979) coined the term "retroductive" to refer more accurately to a process of moving from theory to concepts to data and back again as research proceeds.

[5] At the time of its closing, the company was actually named Owens-Brockway. But in its heyday it was called Owens-Illinois and the former employees always referred to it as Owens-Illinois (pronounced Ill-uh-noice).

[6] A constraint within the data is the difficulty in getting interviews from certain individuals, mainly younger working mothers, but that also is important to the analysis, particularly in understand women's participation within organizations such as unions. The list of potential respondents was created in large part with the help of a group of retirees who still meet frequently. These retirees are more accessible with more time and grown children.

[7] Opal Mann died in 1998, not long before I began analyzing the histories.

The Owens-Illinois Glass Bottle Factory

The story of the glass plant reflects the history of smokestack industry in the twentieth century. The plant is also integral to West Virginia and Huntington history. Built in 1913 by Charles Boldt of Cincinnati, the company began producing in 1914. By 1918 there were five furnaces and eleven automatic bottle machines. The factory primarily produced liquor bottles until prohibition, then expanded into canning jars, soft drink bottles, milk jugs, baby food jars and bottles, medicine bottles, and special bottles, such as those used by the Avon company for their colognes.

Michael J. Owens, a West Virginia native, developed the first automatic bottlemaking machine in 1903. In 1926 the Owens Bottle Company bought the Huntington plant and in 1929, that company merged with the Illinois Glass company to form Owens-Illinois. During the war years the plant expanded considerably and at one time employed over 2000 people. The plant closed in 1993, a shock from which many of its former employees are still reeling. Bear in mind that these respondents look back oftentimes on their days at the plant with a great deal of nostalgia and, perhaps some bitterness, which undoubtedly affects their responses.

Before the turn of the 20th century, glass was blown by hand. One of the oldest skilled trades was glass-blowing. Even before automation the mold makers and the bottle makers were considered highly skilled labor and had developed strong unions. It was an exclusively male industry for some time, even after automation.

Before World War II, some women came to work in the plant. But the big push was in the early 40's. When the war was over, men came back to claim their jobs, but women were increasingly hired in to work in the Selecting Department, where glassware was inspected, selected, and packed for delivery to the customers. IN 1945, the plant was fully unionized and there was a separate union for women from the two all-male trade unions.

At this time, the hourly work for women was exclusively selecting. A few women worked clerical and lower-level administrative jobs. At one time, respondents reported, there was a woman in personnel who hired the women and a man who hired the men. There was a division associated with Selecting called Corrugated, or The Balcony, where women worked, making the boxes for packing ware. But women did not work in the "hot end" where the furnaces were located and the bottles were formed. Nor did they move into supervisory positions in Selecting. But Owens-Illinois did afford opportunities for women to make a living and to be somewhat independent.

Another affect of World War II was to boost the Civil Right Movement and the Women's Movement, an event that will played large in the history of the plant. In 1964, The Civil Rights Act was passed and many long-time, paternalistic and discriminatory practices were challenged, changing the way in which women and minorities were perceived by employers.

In the eighties, according to respondents, there were increasing layoffs as plastic began to replace glass. At one time the plant was taken over in a leveraged buyout and was eventually bought by Brockway. Work became increasingly automated, so fewer workers were needed. Finally, in 1993, the plant was shut down. After production had ceased, the factory was sold to Huntington and was managed by the Huntington Area Development Corporation. Some new industries have located in the building which has been undergoing renovation since it was purchased.

<u>Life on the Lehr: Women's Work in a Paternalistic Company</u>

For the women who worked at Owens-Illinois, work was hard but paid well. The paternalistic company fostered an atmosphere of one big happy family. People were hired in the early days because they had a family member or friend working for Owens-Illinois and the company encouraged participation in sports activities, turning shifts into

leagues.   There were frequent responses indicating "two minds" about the plant upon which women, and men, depended for their livelihood.

This section principally provides women's descriptions of "life on the lehr". At one time there were swing shifts around each furnace, in other words, there were five sets of workers for each furnace and they rotated every few weeks in three different shifts, morning, afternoon, and evening. As one woman put it:

> We swung like monkeys and had stomachs like goats.

She went on to describe her favorite meal after getting off at 7 a.m. as steak, baked potato and chocolate pie.[8]

The women's remarks about standing by the lehr (a conveyor belt on which glassware was loaded, inspected and unloaded) uniformly included descriptions of how difficult the work was:

> I hated it. Oh, Lord, I hated it. It was hot, the hours were terrible, swing shift, you know. It was just a kind of miserable place to be. It was hard work.. . . Well, most of the people working down there had to work, you know, they went there for the money. It wasn't a pleasure cruise.
>
> Hard, heavy work. Very hard. And I think I went to work probably for 25 cents an hour.
>
> It was hard! Mostly it was hard, and it was sort of dirty . . . you'd come home dirty, but mostly it was physically hard. And the swing shift was hard to get used to.
>
> I've actually packed them asleep.

However, women could make good money working at the plant compared to other employment opportunities. One woman, who went to work in May, 1943, said:

> My brother worked there. I think I wanted to maintain my independence. . . . I went there with dependents. . . My sister and I had to support my mother and my two little brothers.. . . Well, right out of high school in 1953. I thought something was going to happen to that plant before I could get a job there. They paid the women a lot of moment, and I got a job there selecting bottles, working the swing shift.

[8] Subsequently, I've heard former workers remark that adjusting their diet to the swing shift was as difficult as getting enough rest.

Another woman said it was the only way she could keep her child:

> I was very thankful to get the job at Owens. . . I was getting a divorce, and I had a baby, I was less than 21 years old. . . . I was desperate for a job. Here I had this baby and getting a divorce. And it really meant whether I was going to keep my baby.

Additionally, the paternalistic atmosphere was apparently comforting to many of the workers. It was described as "one big happy family."

The women said specifically:

> But it was like a big family back then. Everybody knew everyone.

> You will always feel the closeness of the O-I family through everybody you talk with. You will get that feeling. I predict.

And shift work, while frustrating to many in terms of adjustment, created a sense of togetherness for those who shared a shift and effectively kept them from creating much of a life outside of their work. One woman put it somewhat disparagingly:

> I really think that Owens-Illinois and the people there, I think that was a nucleus of their lives. Not only did they earn their money there but a lot of their socialization was a result of their working there.

Others remember that closeness with fondness:

> Oh, you were just instant friends, you know, because you had a lot in common.

> I met a lot of nice people there, and the department that I was in, as I said, it was the men and uh, they were like family to me because I went there so young. . . Owens-Illinois was a family-type plant.

> I grew up with Owens-Illinois (she was hired in 1929 at 18 years of age) . . . and my husband's family were all "Owenizers."

The Owenizer was the name of the company newsletter. All the O-I plants apparently were managed in the same way. At least one other newsletter, one from the Fairmont Plant, was laid out in exactly the same way as *The Owenizer*. Both of these newsletters had reports from the various "clubs", or essentially, shifts, each time it was

published. And the company also provided a clubhouse for the workers. At the clubhouse was where parties were held and the various clubs met.

A respondent who had previously reported frustration of discrimination in the plant still praised them for providing the clubhouse and providing entertainment for the workers:

> But I do want to tell you some of the good things, too. The best thing was we had a job. That was the best thing, but Owens used to be so good to their people about activities. We used to have a Christmas party for the children . . . and then the shifts would have, each would have clubs . . . we'd go to a lot of retirement parties.

The company was also praised for paying well and for generally treating workers well by some of the women:

> I know that we made less than a dollar an hour when I went there in the fifties. And when I left in '03, I was making eleven-something an hour.

> They would even let you not work on Sundays if you were a Christian and you wanted to attend church. Or if you went to church on Saturdays. . . Now wasn't that a nice thing for the company to do?

> I was treated very nice. I was treated very nice. And I worked for some very nice people.

There was a strong sense of community in the plant overall. Respondents report that their fellow employees were a giving people -- helping each other and the community in times of need.

Mann was somewhat cynical, however, in her assessment of the clubhouse and the paternalistic atmosphere:

> Owens started clubs, you know, organizing clubs in the plant and they would spend money . . . They built that club room down there, and they would have parties . . .. give the clubs a bit of money along, you know. In other words, they were trying to keep the people happy without a union. But we enjoyed it . . . I really, thoroughly enjoyed it because, working shift work we did, it was awfully hard to keep with the friends that you had before you went to work there.

Early hiring practices at Owens-Illinois were also based on family connections. For many families it really was a way of life. And many of the women who worked in selecting had mates -- or found mates -- in the "hot end".

One woman described the hiring process before the days of enforcement of equal opportunity:

> Way back years ago when they hired people for Owens, what you did, you got, you got up of the morning early, and went over to Owens at the gate, sit at the gate, and waited and they come out, pick you out . . . if they wanted you . . . My sister and I went over . . . they hired me the first day I applied. Then the next day I talked them into hiring her because she really needed the work worse than I did. Because I was married and she wasn't.

Other women described their family connections:

> My sister-in-law and her husband worked there. My husband's sister worked there and her husband worked there.

> My mother worked there. And I believe she talked to the personnel manager and she interviewed us and we took tests. And I got the job.

> I was only seventeen when I went to work at Owens-Illinois. And I would say that I received my job or my position at Owens-Illinois through my brother, who had been there several years before.

Mann also found a connection at Owens-Illinois that helped her get on at the plant:

> A lady that I knew when I was growing up . . . came by our house and she had got a job at Owens. And Mom asked her if she thought she could get me a job down there and which she talked to her boss and he agreed to give me a job. And back then (1931) they had a little place that you went through . . . a house as we called it . . . You'd go in there and stand around. If they needed anyone, they'd come out and get you.

Mann went to work at Owens-Illinois for necessity by her own admission and did not relish the work and was only too glad to leave in the end. As she put it, "The happiest day of my life was the day I walked out of there . . . I didn't enjoy {it} at all. I mean, the work.

Mann retired long before Owen-Illinois closed but not without leaving her mark by leading an important challenge to institutionalized gender discrimination and the "family atmosphere".

Perceptions of Discrimination

The Civil Rights Act of 1964 is integral to the story of Opal Mann and integral to understanding the relationship between social action and social support. Also important is the paternalistic nature of the plant as described above and the interconnections between the "company" and hourly workers and between the workers themselves, especially between men and women. And gender played a big part in whether any discrimination was perceived. Men were less likely to see it than women, although some of the men were sympathetic. But many of them also qualified that sympathy with believing that women were not capable of certain jobs. There were also women who agreed with the latter belief. One of the few women in management said:

> But a lot of the jobs at that plant, and that's, I'm particularly talking hourly positions . . . I would see ladies bid on, knowing full well that that was not a job a lady should have. It was too hard, it required too much for a woman, and, I just felt at that plant, there were certain jobs that women shouldn't try to do.

Mann herself claimed that a woman should be able to do every aspect of a job before bidding on it. But she challenged general assumptions regarding what women were actually capable of doing. Overall women were more likely to see discrimination and to feel put upon by their male co-workers. In fact, one woman saw her male co-workers as contributing to gender inequality far more, via seniority systems and the unions, and the plant managers less.

And again, these specific responses regarding gender discrimination within the plant come from the women primarily.

Women did not become crew leaders or forepersons even within their department. And they perceived a difference in pay between men and women. As they said:

> The only thing I could say negative about that company, which has since been corrected, is that they did not place that much value, well, I don't want to say, they did value us, they didn't give us the opportunity, I suppose, for advancement.
>
> Well, there weren't any jobs for women except office work. Or in Selecting's about the only thing you could do . . . I can't remember what the men were paid. I think they got more than [what women got]. Yeah, I'm sure it was a big difference.
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> Still, when the plant closed, the Selecting was the lowest rate of pay. You know, that's because that's where all the women were. . . even after they integrated the unions . .. we still had skilled labor as our presidents and everything . . . they never got us the raises they got.

And Mann described sexism on the job in the way that men talked. She felt she had to listen to what she considered dirty talk because she didn't want to lose her job. And she also perceived prettier women getting easier jobs.

According to the respondents, Blacks were not hired in representative numbers until the 70s. Interestingly, with regard to race discrimination, one Black woman who did become a crew leader in the latter days of production, perceived greater discrimination in personal interactions with fellow white workers. She recounted ill treatment by some folks on the basis of her race but she noted that Black *men* were hired into the plant before Black women and into better-paying jobs:

> They just went out of their way for the men. If there were any breaks at all, they were for the men. The men had all the higher-paying jobs when I went there. Women were only, we had the lowest pay rate there. And there was no room . .. I mean, there was no moving up at the time. In fact, all of this happened while I was there where the women were put into the higher-paying jobs. And it took one lady, I think her name was Opal Mann.

The Legend of Opal Mann

Mann went to work for Owens-Illinois in the thirties. By some accounts, she was an independent, somewhat aggressive person. She had taken care of her family -- siblings and mother -- as a young woman. She was married three times during her working life. She was active in the women's union and as a retiree, still an outspoken union supporter. At the time that she challenged the company and the skilled trade unions, Mann was divorced and no longer responsible for anyone but herself and the Civil Rights Act had just passed. The Act's preamble reads:

> An Act To enforce the constitutional right to vote, to confer jurisdiction upon the district courts of the United States to provide injunctive relief against discrimination in public accommodations, to authorize the Attorney General to institute suits to protect constitutional rights in public facilities and public education, to extend the Commission on Civil Rights, to prevent discrimination in federally assisted programs, to establish a Commission on Equal Employment Opportunity, and for other purposes.
>
> Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That this Act may be cited as the "Civil Rights Act of 1964".

Much of the following is told in Mann's own words as she responded to the interviewer in 1994 with my comments to fill in information.

Mann's sister-in-law was president of the women's union at the time the Act was passed and had just returned from a conference. Mann described what happened:

> I was real active in the union at the time. . . . And, so anyway (her sister-in-law, the union president) came back from this trip, and that's when that law had gone into effect. You know . . . this law against discrimination against sex, national origins and I don't know . . . That's when that law went into effect, and we had, before that we had filed [grievances] and they'd gone to arbitration and so (union president) came and, we were sitting down there in [the] locker room and she was telling us about that law and we said, that we believed that that might be the way to go. So I said, "Well," I said, "I've got the quality rating (she was qualified for the job). I'd be ideal to do it."
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> They put [me] on a position to train a guy for quality and they gave him a better-paying job. God, it burned me up! And I was just all for fighting it,

you know . . . I filed a grievance and it went the same way the others did . . . I went through the grievance procedure . . and they ruled against me. So I called Ken Heckler[9] and asked him to get in touch with the Equal Opportunities Commission (sic) in Washington. Ken put me in touch with them, and they sent an investigator down. (Other women employees were invited to talk with the investigator, who was also a woman. The company sent representatives in from their headquarters in Toledo.) They couldn't get the unions and the company to agree.

The Equal Economic Opportunity Commission (EEOC)finally called and informed Mann that she would have to sue. The EEOC explained that they would pay for the lawsuit and that the company could not fire her in the meantime:

It scared me, you know . . . to think about having to go Federal court.

As the lawsuit proceeded over a year, Mann was under a great deal of pressure to drop it. She was pressed not only by the male workers but by some of the workers in Selecting.

While I was suing the company, there was two girls that I know of was taking a petition . .. for me to stop the suit . . . And I was working on the lehr with those girls. They were giving me a rough time. I found out about [it] and . . . I walked up to them and I said, "I hear you all are taking a petition for me to stop that suit." I said, "If every damn woman in here signs that petition," I said, "I'm going through with [it]." I said, "You can't stop me." . . . Well, I never heard any more about the petition."

Mann spoke disparagingly about those women who were opposed to her:

Well, some of them treated me pretty bad, but others . . . they was very few of them had guts enough to stand up for theirself, though.

One of Mann's contemporaries, another older woman who had lived through the same working years as Mann, and who had had an unsuccessful arbitration case against the company, had this to say:

There again, I felt sorry for Opal, because I knew why she was doing it . . . She opened the door for me and many other women. And the girls on her shift turned on her, gave her a real hard time. But I always admired Opal . . Opal got that fixed. To where we got paid for the job we did . . . And I guess, just me and maybe a few others could realize it, because as

[9] Ken Heckler was a congressman from West Virginia at the time.

> I said, some of them couldn't see the forest for the trees. But I knew what she was doing.

Another older woman tried to explain the way in which some women were socialized to be subordinate to men on the job, including those men who were family members, and how some were not concerned at all about issues of discrimination because "it was just a job." She explained also her perception of how things changed:

> See, my generation of women got caught in the middle of women's rights, women not having any rights. See, when I was a little girl, we were taught that it was a man's world. . . . We just believed it really was a man's world. And that's really the way it was at Owens, too. We were hired in Selecting. That was where we selected and packed the bottles. . . Some of them worked in corrugated department which made the cartons. Now, see, we weren't allowed to have these other jobs. In fact, we weren't allowed to have these other jobs until the early '60s, and that was through a lawsuit.

As for how some women reacted negatively to the lawsuit:

> I think they are women that their whole life just revolved around the plant and their job, the friendships that they made, and others just used it as a tool to something else. It was just a means to another ends. . . I think people who feel they have to work, they're afraid to speak out.

I believe that another issue regarding support of Mann and regarding women's activism is associated, not only with being so "bound up" in the plant culture, but also being so busy filling multiple roles. The swing shift was especially constraining in making it possible for women to network outside of their work world. And having to care for children and keep a home was a serious impediment to involvement in the union.

Two of the women who retired from the plant explained their child care arrangements in the days before child care centers:

> When I hired in down there, my oldest was just two, and I had one nine months . . . and I had one when I was there. So, with them being small and out of school when I first started working, I'd just wrap them up in blankets and take them to my mother's home. She didn't work . . . I never would have made it without my mother.

> We lived with his mother and dad, my husband and I did, for years. . . . Then when . . . we moved out, why, I always had baby sitters.

Frequently, women worked around the swing shift to solve their child care problems. As this married women reported:

> We worked different shifts, we couldn't afford a babysitter . . . the first two years we were married, we stayed on the same shift because we thought, you know, being married, we should. But times just got so hard keeping a babysitter that we couldn't do it. . . . I worked one shift and he worked another. And we would just have to have a babysitter in the change of shifts, which was like an hour, hour and a half.

I believe that child care and the traditional perspective toward women's roles, supplemented the patriarchal/paternal system institutionalized within the plant culture, which included a double standard for behavior outside the plant. Some of the older women talked about the plant's policy toward having children out of wedlock, in which a woman was allowed to make one "mistake", but not two. Then she was fired.

But Mann, unhampered by issues of child care and describing herself as "a fighter", was determined to sue the company and the all-male unions. She was discouraged by the district judge but had no real trouble finding a lawyer to represent her. Long-since retired, he told her at one point that representing her was one of the things of which he was most proud.

With Washington backing her, Mann's suit lasted three years, going all the way to the Supreme Court. By then, the defendants settled out of court and women at the plant were allowed to bid on higher-paying jobs. However, things didn't change automatically, according to Mann:

> Even after I sued the company, you know, and won the suit, they still kept trying to get by with stopping, keeping women from different jobs . . . I tell you, they (the men) really tried to give me a rough time. . . . We had to just keep fighting them and fighting and fighting, and we was still fighting them when I left.

At one point, Mann described attending a union conference out of town and how one of her male co-workers even threatened her life. She wasn't

scared, she said. She continued to fight and made a point, in her interview, of praising other women who fought, challenging the bosses, and challenging institutionalized male domination:

> If I had more seniority than this man that was lehr attendant did, they would lay me off and keep him. So, around 1986, we had another lawsuit that made them give us back our seniority if any guy went around us during the fifties.

As for Mann's battle, she never was promoted. She said, "I got nothing . . . but satisfaction."

However, as Mann said, the fight continued, and intrinsically male institutions maintained the status quo in many ways. A few years after the lawsuit, all three unions merged. According to Mann and some of the other older women, even though it meant having greater access to union resources, it was a blow to the women's union.

Mann wasn't sure why the unions were separate to begin with:

> I really don't know hot it came to be that way. But really, it was better . . . When the men took over, I mean, when they merged the two locals . . . the men and the women, they always had a man [president] and the damned, stupid women would vote the men . . . Well, they had to depend on the men to right for them and I don't know how much the men fought for them.

Another one of Mann's contemporaries said:

> It was organized that way when I went out there. And I never thought about it any other way until next thing I knew it was a long time; I meant it was quite a few years when they merged. As far as I was concerned, that was the end of the women's union.

At the time of the interviewing, there seemed to be an ambivalence about the union in general, from both men and women. This ambivalence reflected somewhat the ambivalence about the company. Both could do very good things for the employee yet both were very much in control of employees' lives. Clearly, patriarchy and paternalism were the dominant forces in the everyday life of the Owens-Illinois hourly workers.

Constraints and supports for activism

Primary relationships can be a constraint -- as in the paternalistic culture of the plant. Male kin and both male and female co-workers in a plant such as Owens-Illinois may be obstacles against challenging the company by voicing opposition routinely in the course of work. Additionally, feelings of not wanting to rock the boat, real physical and time deprivation, and care about co-workers may interfere with not only desires to challenge but even prevent any sense of felt deprivation. Also, although not explored here, group pressure in general not to challenge authority and tendencies to identify with oppressors have been demonstrated as real social forces by the classic experiments of Stanley Milgram (1975) and Philip Zimbardo (1971).

Gamson (1992:63) finds primary relationships can be both a source of support and a source of constraint. As a source of support, there must be a sense of closeness maintained among members of an organization:

> High-risk activism is high-stress activity. Preexisting friendships are helpful in recruitment, no doubt, but unless the *continuing* relationships among activists have some of the quality of a primary social support network, it seems hard to imagine that participants will develop organizational solidarity.

Mann's claim of being independent was significant for her decision to take on the company. At the same time, Mann's sister-in-law was president of the union and Mann was an active union member, making it likely that she felt a strong sense of solidarity with and support from other union members, at least in the women's union. She reported, and so did other women, that that sense of solidarity weakened when the unions merged.

Support from without the company and its cultural constraints also was important in the challenge to male-domination. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 gave impetus for the union and Mann to challenge discrimination. And the EEOC backed her directly.

What Mann's story and the overall story of Owens-Illinois brings home is not only the importance of organizing in order to bring about social change but the importance of having access to resources to effect change. Resource Mobilization Theory (RMT) is based primarily on this premise. But what RMT tends to shy away from is the social psychology of social movements. What these transcripts, and similar data, demonstrate is the importance of the way in which people know their social world, especially their immediate social environment, in shaping their behavior. As Smith (1998:13) says, "It is within the cluster of primary relationships involving home, work, family, and community that we act and create meaning." And for the women in this story, all of these domains were directly interrelated, if not one and the same.

The virtual destruction of women's union identity by being more or less subsumed into the male unions is also an important process. As a union, the women had a place and a precedent for acting together as women, sharing an identity, *in opposition to the male unions.* Gamson (1992:60) calls this "micromobilization": "Construction of a collective identity is one step in challenging cultural domination."

Also, the concept of "felt deprivation" is still a valuable one for understanding behavior in general as well as in social movement theory. These transcripts reveal felt deprivation occurs in certain situations and that it can be an impetus for action. I believe this factor was at work not in challenging patriarchy in the plant but in many of the women's decision to seek work there.

In addition, being free from real constraints of child care and housework, is a serious consideration which brings into focus the importance of partner support. In another data set in which Mann participated, one woman explained that it was important for her that her husband viewed her union activities as having priority over housework. Some of the women in the aforementioned data set and the Owens-Illinois transcript remarked that some women were actually stupid not to realize the importance of

unionization. But I think they were in a complicated situation with childcare and dependence on a male-dominated work place. And research shows that working-class men still tend to contribute less to childcare and housework than women.

These various statuses, gender, parental, race, cultural milieu, affect the sense of felt deprivation and social identity, as well as what resources will be accessible for shaping challenges to domination.

As for future research, anyone interested in social justice may find this data set a place to begin an exploration into the environmental concerns and class positions. In the smokestack industry the concerns over destroying the environment clash with the employees who depend on the work. Someone may also wish to explore the interconnections of class, gender, and ethnicity/race more in-depth within unions. A psychologist might examine whether Mann's personality mattered in the likelihood of challenging domination.

I will continue my examination of all of these existing transcripts and have begun to gather additional interviews, particularly from younger women. I want to know how both men and women, but especially women, who still need to work have fared in the labor force since Owens-Illinois closed. The working social environments will certainly be different for a single mother who works two part-time jobs at the local grocery stores. The opportunities for organizing may be scant and the concepts of seniority and layoffs nonexistent. How much does being married affect the future of these individuals? Does the growing childcare industry adequately meet the demands of working mothers? What real career opportunities have emerged for the former Owens-Illinois employees and what have the weakened positions of unions meant for employee security?

I will also maintain a focus on the meanings that individuals share with their coworkers, family, and so on and whether the loss of a paternalistic work environment is conducive to or an impediment to organized challenges.

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