

“The Hand that Rocks the Cradle Rules the World”: Constructing
Oppositional Consciousness and
Collective Identity in an Anti-Feminist
Backlash Movement

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In the last several decades, sweeping social changes have altered the power structures that bind American society. The Feminist or Women's Liberation movement in particular has dramatically (though not completely) shifted the balance of power in society, the workplace, and the home¹. While most Americans would agree that the accomplishments of the feminist movement have represented positive steps towards more universal freedom and equality, even generally-uncontroversial gains like access to birth control (other than abortion) are not without critics; the religious right, the pro-life movement, and some political conservatives are ambivalent at best about most forms of birth control, refusing to support institutions like Planned Parenthood that provide contraception at affordable prices and preventing the establishment of open and honest sex education curricula in schools. To ignore the movements of those who oppose and would seek to revoke progressive changes is to ignore a building source of political and social power in our nation that may very well threaten the rights and freedoms so many Americans (and non-citizens residing in our nation) hold dear.

America's one-"man"-one-vote electoral system means that there is a perpetual opportunity for the eligible populace to demand a shift in the character and socio-political stances of our government representatives. Because politicians vote with their own consciences and with the desires and beliefs of those that brought them into power, a single election can change the entire ideological orientation of the legislative and executive branches and have tangible effects on the laws of the land. As we have just seen with the Tea Party in the last mid-term election (November, 2010), a convincing movement narrative can generate the political momentum necessary to shift the government a significant step to the right—and it didn't take

long for attacks on the progressive gains of prior leftist movements to begin. The current legislative battle over Planned Parenthood’s federal funding is evidence that conservative politicians believe they have enough popular support to attack a vital medical provider and still win future elections. Due to the increasing polarization of the two major American political parties, we can expect these sudden shifts in the governing bodies’ ideology to continue². A national pattern of growing conservatism and anti-feminist backlash would have devastating political and social results for newly-“liberated” but still marginalized groups; those who care about maintaining the hard-won social progress of the feminist movement (or the civil rights movement, or any other progressive shift) should be deeply invested in studying how these conservative “backlash” movements build power and create social change.

Regardless of what “side” (because, of course, there are many) a citizen is on, it is clear that to generate enough social consensus to yield political change, a convincing construction of the issues in question is necessary to build a movement. Convincing and relatable movement narratives—ones that effectively articulate an “us” versus “them” opposition, identify long-term goals, and provide a lens through which members can understand current conditions and future events-- are more successful at recruiting and retaining members that are willing to change their lives and do activism on the movement’s behalf. What follows is an analysis of how one “backlash” movement—the antifeminist Quiverfull movement currently growing mainly among evangelical Christians—generates collective identity (the “us” or “we” feeling) and oppositional

¹ For more on how feminism has changed society, see: Evans, Sara M. *Tidal Wave: How Women Changed America at Century’s End*. Free Press, New York, 2003.

² Abramowitz, Allen. *The Disappearing Center: Engaged Citizens, Polarization, and American Democracy*. Yale University Press, 2010.

consciousness (an awareness of a particular “them” or “other”), and uses these cognitive organizations to produce a particular worldview.

No systematic study has been undertaken to count the number of Quiverfull-identifying (also known within the movement as “Quiverfull-convicted”) families in America. Journalists have estimated the number to be in the thousands to low tens of thousands (Joyce, 2006). The popular email newsletter “Quiverfull Digest” boasts 2,700 members (Joyce, 2006), while *Above Rubies*, a Quiverfull-affiliated newsletter aimed at encouraging women and wives in their traditional duties, claims a circulation of 160,000 and a readership of half a million people worldwide (Above Rubies, 2009). This movement, first sparked in the 1980s, is young; the leading voices are well-defined and few, making it easy to trace the percolation of the movement’s particular ideology from the leaders to the members, all of whom are “first generation” Quiverfull adherents that have adopted the framework rather than being raised within it. These factors make the Quiverfull movement ripe for an examination of the ways in which it is able to persuade families to change their lives and live in accordance with its tenets.

This paper includes an overview of extant literature on the cognitive level of collective identity and oppositional consciousness formation, an outline of the way in which the research was conducted, an overview of the Quiverfull movement, and a detailed analysis of the results that show how movement leaders’ constructions of the movement’s narrative were deeply absorbed by average Quiverfull families. Through an exploration of the roles played by free spaces and the construction of master narratives or frames in the Quiverfull movement, analyzed within the context of prior social movement scholarship focusing on cognitive shifts and the process of identification with a movement, I will demonstrate the ways in which antifeminist

rhetoric structures and informs the character of Quiverfull free spaces and narratives, strengthening the movement's power to recruit and retain.

Literature Review: Collective Identity and Oppositional Consciousness

How are bystanders transformed from disengaged citizens into committed movement activists? Movements need to recruit members, and members need to be convinced that their continued activism is necessary. A key question in new social movement theory surrounds the ways in which a movement's leadership is able to bind constituents to the movement and to one another, generating cohesion and group loyalty. In this literature review, two related concepts will be explored. Collective identity is the “us” feeling associated with shared interests and motivations. Oppositional consciousness is an extension and elaboration upon collective identity, marked by a movement's successful definition of an oppressive “other.” When a movement successfully defines itself *against*, rather than just in contrast to, a “them” or “they,” often the dominant culture or society, the movement can develop strategies to undermine the perpetrator of their grievances. Together, collective identity and oppositional consciousness function to create the motivation a movement needs to induce its adherents to action: “collectively defined grievances that produce a 'we' feeling *and* causal attributions that denote a 'they' which is held responsible for the collective grievances are needed for transferring routine ingroup-outgroup dynamics into political conflict” (Klandermans, 1997: 41). The practical ways in which both collective identity and oppositional consciousness are produced and continuously instilled in the minds of members by group leadership is still the subject of debate. It is worth noting that all of the approaches discussed herein take social constructionist positions; grievances, resources,

perceived opportunities, and identity boundaries are not “natural,” but socially constructed (Klandermans, 1997: 204), rejecting outdated attempts to essentialize difference and favoring instead the notion that all communities are imagined communities (Anderson, 1983), created through language practices and cultural ideology.

Collective identity and oppositional consciousness are so interlinked that many scholars appear to conflate the two even when their objective is to elucidate just one. For example, Alberto Melucci defines collective identity thusly:

Collective identity as a process involves cognitive definitions concerning the ends, means, and field of action. These different elements or axes of collective action are defined within a language that is shared by a portion or the whole of a society or that is specific to the group; they are incorporated in a given set of rituals, practices, cultural artifacts; they are framed in different ways but they always allow some kind of calculation between ends and means, investments and rewards. This cognitive level...is constructed through interaction...Collective identity as a process refers thus to a network of relationships between the actors, who interact, communicate, influence each other, negotiate, and make decisions (Melucci, 1995: 44-45).

Melucci’s objective in this passage is to emphasize that collective identity is *developed* through processes; it is not a static possession inherited through birth or other mode of wholesale acquisition. Melucci resists treating collective identity as a “thing,” as “the monolithic unity of a subject.” He instead views it as a “system of relations and representations” in constant evolution (Melucci, 1995: 50). Construction of meaning and interaction between actors—movement leaders and followers-- are surely key in generating and inculcating a new collective identity. However, his definition, which includes the construction and comprehension of the “ends, means, and field of action,” and “framing” that calculates “ends and means, investments and rewards” is strikingly reminiscent of definitions of oppositional consciousness as:

...an empowering mental state that prepares members of an oppressed group to act to undermine, reform, or overthrow a system of human domination... At a minimum, oppositional consciousness includes the four elements of identifying with members of a subordinate group, identifying injustices done to that group, opposing those injustices, and seeing the group as having a shared interest in ending or diminishing those injustices. A more full-fledged oppositional consciousness includes identifying a specific dominant group as causing and in some ways benefiting from those injustices... and seeing certain actions of the dominant group as forming a “system” of some kind (Mansbridge, 2001: 4-5).

Mansbridge’s definition of oppositional consciousness *includes*, or at least alludes to, collective identity (“identifying with members of a subordinate group”) as the first step toward this “empowering mental state” that situates the group vis-à-vis a dominant group and provides a systematic framework for understanding and acting in the world. Verta Taylor and Nancy E. Whittier draw on past literature to discern three main components necessary for the creation and perpetuation of collective identity (Taylor & Whittier, 1992), and ultimately describe a similar process to Mansbridge’s vision of oppositional consciousness. The first component, “boundaries,” emphasizes the shared characteristics, interests and grievances that establish the in-group and criteria for membership. The second is “consciousness,” the generation and absorption of new interpretive frameworks that logically construct members’ perceptions of their own social relationships and milieu. The third component is “negotiation,” the practical, day-to-day ways in which subordinate groups resist hegemonic cultural forces. The two latter components, “consciousness” and “negotiation,” are much more in line with a discussion of oppositional consciousness than with a strict focus on collective identity, focused as they are upon the identification and construction of an oppressive “other” to oppose as well as upon sites and strategies of resistance.

Along with her definition of oppositional consciousness, above, Mansbridge notes that oppositional consciousness transforms amorphous and undirected frustration into pointed anger (Mansbridge, 2001: 5). For Mansbridge, it is not enough to share a collective identity (identifying with members of a subordinate group), but one must see that group as relationally positioned vis-à-vis some oppressor and be able to identify the specific ways in which one's oppression is enacted. Thus we see that, though clearly linked with the concept of collective identity and perhaps even sharing many of the same origins, oppositional consciousness implies an extended comprehension of unjust social relationships and the felt need to transform those relationships. As with collective identity, movement leaders play important roles in inculcating the development of an oppositional consciousness.

The ultimate goal for a budding movement is “cognitive liberation” (McAdam, 1982), in which the dominant system loses legitimacy, motivating malcontents to demand change. Many scholars agree that the development of an alternative consciousness and “cognitive liberation” is the best explanation for the generation of collective identity (Klandermans, 1997; Ah Kwan, 2008; Buechler, 1995; Chapman, 1987; Evans & Boyte, 1986; Friedman & McAdam, 1992; Gamson, 1992; McAdam, 2009; Snow, 1986; Snow & Benford, 1992; Tarrow, 1992). These scholars generally fall into two camps: those that emphasize organizational *space* as a means to achieve collective identity and alternative consciousness (Ah Kwan, 2008; Evans & Boyte, 1986; Chapman, 1987), and those that emphasize framing processes and rhetorical devices (Klandermans, 1992, 1997; Buechler, 1995; Friedman & McAdam, 1992; Gamson, 1992; McAdam, 2009; Snow, 1986; Snow & Benford, 1992; Tarrow, 1992). However, Mansbridge's (2001) definition of oppositional consciousness is an intervention in scholarship that blurs

collective identity and oppositional consciousness together; mistaking one for the other and ultimately conflating the processes that create each.

Observations that personal connections are important for recruitment has led to an examination of “free spaces,” locations or organizational space in which potential adherents can be socialized into a collective identity by group leaders. These free spaces are “defined by their roots in community, the dense, rich networks of daily life; by their autonomy; and by their public or quasi-public character as participatory environments which nurture values associated with citizenship and a vision of the common good” (Evans & Boyte, 1986; 20). The key quality of these spaces, which are sometimes called “affinity groups” or “consciousness-raising groups,” is their isolation from the majority culture; free spaces allow participants to escape submersion in the hegemonic discourse and provide a more neutral setting in which common identity characteristics and grievances can be recognized. In a study of Scottish politicians, Jenny Chapman finds that “an exceptionally strong relationship exists between a woman politician's political orientation towards women and her experience of separate women's groups of any kind” (Chapman, 1987: 323). Based on interviews and a statistical analysis, Chapman asserts that experience with woman-only settings was a necessary and often sufficient factor in generating greater feminist/pro-woman political stances, regardless of whether the woman-only setting was a feminist one.

Free spaces clearly facilitate the generation of collective identity and solidarity by providing a meeting place for the like-minded, but other influential scholars would argue that the spaces are a mere venue for the creation and transmission of new master narratives or framing processes that actually stimulate and promote “consciousness” and the development of collective

identity (Gamson, 1992; McAdam, 1982). As Klandermans (1997) writes, “groups negotiate new ways of thinking and acting in private spaces,” away from the policing gaze of the hegemonic culture. Social psychological studies of the roots and formations of movements focus on the processes that act on and within individuals to promote collective identification. Interestingly enough, scholars that study oppositional consciousness return to this idea of free spaces and find that they definitively facilitate the growth of oppositional consciousness. In her examination of the state of oppositional consciousness and oppositional culture in three separate disability rights movements, Groch (2001) finds that the mere fact of separate space is not sufficient, but that the “degree and nature of segregation” influences the formation of oppositional consciousness (Groch, 2001: 66). In contrast to the blind and the mobility-impaired, a deaf community has blossomed in the last thirty years, complete with an independent counter-culture and a fully-fledged oppositional consciousness. Those that participate in the deaf community have reframed their impairment not in terms of disability but any instead view themselves as members of a linguistic and cultural minority. Groch finds that these individuals share a collective identity, believe they are treated unfairly and reject the legitimacy of that unfairness, recognize a common interest in ending their unfair treatment, blame a system of domination created by the hearing for that treatment, and view collective action as a viable solution (Groch, 2001: 69). They have little or no interest in integrating or assimilating into mainstream society. Groch firmly links the deaf community’s well-developed oppositional consciousness to the separate, autonomous schools for the deaf in which many were educated. In contrast, the blind community and the mobility-impaired, though often educated separately, are usually taught by sighted and/or able-bodied people until they return home to their sighted and/or able-bodied families; under such

supervision, there is little space for the development of a strong oppositional consciousness that rejects mainstream society's values and definitions of "normal" or appropriate bodies (Groch, 2001). These groups seek instead integration and assimilation into mainstream culture. Thus, when attempting to inculcate an oppositional consciousness, it is necessary to create autonomous, separate, and safe spaces for potential members to discover their common grievances and to generate new frames through which to view their condition. Morris and Braine also affirm the value of segregated space, noting that while not a necessary component to generating resistance, it is often through imposed physical segregation (an oppressive force) that opposition can blossom (Morris & Braine, 2001: 32) From this perspective, unlike from that of some collective identity scholars, independent organizational space is generally conceived not merely as a neutral location for a group to gather, but a crucial facilitator of countercultural awakening that allows the transmission of alternative worldviews.

Bert Klandermans (1997) asserts that collective identity "develops in processes of socialization and public discourse and are eventually appropriated by individuals" (Klandermans, 1997: 208), highlighting the role of an individual's social milieu to provide a lens through which to understand one's place in society. He calls social movements "sponsors of meaning and carriers of identity," (Klandermans, 1997: 204), and seeks to explore how the construction and appropriation of collective beliefs into new logical frameworks can lead generalized malaise or discontent into collective action. The similarity of Klandermans' inquiry to Mansbridge's assessment that oppositional consciousness turns amorphous frustration into pointed anger (Mansbridge, 2001: 5) indicates that what he is really looking at is the way in which social movements foster and transmit oppositional consciousness. His answer to this question is the

generation of collective action frames, which he defines as systems of shared beliefs that “justify the existence of social movements” (Klandermans, 1997: 62) and function like a “toolkit” generated by movement leaders from which adherents can appropriate the symbols and ideas that make the most sense in conjunction with their personal experience. The interventions of oppositional consciousness scholars like Mansbridge (2001), Groch (2001) and Morris and Braine (2001), who went to great lengths to separate “collective identity,” the “we” feeling that creates a *group*, from “oppositional consciousness,” which provides the systemic enemies and long-term goals that motivate a *movement* clarify that Klandermans’ “collective action frames” belong more in the realm of the latter. In fact, many scholarly concepts developed under the umbrella of collective identity studies must be reimagined as the mechanics of oppositional consciousness construction.

For example, David Snow et al. (1986) coined the term “frame alignment” to elucidate the microprocesses by which individual interpretations of current events and conditions and the interpretations sponsored by a social movement are unified (Snow et al., 1986: 467). They identify four different forms of frame alignment. *Frame bridging* involves linking two or more “ideologically congruent but structurally unconnected” frames regarding the social issue or condition in question. *Frame transformation* is the process of replacing existing values or understandings with new ones, re-teaching adherents to comprehend their worlds in a completely new way. *Frame amplification* is the “clarification and invigoration” of an existing frame explaining a particular issue, perhaps in response to new conditions or events. *Frame extension* is the process by which movements seek to attract new adherents by linking the movement’s worldview (frame) with the previously unincorporated values or interests of potential recruits

(Snow et al., 1986: 467-473). This classification system is helpful in distinguishing the ways in which movement leaders construct narratives to connect their objectives with those of various target recruitment populations, but does not do as much to elucidate collective identity as the methods by which a standardized oppositional consciousness is built.

Along similar lines of inquiry, some collective identity scholars have emphasized the appropriation and cooptation of symbols and rhetoric from the dominant culture to bulk up the rhetorical vocabulary of new collective identities. This sub-school focuses on the outgrowth of new movement framing processes in conversation with the dominant culture. Tarrow (1992) argues that leaders must draw from the extant pool of ideational materials in the broader social milieu, reorienting common symbolic language for their own purposes rather than creating an entirely new paradigm, in order to generate a viable and sympathetic social movement. Bernd & Grabow (2010) introduce the concept of “politicized collective identity” as a dual identity, simultaneously part of yet alienated from the host nation. This highlights the ways in which non-violent movements often appropriate the cultural symbols and rhetoric of their host nation to gain credibility, sympathy, and traction, intentionally linking their collective identity with that of the broader public. For example, the appropriation of the rhetoric of “equality” and “freedom” has been an important resource for movements in the United States attempting to embed and contextualize their own quest for inclusion or expanded rights in a history and culture that understands and sympathizes with those goals. Violent movements, the authors add, do not have equal motivation to link their goals or values with those of their host society, since their extreme methods will already serve to alienate them from the mainstream. Goal identification, while

perhaps linked to the identification of common grievances discussed in the context of collective identity, is also (and perhaps more so) a key component of oppositional consciousness.

Other scholars highlight the importance of media discourse as a key framing resource for movement leaders. Gamson asserts that “the trick for activists is to bridge public discourse and people’s experiential knowledge, integrating them in a coherent frame that supports and sustains collective action” (Gamson, 1995: 85). In his view, the mass media is a crucial component that movement leaders must address because it serves as an additional pool of commonly available cultural knowledge. For Gamson, television stories provide images that do not have a fixed meaning, but can be interpreted and appropriated through a collective identity and master narrative (Gamson, 1995: 102), and movement leaders must be able to incorporate news stories into their master frame in order to stay relevant. However, media images are not sufficient to generate a collective identity: a media-based understanding of an issue must be able to be constructed as linked with the everyday lives and lived experiences of potential adherents (that is, unless the event being covered in the media may itself affect or disrupt the lives of viewers) (Gamson, 1995: 104-105). Movement commentary on media events must use “symbolic strategies... to draw out the latent sense of agency that people already carry around with them” (Gamson, 1995: 106). Thus we see that media as a resource for collective action frames requires mediation and translation, veritable cooptation by movement framers, to lend any help or support to movement goals: “by failing to use media discourse and experiential knowledge together in constructing a frame, people are unable to bridge the personal and cultural and to anchor their understanding in both” (Gamson, 1995: 88-89).

A similar school of thought emphasizes the importance of drawing rhetoric and framing narratives from sibling movements, which can also help draw new recruits from those movements to the new branch. Klandermans (1992) has elucidated the ways in which multiorganizational fields construct social protest. He defines a multiorganizational field as “the total possible number of organizations with which the movement organization might establish specific links” (Klandermans, 1992: 95). He argues that movements spark and grow within the context of multiple other organizations, and that the framing processes that leaders adopt and project take into account their organizational milieu, both sympathetic and unsympathetic, in order to draw support. Thus, the construction of social protest movements is dialectical with the voices of socially proximate organizations, adopting, appropriating, and reorienting ideas and rhetoric that may already be in use in sympathetic organizations (in the hopes of casting their movement as a natural extension of another) while countering the rhetoric of unsympathetic organizations to frame a new movement and new collective identity. Doug McAdam elaborates upon the aforementioned idea that familiar appropriated symbols, goals, and orientations are important in generating a new collective identity, noting that participants in the Mississippi Freedom Summer project came primarily from tangential organizations that were “socially proximate,” that is, that shared ideals and visions of a good world and had links with the new organization (McAdam, 2009). However, it is equally possible to theorize that participants in the Mississippi Freedom Summer project shared a similar oppositional consciousness, targeting racism as the systemic enemy and greater equality as their common long-term goal; in light of the short-term nature of the project, perhaps these shared objectives were in fact a stand-in for a strong collective identity. Deborah Friedman and Doug McAdam (1992) assert that members are

most likely to participate in a new movement when that movement is still closely rooted in its parent or sibling organizations (Friedman & McAdam, 1992: 170). This has largely to do with the shared rhetoric, frames, and goals (again, more oppositional consciousness than collective identity) that newly-emergent movements borrow from the institutions that fostered them (i.e. the black church and the civil rights movement); as the new movement begins to generate new frames and radicalize, it may lose some of its original shared members. Tarrow (1992) adds that symbols, rhetoric, and collective action frames (or master frames, defined below) that are found in the oppositional cultures of proximate social movements are often more “actionable” than those drawn from the dominant culture, which often promote complacency (Tarrow, 1992: 197).

Furthermore, because these borrowed or adapted collective action frames and identities have been shown to be dialectical with those of proximate organizations, they are variable with social conditions or events (Snow & Benford, 1992). David A. Snow and Robert D. Benford (1992) link this necessary interconnectedness to the emergence and fluctuation of cycles of protest. They distinguish between “master frames” and specific collective action frames. Master frames are generic and broad in scope (Snow & Benford, 1992: 138). They provide “a grammar that punctuates and syntactically connects patterns or happenings in the world,” translating external events into the terms of the movement’s discourse (Snow & Benford, 1992: 138). Master frames help to articulate long-term goals (i.e. nuclear freeze) and systemic enemies (i.e. the capitalist world order)—crucial components in Mansbridge’s (2001) definition of oppositional consciousness. In contrast, specific collective action frames are a response to new or immediate threats and motivate short-term activities and goals, all of which are viewed through the explanatory lens of the master frame. New movement cycles (periods of new activity or

dormancy) are linked to changes or amplifications in the master narrative, as influenced by outside events and the actions of relevant social organizations in the multiorganizational field. Thus, a given master narrative can become more or less salient to movement adherents and recruits depending on the social/political environment in which it is operating.

Oppositional consciousness scholars Aldon Morris and Naomi Braine attest that most contemporary work that tries to construct cultural and social psychological analyses of social movements fails to “adequately situate individuals and social networks within systems of human domination” (Morris & Braine, 2001: 21). Based as much of prior work is on the peace and environmentalist movements, these authors allege, activists are seen as needing to construct identities and master frames from scratch. These studies fail to notice that many of the cultural symbols, rhetoric, identities, and even injustice frames employed by certain movements were found in an oppositional culture that predated mobilization often by decades or generations. For example, though the civil rights movement needed to construct convincing master narratives indicating that American race relations could and must be improved, there was no need to first build and foster a Black collective identity or injustice frame because these things (elements of an oppositional culture) had long existed; they did, however need to be imbued with a sense of efficacy and reoriented towards action (Morris & Braine, 2001: 22-23). A useful concept,

oppositional culture:

contains the frameworks of oppositional ideas and worldviews that permeate the larger culture of certain subordinate communities. These frameworks also contain partially developed critiques of the status quo as well as knowledge of isolated rebellious acts and prior episodes of organized collective action. These frameworks provide the raw materials that help shape and crystallize the collective identities that are in large part externally imposed on oppressed communities by dominant groups (Morris & Braine, 2001: 26)

In short, an oppositional culture is the precursor to the development of an oppositional consciousness, but, because it often develops as a result of systematic oppression and exclusion of a particular group, contains the seedlings of strong collective identity as well.

Alongside those scholars that seek to determine the rhetorical (and historical) resources for generating collective action frames and collective identities are those more interested in modes of frame transmission. In his exploration of the ways that traditions and social cohesion are created and realized through discourse, Gary Alan Fine uses the concept of “idioculture” to frame his analysis of social movements. Fine defines idioculture thusly:

An idioculture consists of a system of knowledge, beliefs, behaviors, and customs shared by members of an interacting group to which members can refer and which they can employ as the basis for further interaction. Members recognize that they share experiences, and these experiences can be referred to with the expectation that they will be understood by others, and will become tools by which to construct a social reality. By traditionalizing shared experiences, often through discourse, members are cohesively linked... Cultural referents are... a “tool kit” that is used to generate meaning, interaction, and, ultimately, structure. (Fine, 1995: 128-129)

The link between Fine’s “idioculture” concept and that of collective identity is much clearer than the assertions about collective identity made by many other scholars, who were in fact often writing about oppositional consciousness; Fine’s concept includes the modes of behavior and customs as well as shared beliefs, experiences and knowledges that surely form the basis for in-group recognition and cohesion.

Some collective identity scholars emphasize the importance of the Taylor and Whittier’s third component of collective identity: negotiation. They primarily focus on the ways in which a collective, subversive lifestyle (described similarly to Fine’s “idioculture”) helps to perpetuate, recreate, and signal collective identity and group loyalty (Taylor & Whittier, 1992; Gamson, 1992, Haenfler, 2004). Gamson (1992) notes that “the locus of collective identity is cultural: it is

manifested through the language and symbols by which it is publicly expressed. We know a collective identity through the cultural icons and artifacts displayed by those who embrace it” (Gamson, 1992: 60). Taylor and Whittier have stressed the act of “doing” one's collective identity, recreating and reinforcing that identity through the lived experience. Some examples of lifestyle changes that their focus group, lesbian feminists living in separatist collectives, made are the changing of surnames to honor the matrilineal line and the critique (and often rejection) of traditional feminine dress and behavior; because these behaviors directly challenge patriarchal norms, these feminists are performing their resistance in physical, visible ways. This lived negotiation of collective and individual identity is an “ultimatum of identity community,” a crucial embodied sign of solidarity without which one’s loyalty is subject to question (Taylor & Whittier, 1992: 192). Similarly, Haenfler's exploratory study of the Straight Edge movement finds that the core tenet of its collective identity, abstention from drugs or alcohol, is also the primary lived practice. For this disparate movement, largely without any institutions or organizations, adherence to the embodied practice is more or less equivalent to membership in the collective identity; one cannot drink or do drugs and identify as Straight Edge (Haenfler, 2004). All of these authors emphasize the role that lifestyle changes and commitments, separate from and complementary to political activism, play in maintaining collective identity and signaling movement loyalty. Without these material lifestyle changes, sometimes enacted at considerable self-sacrifice, one’s commitment to the counter-cultural values of the collective identity appears nominal at best.

Fine places special emphasis on the role of narratives within these idiocultures to shape and reinforce identities and frames of understanding. Moving beyond “idiocultures,” Fine refers

to social movements as “bundles of narratives” (Fine, 1995: 128) that strengthen member’s cohesion to the group, and to each narrative as a “text” (Fine, 1995: 133), defined as “a coordinated set of meanings aimed at specific or generic audiences.” Fine argues that a significant gap in the study of both collective identity and framing processes is the failure to examine the role of storytelling and talk in the context of the social movement. For transmission of master frames and inculcation of collective identities, there must be speech that situates and expresses these concepts; this speech often takes the form of stories that demonstrate or exemplify the movement’s ideological bases (Fine, 1995:134). Fine identifies three types of narratives. *Horror stories* justify an individual’s involvement in the movement by acknowledging and addressing their own stigma in the broader society (which often translates to the individual’s advantage in the sympathetic idioculture) (Fine, 1995: 135). *War stories* recount experiences members have had through their participation in the movement, such as having been targeted by hostile counter-protesters. In their retelling, these stories are processed to reaffirm the struggle as just and moral, and help create a body of shared experiences (Fine, 1995: 136). A third category of narratives, *happy endings*, directly reinforce participation and membership in the movement by highlighting and repeating the benefits that participants have reaped (Fine, 1995: 136). The “bundles of narratives” that become intrinsic to a particular movement are told and retold to promote collective ideology and to motivate continued activism. Narration or storytelling creates social spaces in which listeners are encouraged to identify with the concerns, grievances, victories, and transformations of others—important components of collective identity formation. However, some of these narratives (particularly “war stories” and “horror stories”) demonstrate an acute awareness of the undesirable “other” and conflict with that “other” which

alludes more to the social construction of an oppositional consciousness. Thus, Fine provides another connection between oppositional consciousness and collective identity: “talk” and narrative are important tools for the transmission of both of these key concepts between members and from leaders to recruits.

Two scholars working primarily with oppositional consciousness offer important interventions into the monolithic, uni-dimensional quality of most collective identity studies and theory. In her study of the role of Black elites on the Chicago Freedom Movement of 1966, Lori G. Waite finds that not all members of a collective identity (i.e. Blacks, women, the poor) develop the same kind of oppositional consciousness (Waite, 2001: 200). She contends that the monolithic vision of a belief system posited by most collective identity scholars is overly simplistic; it fails to take account the social and structural positions of various movement actors as well as their overlapping and potentially contentious loyalties. In her case study, Waite noted that Black elites like clergy and elected officials tended to have a less-developed or intense oppositional consciousness, though they identified with a shared collective identity and believed in the advancement of civil rights. Due to their relative privilege in the hierarchical system in place in Chicago at the time, they failed to radicalize against that system, using their influence to discourage protest politics and civil disobedience but to encourage patience and less-confrontational strategies for the redress of grievances-- ones that posed little threat to the broader institutions that supported the oppression of the Black community. “Differences within hegemonic and oppositional consciousness develop in part because subordinate group members...are not always similarly situated” within systems of oppression. The interests of Black elites in maintaining the status quo overwhelmed their sense of duty to their collective

identity community, demonstrating the real gap between possessing a collective identity and possessing an oppositional consciousness (Waite, 2001: 201). Failing to find ways to instill oppositional consciousness in all strata of a collective identity movement can pose a real stumbling block to unified action.

Building on a similar scenario, the AIDS activists studied by Brett C. Stockdill struggled to build an oppositional consciousness that could cut across barriers of race, gender, sexual orientation, and class. Data suggests that being at-risk for AIDS transmission is the result of a “matrix” of factors intimately linked to “social inequality emanating from dominant social institutions and culture... and by social inequality on the community and movement level” (Stockdill, 2001: 207). In short, the disease primarily affects those that are neglected by the scientific community and legislators as well as by activists with tunnel-vision that ignore the multiplicity and diversity of affected oppressed populations, often due to some form of internalized hegemonic consciousness. For example, white gay AIDS activists have historically neglected to connect their struggle for recognition and destigmatization with that of lesbians or communities of color. Such movements are, in Stockdill’s words, indicative of a “one-dimensional” oppositional consciousness; these one-dimensional movements are also the primary subjects of most collective identity/collective action studies (Stockdill, 2001: 205). Rarely are movements that strike out against complex social structures that sustain *multiple* forms of oppression examined. The activists in Stockdill’s study, though they come from different backgrounds and different collective identities and affiliations, have undertaken the task of forging a multidimensional oppositional consciousness along with other AIDS-affected groups. Interestingly enough, they employ forms of Snow et al.’s (1986) *frame bridging*, tapping

into and connecting the uni-dimensional oppositional consciousnesses of individual interest groups to the oppositional consciousnesses of other groups, highlighting the common themes and shared interests, i.e. using the framework of racial oppositional consciousness to explain and challenge homophobia (Stockdill, 2001: 233). This clear application of Snow et al.'s *frame bridging* again reinforces that, while these scholars intended to speak to the formation of collective identity, they were instead (or perhaps additionally) writing about modes of generating a convincing oppositional consciousness framework.

Oppositional consciousness scholars intervene in the models presented by collective identity theorists, shedding light upon the rampant conflation of these two concepts that long went unchecked. Some of these scholars have emphasized the importance of recognizing the ways in which even actors that share a collective identity may not, due to other structural factors like class, share an oppositional consciousness (Waite, 2001), and conversely, that groups can use frame bridging processes to generate a shared oppositional consciousness without sharing a collective identity (Stockdill, 2001). While oppositional consciousness is intimately linked to and often inextricable from conversations about collective identity and shared frames of understanding, a perspective that restores an awareness of oppositional consciousness as different and separate from collective identity to older works yields several revelations: framing processes of all kinds, but particularly the construction of “master frames” that identify systemic enemies and long-term goals, are intimately linked with the generation of oppositional consciousness; while lived experience, the sharing of customs, practices, norms, and values (Fine’s “idioculture”) is vital to the construction of collective identity. Free spaces appear to be more strongly linked to the latter, as places for like-minded or similar people to gather and

standardize their values and practices, though they can also be venues for the transmission of master frames through narratives and storytelling.

Research Design

Though scholars agree that the development of collective identity and oppositional consciousness provides the ideological frameworks necessary for the construction of an efficacious social movement, there is hardly consensus as to whether access to free spaces or the construction of effective framing narratives matter more in transforming bystanders into movement members and retaining these new recruits. Framing narratives, particularly the “master frames” as defined by Snow and Benford (1992), are undeniably important: the master frame provides the worldview that makes a movement feel justified, important, and legitimate to its followers. Without a master frame to articulate the long-term goals and systemic enemies, oppositional consciousness, which relies on the identification of systems, enemies, and the perception of social conflict, cannot fully develop. However, in my view, the importance of free spaces as crucial venues for the transmission of both collective identity and the narratives that generate oppositional consciousness cannot be dismissed, and strong research suggests that the type and nature of free spaces can in fact have important consequences for the movement mentalities that emerge (Groch, 2001). Movements need these spaces in order to tell the stories of their collective difference from the rest of society (collective identity), and their rebellion from it (oppositional consciousness). I assert that the importance of master frames versus free spaces, when properly contextualized in the socio-historical context that generated the movement in question, varies from movement to movement. Neither, I feel, can in good conscience be

dismissed outright, as both can play important roles in frame transmission and reinforcement for retention. However, the way movements imagine themselves in relation to their society—and to antecedent movements that trigger a backlash— must be established before this perception of social relations can be transmitted. Indeed, movement leaders must construct a convincing narrative about a collectivity that has particular qualms and contentions with the broader social milieu before recruitment and indoctrination to these ideas can occur. Thus, though free spaces may be useful for first recognizing particular common interests, their use as a tool for recruitment or retention hinges upon the movement already having developed a narrative that justifies the need for these unsupervised, separate spaces.

Not all scholars visualize and study social movements within their socio-historical contexts, and I would agree with others that this is a conceptual error that has hindered the academic comprehension of social movements. Morris and Braine made the critical observation that most social psychological and cultural analyses of the origins and methods of social movements unhelpfully decontextualize these movements from social networks and systems of oppression that clearly affect not only the reasons for movement mobilization, but also the ways in which that mobilization occurs (Morris & Braine, 2001: 21). Though other scholars failed to address backlash movements in particular, they did note that different movements must draw upon various, historical, cultural, and multi-organizational resources to structure their master narratives and identities (Klandermans, 1992, 1997; Buechler, 1995; Friedman & McAdam, 1992; Gamson, 1992; McAdam, 2009; Snow, 1986; Snow & Benford, 1992; Tarrow, 1992). Furthermore, assessment that socio-historical context matters, that movements cannot be studied and understood in isolation from the conditions under which they developed, is an implicit but

vital thread running through some of the most compelling and enlightening studies reviewed above.

Groch's study comparing the formation of oppositional consciousness in the deaf community with that in the blind and the mobility-impaired communities also imparts crucial insights into the importance of studying movements within their physical and socio-cultural milieux. She finds that the growth of a Deaf culture that views itself as a marginalized linguistic minority rather than a disabled sub-population is a result of the access to free spaces that this population has historically enjoyed. Deaf students were taught by deaf teachers in autonomous schools, such that this master narrative could be transmitted without the intervention of the hegemonic ableist discourse (Groch, 2001). In comparing the free spaces occupied by the Deaf to the regulated, supervised spaces that the blind and mobility-impaired populations have been relegated to, Groch links the “degree and nature” of free spaces with the strength and character of the oppositional consciousness that can form (Groch, 2001: 66).

In Lori G. Waite's study of Black elites in the Chicago Freedom Movement of 1966, there is recognition that one's social position has important effects on the ways in which one develops an oppositional consciousness or collective identity. In her case study, though some degree of collective identity may have been common across many or all Blacks in the city, class-based vulnerability to oppression deeply affected the formation of oppositional consciousness and subsequent alignment with the Freedom Movement cause. The more vulnerable populations developed a stronger adversarial mindset than their wealthy counterparts that in some ways benefited from the status quo (Waite, 2001). Her findings are extremely important: they indicate that oppositional consciousness and collective identity are highly sensitive to the social

conditions under which they develop, and that within a movement, factors like class can facilitate or inhibit the development of these mental states. To understand the ways that collective identity and oppositional consciousness form, scholars must study sub-groups within movements, because oppositional consciousness and collective identity may vary within a single group or movement.

Thus we see strong indications that social conditions affect the accessibility and type of free spaces and that the social positions of individuals (in Waite's case study, variation across class) influences the likelihood that they will develop an oppositional consciousness. There is also evidence that the organizational network out of which movements emerge will affect their values, character, and rhetoric. David A. Snow and Robert D. Benford (1992) link the interconnectedness of organizations within a society to the emergence and fluctuation of cycles of protest. Bert Klandermans (1992) concurs, noting the dialectical nature of all movements with the organizations and social conditions, favorable and unfavorable, in their social milieux.

The study of backlash movements seems like a natural extension of analyses that situate movements within multiorganizational fields (Klandermans, 1992) and in socio-cultural contexts that determine access to and control over free spaces, and those that use frameworks like class to analyze power dynamics and loyalties within movements. Though no scholars reviewed above particularly addressed backlash movements, their observations seem very relevant to the study of movements that emerge in response to other movements: the very character of a backlash movement is defined by (and counter to) the character and values of its antecedent social movement (the one that triggered the backlash). The mores of a backlash movement are, naturally, to some degree determined by the rejection of the mores championed by the initial

movement, and these mores will structure the movement's organization, master narratives, and allocation of power.

In this research design, I will seek to structure a project that illuminates the ways in which backlash movements are affected by the rejection of the values, mores, and practices of the social movements that inspired them. Based on the assessments of the aforementioned authors, there are a multiplicity of factors that determine how and for whom collective identity and oppositional consciousness will form. I argue that collective identity and oppositional consciousness within a backlash movement cannot be studied outside of the context of a dialectical relationship with an antecedent social movement. The reactionary quality of backlash movements structures movement institutions, including the types of free spaces available to would-be adherents and ultimately the nature of their collective identity or identities. It also structures the content and character of the master frame used to justify the movement's existence, deeply affecting the oppositional consciousness or consciousnesses that adherents develop.

Figure 1 (below) provides a general model of this hypothesis. Alienated individuals will seek out others who share their views; rejection of the new social changes resulting from movement “X” (the antecedent movement) will be a primary criterion for the spaces and ideologies that will be most welcoming to these alienated citizens. The rejection of movement “X” will also play a key role in determining the nature of the physical organizational spaces in which certain backlash movement members meet and develop collective identities (are these spaces segregated in any way, by race, class, gender, or other classification?) and the content of the master frame that will ultimately shape of adherents’ oppositional consciousnesses.

Figure 1: General Model of Collective Identity and Oppositional Consciousness in a Backlash Movement

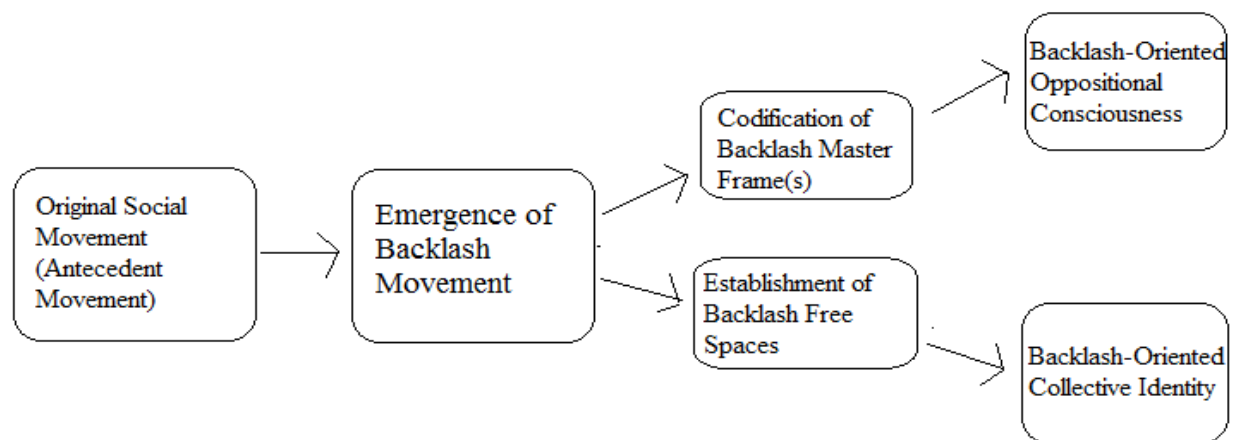
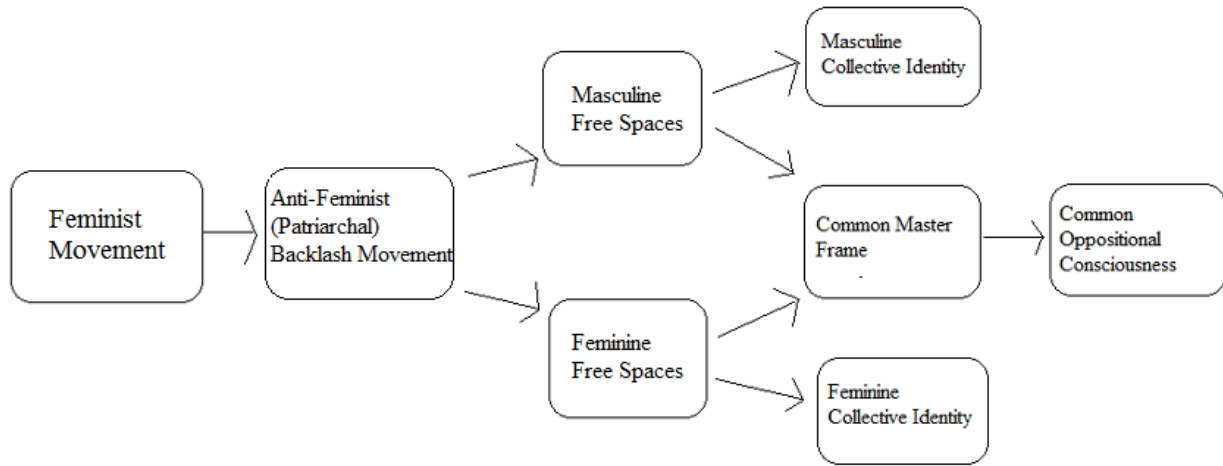


Figure 2 (below) is an example of the application of this general hypothetical model to a hypothetical anti-feminist backlash movement, the genre of the case study I have selected. Here we see that the permeation of the values of the feminist movement through mainstream society has alienated some individuals or populations. These populations reject some basic tenets of the American feminist movement, including equality of the sexes and the idea that gender roles are socially constructed. I hypothesize that the rejection of equality and social construction will impact the ways in which movement adherents are socialized into collective identities and oppositional consciousnesses in several ways. First, free spaces will at least sometimes be segregated by gender, encouraging the development of and socialization into two distinct but related collective identities, one masculine and one feminine. However, I further hypothesize that the oppositional consciousness in anti-feminist backlash movements will be gender-neutral, as the perceptions of a systematic enemy (feminists and the feminist movement) and modes of oppression (cultural hegemony) will be common to both men and women. The successful transmission of these collective identities and oppositional consciousness will lead to movement growth.

Figure 2: Collective Identity and Oppositional Consciousness in an Anti-Feminist Backlash Movement



Ann E. Cudd has developed a normative framework for defining “backlash” in which:

it is to be defined in terms of progress or regress, which is defined in terms of oppression. Backlash is clearly in evidence when oppression is greater than in a previous period with respect to some social group, and in that previous period the social group suffered less oppression in some still previous period (Cudd, 2002).

Taking this definition into account, for the purposes of this study I will define it as a movement that coalesces and mobilizes as a negative response to another, prior movement (the antecedent movement), at least in part to undo the social progress (defined in terms of increased social freedom or decreased oppression) achieved by that prior movement. The term “free space” will refer to a location or organizational space, isolated and autonomous, in which potential adherents can be socialized into a collective identity by group leaders (Evans & Boyte, 1986). Discussions of “master frames” will refer to Snow & Benford's definition: generic ideological narratives that lend legitimacy and credibility to a movement, explaining its reasons for existence and long-term goals broadly (in contrast to specific collective action mobilizations, which are responses to new events) (1992: 138). Current events are translated through the lens of the master frame into terms that movement adherents can understand and resolve with their worldview. Collective identity

will refer to the “we” or “us” feeling generated by participation in movement activities, constructed on a cognitive level through interaction with other members. Alberto Melucci's emphasis that collective identity is a constantly evolving *process* rather than a static possession helps to highlight the changeable nature of this mental state: collective identities can deepen or weaken in the face of many variables (Melucci, 1995). This study uses Jane Mansbridge's (2001) definition of oppositional consciousness, which she defines as “an empowering mental state that prepares members of an oppressed group to act to undermine, reform, or overthrow a system of human domination.” Though Mansbridge is primarily referring to the oppositional consciousnesses that motivates the liberation movements of historically oppressed groups, I believe that her definition, which points overall at an adversarial mentality denouncing and protesting a well-defined “other,” can be adapted for the study of backlash movements as long as definitions of “domination” and ideas about injustice are evaluated through the lens of the backlash movement's own master frame, rather than through the lens of a more objective historical consensus about who has been oppressed and victimized.

To test my hypotheses, I will conduct qualitative research by generating questionnaires targeting issues of oppositional consciousness, collective identity, and access to free spaces to be answered by members of an anti-feminist backlash movement. When selecting individuals to interview, I will attempt to contact a number of men and women that self-identify as part of the backlash movement, ideally husband and wife couples to control for issues of class and, to some degree, ideological exposure and commitment. In the questionnaire, I will attempt to construct open-ended questions that gesture towards the ideas of oppositional consciousness and collective identity. For example, I will inquire as to the way members view their movement in society and

in history, including but not limited to questions about why the movement is important and what its goals are, hoping to elicit responses that indicate the formation of an oppositional consciousness. I will also probe adherents' ideas about their antecedent movement (the feminist movement), social issues, and perceived hostility to find out what groups movement members view as their competitors or enemies. To examine collective identity, I will ask members about their own personal roles in the movement. What do they see as their responsibilities, and what are their personal goals for constructing a life in line with the movement's tenets? Where do they seek and find like-minded people? Do they have many friends in the movement, and if so where did they meet them? What, if anything, triggered their involvement in anti-feminist backlash? I hope that these latter questions will also lead to conversations about the organizational spaces that men and women occupy, separately and together. Judging by the openness of each couple on the initial survey, I will follow up with additional questions or clarifications by phone or Skype to add an additional layer of freer, less controlled information-gathering. In depth phone interviews allow for less-targeted questioning, immediately following interesting tangents, and above all allow a greater degree of connection between interviewer and interviewee, ideally generating more trust and openness.

I hope to supplement the data provided in the questionnaires with an examination of prominent books by movement leaders. Through a critical reading of key movement texts, I hope to distinguish the model or ideal collective identities and oppositional consciousnesses promoted by the leadership. I will pay careful attention to descriptions of recruitment strategies, the roles and responsibilities of men and women (separately and together), and the causal explanations for the movement's existence that compose the movement's master frame. How do movement elites

construct the effects of the feminist movement, and why do they rebel against it? How does their rebellion structure their ideas about “correct” social mores and norms, and thus the ideal identities and roles of their followers? How are women encouraged to act and interact, and how are men? I hope that these readings will provide a template against which to compare adherents’ views of the movement and themselves, as well as to enable me to more deeply understand the philosophical and ideological roots of the backlash. They will help to contextualize the questionnaire responses of the average Quiverfull family within the leaders’ visions for the movement, and will elucidate the trickle-down of ideas. I will also study these same questions within the context of internet forums, popular websites, and blogs established and frequented by members of the backlash movement.

My case study will be the Quiverfull Movement, a branch of evangelical Protestantism born in 1985. There are several thousand families in America that identify as Quiverfull, and many more that embrace its ideology (Joyce, 2006). The Quiverfull define themselves forcefully against feminism, which they believe is the driving force behind the deterioration of the gender order. The movement promotes patriarchalism as the natural and correct family and social structure, and denounces any and all attempts to regulate family size, citing an Old Testament verse stating that children are “as arrows” in the hand of God. Traditional gender roles, particularly concepts of “biblical” manhood and womanhood, are at the heart of the Quiverfull ideology; this represents a strong stance against the American feminist movement's philosophy regarding the social construction of gender. A stated long-term goal of this largely-dispersed movement is to influence the spiritual makeup of the world as well as the electoral makeup of America through a procreation-oriented lifestyle that values very large families in the hopes of

stopping the perceived rush of the nation towards atheism, hedonism, and gender-anarchy. Often overlapping and sharing resources with the Christian Homeschooling movement (one of the most popular homeschooling websites online, Homeschool World Forum, was founded by a Quiverfull woman), the Quiverfull movement seems to recruit many new members from this population (general description derived from Joyce, 2009).

The explicit anti-feminist thrust of the movement makes it an ideal candidate for studying backlash movements. The movement's recent development is also an asset: most of the adults that I interview will be first-generation Quiverfull, socialized rather than born into the movement's ideologies. I anticipate finding that the Quiverfull movement has free spaces both online and in physical places, the former of which may allow me to have deeper access to the socialization process than I would be permitted in the latter. Their online presences also provides opportunities for me to find and make contact with average Quiverfull families that blog about homeschooling or their commitment to the Quiverfull ideology. I believe that I will find that the ways in which this backlash movement fosters the development of collective identity and oppositional consciousness are deeply and inextricably linked with their rejection of feminist ideology; building on the observations of other scholars that in order to fully grasp the fascinating dynamics of recruitment and retention the study of backlash movements must not neglect contextual socio-historical relationships with antecedent movements, I anticipate that that the gendered makeup of free spaces will create gendered collective identities.

Case Study: The Quiverfull

Behold, children are a heritage from the Lord,
The fruit of the womb is a reward.
Like arrows in the hand of a warrior,
So are the children of one's youth.
Happy is the man who has his quiver full of them;
They shall not be ashamed,
But shall speak with their enemies in the gate.
Psalm 127: 3-5

The term “Quiverfull” is derived from the above psalm (translation from the New King James Bible), in which children are equated with arrows and viewed as unmitigated blessings from God. The publication of Mary Pride's 1985 book, *The Way Home: Beyond Feminism, Back to Reality*, is often referred to as the start of what is popularly called the “Quiverfull movement” among religiously conservative Evangelical Christians. This book, as well as several others (including *A Full Quiver: Family Planning and the Lordship of Christ* by Rick and Jan Hess in 1989, as well as *Be Fruitful and Multiply: What the Bible Says about Having Children* by Nancy Campbell in 2003) codified a set of core beliefs and values that have come to be associated with the Quiverfull label. A more detailed discussion of the contents of these key movement texts will be undertaken later, but there are some common beliefs that span all of the founding voices and construct what could be referred to as the Quiverfull worldview. So far, little scholarly work has been conducted with the Quiverfull, and so an “official history” has yet to be written about this young grassroots movement. The information in this section has been derived from journalistic accounts, primary texts authored by leaders of the movement, and websites written by and/or for Quiverfull-identifying families or groups.

Rejection of Feminism

Of these beliefs, nothing is more central than the rejection of American feminist assertions that gender roles are socially constructed. Many of their other tenets flow from this underlying assertion that men and women were created differently, with different strengths and weaknesses, for different purposes. This belief, known as patriarchalism or complementarianism, is derived solidly from scripture and from a particular common sense that links visible biological differences with differences of destiny and purpose; it is believed that the Lord created the bodies of men and women to best suit different but complementary roles modeled after the union between Christ and the Church (Hess & Hess, 1989; Campbell, 2003; Houghton, 2007). Though the modern lives of Quiverfull families are very different from those of their scriptural predecessors, within the movement these roles are referred to as “biblical womanhood” and “biblical manhood.”

In addition to their firm belief that gender is essential, the Quiverfull also reject the notion that sex and procreation can or should be separated (an idea that key texts credit to the feminist movement and the sexual revolution of the '60s, ignited by the invention of the birth control pill). Nancy Campbell, author of *Be Fruitful and Multiply*, asserts that contraception (and the “abortion mentality” that divides the sex act from conception) began with Margaret Sanger and resulted in many perceived ills of the modern world including adultery, homosexuality, and the legalization of abortion (Campbell, 2003).

Gender Roles

Women aspiring to biblical womanhood are encouraged to be “helpmeets” to their husbands, a role in which submission and obedience are essential. Wives are expected to submit to their husband in most, if not all, things, and though they do have primary responsibility for all

affairs of the home, the husband's role as caretaker of the family unit gives him first and final say on all family decisions (including prioritizing domestic matters as he sees fit). Wives are strongly discouraged from working outside the home, though helping to run a small family business from inside the home is common and acceptable (Hess & Hess, 1989). The vast majority of Quiverfull families home-school their children (Joyce, 2006); it is the primary responsibility of the mother to see to the education and enrichment of her family, while simultaneously coping with successive pregnancies and balancing all of the day-to-day demands of a household with many kids.

Men, meanwhile, are expected to strive to steward the foundations of a “dynasty” of strong, virtuous, committed Christians (Campbell, 2003). This includes bearing the burden of primary (and often sole) financial support of the family and making all important decisions regarding the family's future. It also includes supporting the wife in her efforts to educate the children with strong biblical values, with the hope or expectation that their sons and daughters will follow in their parents ideological and moral footsteps. Both parents are encouraged to think about the long-term effects of their efforts in this direction; the foundational texts are riddled with mathematical experiments to project the potential number of great-great-grandchildren that one Quiverfull patriarch might sire³.

Family “UnPlanning”

For Quiverfull families, sex is intimately and inextricably linked with procreation. A healthy marital sex life is encouraged, and emphasis is placed on the simultaneous satisfaction of

³ “I have some dear friends in Australia who presently have nine children but are hoping for ten. The mother has always had a vision to raise ten children who will shine as lights in the nation. Recently she shared with me (cont’d) her total vision. If she has ten children and each of her children has ten children, she will end up with one thousand

both partners, but for the Quiverfull the *purpose* of sex should never get lost in the shuffle. Thus it follows that any form of sex that has little to no possibility of leading to conception is sinful, as are any attempts to regulate one's reproductive function (Campbell, 2003; Houghton, 2007).

Perhaps the most distinctive conviction of Quiverfull families is their aversion to birth control or family planning of all kinds. Hormonal birth control methods like the pill or the patch are thought to be abortifacient (causing abortion), as are IUDs; all other birth control methods including barrier methods (condoms), surgical solutions like vasectomies or tubal ligation, and even natural family planning (abstaining from sex during ovulation) and abstinence to avoid pregnancy are frowned upon as audacious usurpations of a domain that rightly belongs to God alone. It is simultaneously posited that attempts to control one's family size or the spacing of children are futile self-deception because the Lord's powers to control conception are unlimited (after all, Mary mother of Jesus didn't even require a sexual partner to conceive), and that these attempts deprive the Lord of his rightful prerogative to open and close the wombs of women as he sees fit. The anti-contraception tenet is firmly derived from scripture, and the Bible is portrayed as virulently pro-child (Campbell, 2003; Houghton, 2007). Followers are encouraged to view all pregnancies as unmitigated blessings. In line with their position on contraception and family planning, the Quiverfull community is strongly opposed to abortion.

Contrary to some media portrayals, the goal is not explicitly or necessarily to have as many children as possible, but instead to submit entirely to the will of the Lord in reproductive matters. Thus, there is diversity in family size according to the natural fertility of the couple, and even infertile couples can identify with the Quiverfull movement. Adoption of additional

great-grand children! Now isn't that a great vision? What far-reaching influences a Godly mother can have, not only in determining the destiny of a nation, but also future generations!" (Campbell, 2003, p. 100)

“blessings” (as children are often called) is fairly common, creating what are called “blended” families. There is some controversy within the movement about using contraception in the extreme circumstances of avoiding a dangerous or potentially fatal pregnancy, which leaves individual families to search their spiritual hearts for the right answer for their own lives. One rather extreme perspective on this matter is that if a woman is too sick to bear children, she is too sick to have sex, and should abstain completely rather than choose artificial means to prevent pregnancy (Campbell, 2003). There are also problems of gender-role policing in Quiverfull circles; sometimes, when families struggle with fertility issues, the wife is suspected of secretly using contraception to avoid pregnancy.

Homeschooling

The vast majority of Quiverfull families homeschool their children, at least partly in order to shelter them from “ungodly” outside influences (Joyce, 2009). This undertaking is generally spearheaded by the wife and mother of the family, often using curricula available on several prominent Quiverfull-friendly evangelical websites. Many women blog about their homeschooling adventures, sharing best practices and ideas for enrichment activities.

Population Games and Political Ramifications

Discussions about long-term fertility and population growth are often linked, in both subtle and overt ways, to a consciousness about population politics in the world and in the American electorate. All of the key Quiverfull texts reject the modern premise that the Earth has a population problem or that natural resources are scarce: several posit that the entire population of the world could fit into the state of Texas (though they do admit that it would be a tight squeeze) (Campbell, 2003; Hess & Hess, 1989). Birthrates are of central concern and are

depicted competitively as a race to gain or hold a religious or moral majority in the nation and in the world. Anxieties about a “birth dearth” among Christians (largely due to contraception use and the permeation of the “abortion mentality” into lax Christian churches and congregations) are compounded by the higher birthrates of other religious or racial groups, though some relief is found in the low birthrate among feminists and non-believers. Discussions about increasing the proportion of true Christians (generally defined as those that accept a literal interpretation of the Bible) in comparison with members of other religions, non-believers or secular materialists, and feminists generally focus on the moral improvement of the world for the pleasure of the Lord that would result from more Christian children. In Rick and Jan Hess's *A Full Quiver: Family Planning and the Lordship of Christ*, the authors frankly discuss the relationship between birthrate and electoral clout, speculating that if Christians stop interfering with their own fertility through birth control or abortion and put it in the hands of god, within a few generations a huge voting bloc of devout Christians will have veto power over ungodly or immoral policies and politics in America.

Movement Growth and Recruitment

According to journalist Kathryn Joyce, the Quiverfull movement has grown in a grassroots way through community Bible studies, homeschooling forums and cooperatives, in pro-life activist communities, and through small ministries (religious mentoring groups) often headed by women (Joyce, 2006, 2009). While conservative Evangelical churches sometimes support Quiverfull positions on abortion, contraception, and family planning, there are no explicitly Quiverfull churches; the movement has few physical institutions. There is, however, a vibrant online community of blogs, forums, e-newsletters, and large-family directories that helps

movement leaders disseminate their messages while allowing dispersed Quiverfull-convicted families to connect with others of a similar persuasion for support and friendship. These internet circles often overlap with blogs, forums, and websites that promote the practice of homeschooling and provide resources and support to homeschooling families. Visionforum.com, a popular homeschooling website, claims that the “defining crisis of our age is the systematic annihilation of the Biblical family.” In its mission statement, which focuses on decidedly Quiverfull values and worldview, Vision Forum claims that in the next year, it will:

bring our message to more than twenty major home school conferences in America. Through keynote addresses, workshops, and seminars we will reach more than sixty thousand home educators this year. Our goal is to encourage and build up home school parents with the Biblical foundation and long-term vision for the training of their children. (“Vision Forum's Quest for Family Renewal”)

The homeschooling community is thus an accessible and often religiously and ideologically sympathetic group from which to draw new recruits. The other primary way that Quiverfull-convicted families seek to grow their movement is through childbirth and adoption with the goal of socializing children into the beliefs and values of their parents. For the purposes of this study, however, I will focus primarily on the factors that lead non-Quiverfull individuals or couples to alter their beliefs and lifestyle, rather than on the success of ideological transmission from parents to children.

Criticism

Criticism of Quiverfull ideology comes from several corners. Feminist critiques focus on fears that the growing popularity of patriarchalism will undo some of the successes of the feminist movement, but also on concerns about the mental and emotional health of wives and daughters, who are urged to display constant submission and obedience (Joyce, 2009). These

latter concerns are shared by groups like the women who blog at nolongerquivering.com, a site founded by Vyckie Garrison, a former Quiverfull mother of seven who “escaped” the movement when her oldest daughter attempted suicide. Garrison and like-minded crusaders against abusive religious practices have referred to the rigid gender roles set for women and girls in Quiverfull communities as “soul murder,” and have started a non-profit, the Take Heart project, to provide resources for women who wish to leave the movement and to support those that have already done so. Criticism also comes from mainstream Christians, who view the fundamentalist ideologies and literal reading of the Bible to be socially regressive and outdated. Media portrayals of Quiverfull-convicted families often depict the lifestyle to be cult-like and exotic (see the Women’s Entertainment channel special “Born to Breed,” 2009), appealing to audiences’ fascination with difference and alternative worldviews.

Data Analysis & Discussion

Overview of Respondent Characteristics

Forty-seven individuals responded to the online survey, which was composed of both multiple-choice and free-response questions. The majority (thirty-two) were women, complimented by fifteen men; their ages ranged from 21 to 55, with an average age of 36. Most of the men that responded were spouses of female participants. The average number of children each participant had was 5.68; a few participants had not yet had their first child, while some outliers on the other side of the spectrum had as many as twelve. No distinction was made between biological and adopted children, and several of these counts included children from previous marriages. Thirty of the respondents do not work outside of the home, all of whom

were female; of the sixteen respondents that did work outside of the home, fourteen were male and two were female (one male respondent did not answer this question). Only five of the forty-seven survey participants (10.6%) were raised in families that intentionally avoided the use of contraception.

Respondents were from 19 different U.S. states and the province of Alberta, Canada. Six participants listed their home state as Washington, six live in Virginia, four live in Ohio, and three in North Carolina, but others came from states as diverse as Alabama and New York, Tennessee and Michigan. The more unifying geographical factor was the kind of area that Quiverfull families occupied: 18 respondents said they lived in a rural setting, and 20 said that they lived in a suburban setting, with a few listing “outskirts of town” or “rural village” in the “Other” answer space.

Most of the participants (39) said that they belong to or are regular attendees at a church, while others belonged to less formal worship circles or fellowships in the homes of friends or acquaintances. Some families unable to find a suitable church in their area chose to home-church with their family. Prominent denominations included varieties of Baptist, Evangelical, and Pentecostal churches with a few respondents listing that they were part of Catholic, Messianic Jewish, Lutheran, Episcopal, or non-denominational congregations.

Eight participants were selected for follow-up interviews from the twenty-one that volunteered for phone interviews. The goal of these interviews was to ask for elaboration upon survey answers, as well as to gather additional data about political positions and civic behaviors like voting, activism, or volunteering activities. Selection was based on several factors, foremost among which was a sense that the participant was relatively open to answering personal

questions as indicated by detailed or intimate answers to survey questions. Other factors included having answered survey questions using terms or alluding to concepts that seemed specific to the religious or social demographic and required further explanation. Seven of the eight interviews were conducted with women, and one was conducted with a man. All interviewees were married with children.

Master Frames and Oppositional Consciousness

As stated earlier, collective identity and oppositional consciousness function together to generate the motivation a movement needs to induce its adherents to action: “collectively defined grievances that produce a 'we' feeling *and* causal attributions that denote a 'they' which is held responsible for the collective grievances are needed for transferring routine ingroup-outgroup dynamics into political conflict” (Klandermans, 1997: 41). What distinguish the Quiverfull as a movement, rather than just a group or sect, are their strong master frames—the broad, generic lenses through which members of a movement view their place in the world (Snow & Benford, 1992: 138). These master frames provide “a grammar that punctuates and syntactically connects patterns or happenings in the world,” mapping external events and conditions onto the movement’s own distinctive worldview, creating a coherent internal logic that identifies systemic enemies and long-term goals (Snow & Benford, 1992: 138).

Since Quiverfull-convicted individuals are, almost uniformly, very religious, one might expect that their shared faith in a literal, legalistic interpretation of the Bible would provide enough motivation for families to choose the Quiverfull lifestyle since there is ample evidence that it is biblically sound. However, key Quiverfull texts and influential websites all went beyond the purely biblical basis for leaving family planning in God’s hands. The master frames that

generate the internal logic of the movement and create the “common sense” or worldview among its adherents rely strongly upon particular constructions of feminists and feminism, population-based fear tactics that allude to civilizational conflict and the demise of Judao-Christian culture, and a repudiation of environmental concerns about global warming and resource conservation.

Constructing an Enemy: (Mis)Representation, Repudiation and Vilification of Feminism

Given the rampant misrepresentation of feminism in popular culture⁴, it is unsurprising that the “brand” of feminism that survey participants were most familiar with was an exaggerated vision of radical feminism in which the goal is to completely dismantle the existing gender order and destroy the traditional family. All three of the Quiverfull texts studied envisioned and portrayed feminism thusly, refusing to acknowledge any of the subtleties or varied concerns that might break down the oppositional relationship so crucial to scaring women away from exploring or considering any real feminist tenets. The texts also characterized the culture at large as permeated with feminism, often implying that materialism and selfishness were the result of the feminist movement’s successful absorption into the social fabric of America (a characterization that most feminists would strongly disagree with). Three texts were studied, all of which were advertised and sold on several Quiverfull websites (including Quiverfull.com) and blogs: Nancy Campbell’s *Be Fruitful and Multiply* (Vision Forum Ministries, 2003), Rick and Jan Hess’s *A Full Quiver: Family Planning and the Lordship of Christ* (Hess Publishing, 1990), and Craig Houghton’s *Family UnPlanning* (Xulon Press, 2007) with a forward by Nancy Campbell. Vision Forum, a Quiverfull-oriented Christian homeschooling resource website, founded by Doug Phillips (who, incidentally, wrote the forward for *Be Fruitful and Multiply*)

was also analyzed, as was Quiverfull.com. The successful permeation of the anti-feminist frame from movement leaders to average Quiverfull families was remarkably strong, with adherents using very similar language and echoing ideas with notable parity.

Feminism and Materialism

Rick and Jan Hess's *A Full Quiver: Family Planning and the Lordship of Christ* goes to considerable lengths to promote the idea that women who desire and pursue careers are primarily motivated by materialism: "The idea that we would all be richer and happier if only we had less children is very popular with morally indigent, playboy types—of both sexes and all ages (Hess & Hess, 71)." Those who plan their families or seek financial security prior to having children are simplistically characterized as "morally indigent playboy types," rather than responsible or cautious future parents. Throughout the text, material goods are cast as "temporary," in the sense that they do not follow their owners into the afterlife, and so are frivolous or unworthy pursuits. Given the financial hardship that several interview participants and survey respondents alluded to, as well as the many blog posts on the art and value of thrift, money is a central concern for these single-income households with an average of 5.68 children. Despite these realities, and to warn women from succumbing to the temptation to pursue a second income for their households, the Hesses posit that two incomes are unnecessary, provided that a family is willing to disentangle real need from manufactured commercial desire. Regardless of the real financial situation of a particular family, their construction is that the feminism-saturated culture that promotes family planning is more concerned about material accumulation than about allowing children to come into the world according to God's plan. In pursuit of these goals, feminists are

⁴ See: Owen, Susan A. et al. *Bad Girls: Cultural Politics and Media Representations of Transgressive Women*. P. Lang, New York, 2007. Or, for a more accessible introduction: Levy, Ariel. *Female Chauvinist Pigs: Women and the*

often characterized as admiring and seeking to implement China's one-child policy here in America (through birth control and abortion): "The Western World has no official one-child policy, but the philosophy remains the same that the fewer people there are, the more there will be for the rest of us" (Hess & Hess, 35).

Craig Houghton's 2007 book promotes a similar vision of modern western (feminist) society as valuing childlessness (a product of feminist interventions like birth control and abortion in the natural consequences of sexual union) because it facilitates the accumulation of material goods:

Our culture today leads us to believe that barrenness is the true blessing. Young couples are encouraged to spend time getting to know one another, establish their careers, save for the down payment on their house, pay off those student loans etc. Those same couples are told, often by fellow believers, that the last thing you need when you're just starting off is to have children. The world tells us that material stuff and self-fulfillment are the greatest need for couples...How totally we have lost God's ideal for families and perverted our way of thinking (Houghton, 25).

Houghton alludes to "fellow believers" that also promote this unbiblical materialism, a jab at the cooptation of mainstream Christianity that tolerates or even promotes family planning despite the Bible's clear exhortations to the contrary. The use of family planning methods is cast as a strategy to acquire "material stuff," with the implication that this "material stuff" is superfluous and unnecessary, rather than the makings of a stable, safe, and financially secure home in which to ultimately raise children. An even more harsh renunciation of "feminist" materialism was found on Quiverfull.com, from a moderator of the *QF Digest*:

We Christians are believing lies from the very pit of hell. If we were to list all the reasons why Christians use birth control, we would see that they are the same reasons why a woman aborts her child. The primary reason children are murdered is because they are an inconvenience. Babies interfere with our pursuit of happiness, or Lexus's, swimming pools, careers, 3,000 square foot houses....you get the idea. One of the main reasons why

we as the Church have failed to act against abortion is because we have the same anti-child mentality as those who advocate it.

In the moderator's public comment, we see the subtler judgments of the previous quotes from the Hesses and Houghton brought to their extreme conclusion: "children are murdered" because they intervene with the accumulation of completely unnecessary luxuries (notably including "careers" in between "swimming pools" and "3,000 square foot houses"—for women, a career *is* considered an unnecessary and even inappropriately self-serving possession). Materialism and family planning/feminism are positively linked, and very harshly judged, while the pursuit of "happiness" is conflated with the pursuit of "Lexus's" as representative of unnecessary luxury goods. This conflation seems intentional, to mock a pursuit of "happiness" that involves the use of birth control as superficial—an unacceptable excuse for the practice of family planning. In the above quote by the *QF digest* moderator, we also see the cognitive leap made by most Quiverfull adherents that positions the use of birth control of any kind as belonging on the same spectrum of materialistic, selfish interference with God's plan for each family as abortion. These sentiments were strongly reflected in survey answers about feminism's role in society. One respondent linked the feminist desire for equality with a quest for material, monetary gain (and in doing so constructed the "feminist" as valuing material goods over their children):

Careerism as a characteristic of feminism seems like it has made the biggest negative impact on families, as mothers strive to be equals with men for the sake of money, leaving their children to be raised by other people ("professionals") or to raise themselves.

Others referenced the same dynamic with slightly more subtlety:

I also believe the breakdown of the family is a big concern. Again, when people are more focused on their own happiness and fulfillment instead of reaching outside of themselves to help others, it does not contribute to a strong society

The latter individual connects the breakdown of the family with a selfish drive for one's own happiness and fulfillment, which in previous statements has been conflated with the quest for material accumulation. Thus, in Quiverfull constructions of feminism or feminists (or users of birth control of any kind), "careerism" and the pursuit of financial stability prior to having children is cast as a capitulation to immoral materialism—a highly undesirable characterization. It seems as though, from the point of view of movement leaders, there is no excuse for waiting to have children that is not materialistic, and this uncharitable judgment has indeed permeated the rank-and-file family. However, it is necessary to note that several interview participants did express more sympathy for women pursuing financial stability and using birth control in the process, as they themselves had once been in a similar position. They found the rhetorical position that casts birth control users as ungodly materialists to be extreme, and stressed that not everyone comes to a strong Quiverfull conviction at the same time, though none advocated the use of birth control as ideal or even value-neutral.

Feminism as Delusion

A key goal of several movement leaders seems to be to establish that the feminist goal of "having it all"—a happy family *and* a satisfying career—is a delusion that ultimately harms women who even attempt this balance. The representation of feminism as a deception is crucial to maintaining the strict patriarchal family structure and gender roles that are central to the lived expression of the movement.

The working world tells you that its "fulfilling" opportunities like typing, filing, data entry, stuffing bottles in an assembly line, or soldering widgets in a factory are more satisfying than God's gift of actual lives to shape and mold and free time in which to do it. What a sad lie...He calls you to serve and be loved and protected by only one earthly master—your husband. Why surrender your freedom to try the impossible task of serving two masters at once? (Hess & Hess, 89)

For a text written in 1990, the professions that the Hesses see as a woman's best options are decidedly uninspiring. The sarcasm embedded in the list of so-called "fulfilling" opportunities (typing, filing, soldering widgets) is clearly meant to discourage readers from believing that any real satisfaction or personal growth can come from a career; meanwhile, the gift of "actual lives to shape and mold" is cast as the more realistic path to a fulfilling life. Above all, a woman seeking to work is shirking her biblical duty to her husband, and enslaving herself to more masters than it is possible to serve well. Later, the Hesses also imply that working outside of the home is impossible to do without resorting to birth control, and even then her children will still be neglected if her attention is divided between the household and a job.

How does all this tie in with the question of birth control? Well, unless a woman is in the habit of flying to work wearing a red cape and a large red S emblazoned on her blouse, she will not likely be able to do her duty to both a large family and an outside-the-home job... With this kind of lifestyle, a woman just can't do much more for her children than simply produce them and pick their custodians. (Hess & Hess, 112)

The Hesses believe that the dual goals of having a family *and* a successful career are incompatible and that it is a "sad lie" (Hess & Hess, 89) to promote the idea that a woman can balance both and neglect neither. For leading voices of the Quiverfull movement, the feminine biblical roles of wife and mother are a woman's primary duties, and if a woman is doing them right (i.e. not using family planning, homeschooling), they will be too time-consuming to allow for other worldly pursuits. In fact, any attempt to balance these two commitments that involves delaying pregnancy will leave women clutching at straws, as they find that they enter the afterlife without children (or with badly-raised ones) to be a comfort to them:

Motherhood is an eternal career. It carries forever and ever. One of the greatest deceptions of Satan is to seduce mothers to be captivated with their careers and ministry outside the home so they don't have time to create life. All their material "things" will be left behind.

Instead, they will be empty of that which they could have taken into eternity—the redeemed souls of their children. (Campbell, 165)

Nancy Campbell is clear: women that invest themselves in a career are falling prey to “one of the greatest deceptions of Satan.” They are abandoning their biblical responsibilities to their husband and to God, to their own spiritual detriment. While there is sufficient scriptural evidence supporting traditional gender roles that this alone might be enough to convince the very faithful, Campbell is not averse to using some fear tactics to drive home the point that establishing a career is even *physically* antithetical to successfully having a family: she claims that endometriosis is known as the “career woman’s disease,” and is a result of delaying pregnancy for worldly reasons (Campbell, 108).

The premise, propagated by the leadership of the movement, that a woman attempting to pursue a career is hurting herself physically, emotionally, and spiritually, carries strongly into the survey answers about feminism’s effect on society, as does the idea that balancing family and career is an impossible feat. One female respondent commented,

feminism is an effort to eradicate [sic] the differences between men and women, which are God ordained. It has caused women to be unhappy with the biblical roles. It has pushed them out of their created sphere - the home - and into a damaging one - the workforce. As a result, women have abandoned their families in favor of self fulfillment. (which often eludes them anyway).

The characterization of feminism as an “effort to eradicate the differences between men and women” is fairly typical of the group’s understanding of the goals of the feminist movement. For the above participant, it is natural for women to remain in the domestic sphere, and attempts to enter the workforce are “damaging,” though in what particular ways, she does not elaborate. She talks about women who work as “abandoning” their families, echoing the above analysis that employment leads to the unjustifiable neglect of husband and children. Finally, this participant

believes that seeking “self-fulfillment” through a career is most likely a doomed endeavor. Another woman used the language of “freedom” and “power” to describe her life as a homemaker, and rejected the workforce as “borrowing” and “taking” her away from her rightful place in her family:

I have to [sic] power to lead my children, I have the freedom to serve God and not an employer, I have the freedom to make my own schedule, have a home business, train my children daily, reach out to the less fortunate, love people and serve God. I am not borrowed for 40+ hours a week by someone else, taken from my family in the efforts to have a pseudo-freedom from my family. That is a heavy burden and not worthy of the effort.

The respondent’s description of the “pseudo-freedom” of a career is very similar to the vision put forth by the Hesses that having a family and a career is “surrendering your freedom to the impossible task of serving two masters at once” (Hess & Hess, 89). The bottom line in this narrative is that the ideal of balancing work and family is a delusion, an impossibility, and bound to cause more pain to a woman than joy or satisfaction. One respondent asked, “Have you ever met a feminist that was truly happy?” The tone of the rhetorical question makes it clear that this male respondent never had.

Why is this narrative so convincing? Why are Quiverfull families—particularly women—so easily convinced that a work-family balance is impossible? In addition to the biblical perspective, an economic or class component appears to be at play as well. The careers that the Hesses envision women as able to obtain, “typing, filing, data entry, stuffing bottles in an assembly line, or soldering widgets in a factory” (Hess & Hess, 89) are distinctly pink or blue collar, menial labor that is widely understood to be monotonous, tiring, and/or physically demanding—and above all lack opportunities for advancement. Perhaps the socio-economic position of many Quiverfull families—often living rurally and expressing in their blogs the need

for frugality because of their dependence upon a single income to provide for more children than the average American family—leads to low expectations of the emotional returns of a career. Another survey respondent elaborated upon the classed and gendered realities that support the “feminism as delusion” lens:

Although there are certainly the wonderful stories of great lawyers and doctors, etc. who are women and of their contributions to society, the reality where I live and what I see is many women are stuck in less than ideal factory and low-wage jobs they really do not want nor do they feel fulfilled.

“The reality” for many American families is that emotionally satisfying work is out of reach, perhaps particularly for women in certain rural, less-wealthy communities. However, rather than laying the blame for this problem at the feet of global capitalism, poor public school educations, a lack of respect for a work-life balance in the American context, and the exorbitant price of higher education, these problems are largely attributed to what is perceived as a feminist illusion and delusion that a woman can find satisfaction in a career while maintaining her role as wife and mother.

Feminists Hate Stay-At Home Moms

One remarkably prevalent view, expressed by male and female participants alike, is that feminists hate stay-at-home mothers and view them as unproductive, worthless drags on society. Hess and Hess outline their interpretation of the role the feminist movement played in supposedly decreasing the value of women’s care work:

As we move further into the 20th Century, we see the birth of modern feminism. It was no longer a desire for women to be feminine, but rather to be the same as men. Slowly the role distinctions between men and women became blurred, and equality now became sameness. Feminism dealt a blow to those young women who wanted to be keepers at home...The idea of a young lady staying at home and raising lots of children slowly became obsolete, if not obscene to many women (Hess & Hess, 67).

It cannot go unmentioned that a woman working outside of the home was hardly a new phenomenon that arose with “the birth of modern feminism;” women of less privilege have been doing “men’s” labor for centuries. It must also be noted that care work has been undervalued throughout history, as many feminist historians have pointed out, and that “modern feminism” is a strong proponent of government programs that support single mothers and impoverished families, with the goal of allowing these mothers to be involved in the lives of their children⁵. These unfounded historical claims and characterizations are intentional erasures that serve to simplify history, so that the perceived degradation of gender roles through out-of-the-home work and the undervalued status of care work can be entirely blamed on feminism and feminists. Movement leaders want their followers to believe that feminists think their lifestyle “obscene,” (Hess & Hess, 67) to better demarcate the systemic enemy as completely oppositional. Nancy Campbell has a similar perspective:

The world tends to view this attitude [Quiverfull ideology] as narrow-minded and unsophisticated. They wonder how a woman confined within four walls, accompanied by numerous children, can have anything worthwhile to contribute to society. Such a woman can certainly contribute something more valuable than a heated discussion on nuclear arms limitation or speculation on who’s doing what to whom on the Hollywood scene. (Campbell, 155)

It is clear throughout Campbell’s narrative that she thinks of “the world” as completely contaminated with exaggerated feminist ideas about gender and family, a view probably informed by the pervasiveness of women controlling their reproduction and entering the workforce (both viewed in the Quiverfull context as “feminist” actions). She posits that feminists and working women judge “worth” based on the ability to carry on a (liberal) political discussion

⁵ See: Meyer, Madonna Harrington. *Care Work: Gender, Class, and Welfare States*. Routledge, New York, 2000.
Or: Featherstone, Brid. *Family Life and Family Support: A Feminist Analysis*. Palgrave-Macmillan, New York, 2004.

and knowledge about the minutia of pop culture. Her trivializing characterization of the values of feminists is an intentional rhetorical move to increase the “otherness” of these women whose values are portrayed as diametrically opposite to those of Quiverfull individuals, particularly Quiverfull women. Again, this serves to create an impression of feminists as materialistic, superficial, and implicitly family-hating (based on their support of family planning and the common practice of “abandoning” one’s family for a career)—attitudes completely incompatible with Quiverfull values.

The idea that feminists hate women who choose to stay at home and occupy a more traditional gender role has filtered into the mass consciousness of the movement to a remarkable degree. Here are just a few of the many comments from male and female survey respondents—that displayed absorption of this oppositional thinking.

I believe women were designed to care for children and husbands, and the feminist movement made women look at that lifestyle and think it was "not enough," that it is stupid and boring.

The feminist movement really made our society change it's [sic] view about the value of a woman's traditional role as a mother and wife, I believe in a negative way. In our society, women feel that they need to apologize for "just" being a mom and a wife, but I feel that is the most rewarding and most valuable "job"

Women were and are being told that aspiring to be a stay at home mom is unsatisfying and unrewarding. That no worth comes from being a mom.

Women are pressured - to work outside the home and to not be "just" a mommy.

I also take issue with more radical feminists who think women who stay at home are parasites and should get out there and get a job. I have stayed at home for most of the 28 years of my marriage and feel I have contributed to society in many ways.

Stay At Home moms are considered "unemployed" looked on poorly, and treated horribly.

As a woman, I feel that feminism has essentially robbed stay-home moms of perceived value. I think it was important for us to be liberated, but those of us who choose to stay home are often regarded as backwards as a result.

The repetition of ideas of “value” and “worth” reveals some insecurity about how to negotiate and live a meaningful life outside of the modern “feminist” family structure in which both partners have careers and within the idealized patriarchal family structure in which mothering is the full-time job. The assertion that “radical feminists... think women who stay at home are parasites” is exemplary of the simplification and even misunderstanding of feminist views about empowerment, worth, and social position; it is also exemplary of the exaggerated opposition set up and perpetuated by movement leaders between their female followers and feminists. The idea that a person’s value is derived from their wage-earning capacity is a poor representation of feminist thought; it is instead more representative of the value system perpetuated within a capitalist economy.

Feminism Yields Social Destruction

There are deep concerns in the Quiverfull community about the effects that reproductive control (including contraception, sterilization, and abortion but also natural family planning interventions such as the rhythm method and planned periods of abstinence) has had and will continue to have on society. In all three of the movement texts studied, Margaret Sanger is posited as the ultimate feminist prototype—indeed, she is the only feminist whose name appears in these texts-- in two key ways: her supposed hatred of children and life (as indicated by her role in the invention of the birth control pill and her eugenicist beliefs—which are always mentioned together), and her hatred of God and religion (Sanger is identified in these texts as an atheist). The result of Sanger’s invention is framed thusly: “God was once again shoved aside as being

the creator of life, and now the woman was sovereign in family planning” (Hess & Hess, 67). The “sovereignty” of women in family planning through the use of the birth control pill, and the pill itself, is later described as “an overwhelming curse, physiologically, socially, and spiritually” (Hess & Hess, 113).

The concerns about family planning and reproductive control are specifically about the use of birth control methods by Christians, and the creeping acceptance or endorsement these behaviors have come to receive from many churches—even in more legalistic and devout congregations. Nancy Campbell, author of *Be Fruitful and Multiply*, writes that the tools of family planning are the tools of Satan, and that by not taking God’s words in the Bible literally, Christians are allowing themselves to succumb to evil.

Notice, dear reader, that the words, “contraception, sterilization, and abortion” are always used together. They are a threesome in feminist and humanist literature. They use these three weapons for the same purpose—to eliminate children! As Christians, we have tried to separate contraception and sterilization from the issue of abortion. But they all have the same purpose... It is interesting that Satan, who comes with his three-pronged attack to “steal, kill, and destroy,” exposes his “elimination [of] life program” with another threesome of “contraception, sterilization, and abortion.” Each one was masterminded in hell! (Campbell, 153-154)

Campbell has no qualms about linking the feminist movement (simplistically represented by family planning methods) with Satan’s goal of eliminating life. She accuses Christians of hypocritically accepting contraception and sterilization but rejecting abortion, when all three have the same goal of restricting fertility. This reveals another aspect of Quiverfull anxiety about the use of birth control—that it will lead to the elimination of righteous Christians, which is thought to be one of Satan’s key goals. Campbell’s rhetoric in this quote is strong and strongly religious; though she is the fieriest of the writers, the content of her claims is no different from the premises of the other Quiverfull leaders as far as the idea that contraception is a tool of Satan.

If feminism is a tool of Satan bent on decimating the population of righteous Christians, it works in more ways than one. Vision Forum, a well-known Quiverfull-supporting organization that offers Christian homeschooling products and books endorsing the biblical/patriarchal family structure, focuses on the damage done when women take leading roles in their families. Their “About Us” webpage claims that “the defining crisis of our age is the systematic annihilation of the Biblical family,” and attributes this annihilation to the “decline of fatherhood” that occurred when women began to usurp the traditional roles of men, leaving fathers purposeless and unmotivated to lead their families.

Minimize the father and the family will perish. Minimize the family and you have neutralized the church...The influence of Unitarianism and early feminism, certain adverse effects of the industrial revolution, and the abandonment of the old Reformation view of the family all contributed to the decline of fatherhood in America. The result, for the first time in the history of the church, was the gradual transfer of spiritual training responsibilities from the father to the mother. Generations later, few Christian fathers even know how to begin the process of shepherding their children and leading their families in the ways of God.

The breakdown of the patriarchal family structure (and the movement of women into new spheres of decision-making and influence within the family) is thought to weaken families, yielding troubled and unsupported children that stray from their faith and “neutralize” the church. Though several survey respondents viewed some aspects of feminism’s legacy to be positive (voting rights, workplace equality, and access to education were named as valuable), the consensus was overwhelmingly negative; 91% of respondents answered that feminism had a negative or very negative effect on their society. Some of the negative social changes that were attributed to the feminist movement were: higher divorce rates, higher rates of and the legalization of abortion, STDs, a loss of respect for the institution of marriage (leading to and including gay marriage), estranged families, alcoholism, lung cancer, “brazen behavior” and the

oversexualization of young women/girls, sexually immoral behavior, sexual exploitation of women by men, less-safe neighborhoods, materialism and excess, the decline of the family wage, a decline in the practice of breastfeeding, and an overall increase in violence due to the degradation of the sanctity of life:

When they started killing babies (abortion) it devalued life. Now babies are not the only ones murdered. Young children, teens, young men/women, old men/women, all are being murdered and even the punishment is lax now. Parents kill their children... husbands and wives killing their spouses...children killing their parents...children killing other children..... It is something that was rare before the 50s when 'the pill', women in the workforce, and feminism began.

The author of the above quote has clearly absorbed some of the historical simplification and idealization of a pre-feminist era that is so strongly propagated in the foundational movement texts authored by Nancy Campbell and the Hesses. However, the general sentiment that feminist interventions in family life, prominently including family planning methods, have changed the way that western culture views and values children and family for the worse is rampant among survey respondents. Other quotes demonstrate that many Quiverfull individuals believe that our modern culture is a feminist culture, and so mistakenly attribute ills like unintended pregnancy, the oversexualization of women and girls, and the abuse of children to feminism's legacy even while modern feminists are actively working against all of these things:

I have seen the impact of changing norms and laws (generally brought about in the name of feminism) in terms of family roles and dynamics and how they have hurt children. In my job I see the negative impact of single parent families, unwed teen pregnancies, and sexual promiscuity everyday [sic]. Children are being hurt in many ways; physically, sexually, emotionally and psychologically, and perhaps most importantly they are never learning what it means to really be a good parent. It is a cycle of ignorance, hedonism and absolute narcissism that is being continually perpetuated by generation after generation.

Another respondent commented,

Women are to be sex symbols or equal to men... both devalue women and strip them of their femininity...Feminism ushered in the widespread use of birth control pills and abortion. It made being a housewife and mother something that was shameful and encouraged women to go to work and do whatever they wanted. Trouble...nothing but trouble.

While the feminist movement has made it possible for women to do things that Quiverfull individuals believe are inappropriate for the gender and harmful to society—like work outside of the home, plan their families by controlling their reproduction, and explore their sexualities more freely outside of the institution of marriage—many of their other qualms with modern western culture are shared by feminists. However, by portraying Margaret Sanger as the model feminist, representing birth control as the primary goal of feminism, linking feminism with the Satanic goal of eliminating Christian life, and distorting history and ignoring the negative effects of capitalism and patriarchy, movement leaders are able to convince their followers that they have nothing in common with the goals of the feminist movement, and in fact that feminism is antithetical to a peaceful, free, and healthy society and to a wholesome, secure, and religious life.

Articulating Long Term Goals: Population Calculations

Leaders of the Quiverfull movement know that in a modern world there are other concerns besides income or the desire for a profession that might prevent a woman or family from embracing the idea of letting God control their family's growth. A sense of responsibility about environmental concerns—including overpopulation—might also seep into a family's consciousness and affect their decisions about family planning. Thus, all of the key texts studied for this analysis of master frames name "population pessimists" (Campbell, 26) in their articulation of the movement's enemies or opposition, and in doing so reveal the primary goal of the movement to be demographic change (for various reasons, some quite benevolent).

Each of the texts refutes the modern/scientific thesis that the world is overpopulated or overcrowded, and that a dearth of crucial resources will result in the not-so-distant future. Nancy Campbell briefly but soundly encourages her readers to dismiss these concerns:

God is interested in filling the earth and populating eternity...Who are we going to listen to—God, or the population pessimists who have no trust in God? If you have driven from the west coast to the east of America, you will know that most of this great land is still uninhabited...It has been exposed that the entire world population could fit in the state of Texas, each being allotted 2,000 square feet a piece, and the rest of the world would be empty! (Campbell, 26-27)

The veracity of these figures is suspect, but the context makes the purpose of such statements perfectly clear: the “overpopulation scare” is no excuse for family planning. Craig Houghton’s *Family UNplanning* takes as fact that overpopulation is an overblown concern, saying only that the idea is “a myth, which both believers and non-believers alike have shown to be an outright lie...” (Houghton, 53). He then refers his readers to Rick and Jan Hess’s *A Full Quiver* for a more in-depth discussion, which they certainly provide. The Hesses begin their discussion of overpopulation by connecting this “myth” to the anti-life agenda previously attributed to feminists: “Those who talk about overpopulation are propagating a destructive myth. It may serve the purpose of justifying abortion, sterilization, infanticide, and euthanasia; however, it is totally contrary to the facts. Actually, the world is comparatively empty” (Hess & Hess, 72). The Hesses go on to make similar claims to the one made by Campbell about Texas, saying that the world population could stand shoulder to shoulder in just half of the city limits of Jacksonville, Florida, which has an area of 841 square miles (Hess & Hess, 72). They also refute the premise that the world is running out of vital natural resources, urging readers to have more trust in God than to believe such ideas: “God gave to man the command and ability to fill up the world with people and to subdue the earth for their own needs” (Hess & Hess, 73). Consistent with other

aspects of Quiverfull lives, the literal word of God supersedes all worldly reasoning. Though a question about overpopulation and the environment was not included in the original survey, a question was posed in most of the follow up interviews about global warming and/or other threats to the environmental health of the Earth. All participants asked this question expressed deep skepticism as to the veracity of such claims, believing instead that these “fear tactics” were either a way for governments to create more restrictions and consolidate their control over people’s lives and choices, a way for businesses to generate new markets and sell products, or (as the Hesses claim) part of an anti-life agenda to promote the use of birth control and abortion. Several did express that environmental stewardship was an important biblical role that God appointed man to fulfill, but seemed to feel that no environmental crisis was in any way imminent.

The rejection of concerns about overpopulation or resources scarcity serve as a lead-in to the glorification of large Christian families, and through articulations about the benefits of large families the long-term goals of the Quiverfull movement become clear. In *Be Fruitful and Multiply*, under a section entitled “The Purpose,” Nancy Campbell quotes the Good News Bible’s “amplification of Genesis 1:28” (the “be fruitful and multiply” clause) that states “Have many children, so that your descendants will live all over the earth and bring it under their control” (Campbell, 23). Based on subsequent statements, it can be inferred that for Campbell, this “control” refers to the moral and behavioral codes established in the Bible. Later, in a chapter entitled “Arrows for God’s Army,” she states:

We are in a war today and God needs arrows for his army. God wants children born to fulfill his strategies and plans. When a warrior went to war, how many arrows would he want in his quiver? One or two? No, he’d want to squeeze in as many as he could. The

more arrows he had in his quiver, the more weapons he had to slay the enemy and the more protection he provided for himself... (Campbell, 79)

She then synthesizes her views on birth control and on generating arrows for “the war:”

Satan, who comes “to steal, kill, and destroy,” seeks to destroy newly formed life in the womb by abortion. But he has an even better plan than that—and it has been successful. He seeks to limit the godly seed before it is even conceived. By doing this, he limits the army of God. If the Christian Church had not listened to the humanistic lies of the enemy and limited their families, the army of God would be more powerful in this hour. The enemy’s camp would be trembling. Instead they are laughing...Think of how many more pastors, prophets, teachers, and evangelists we would have. (Campbell, 80).

Family planning is constructed as Satan’s intentional tool used to limit the procreation of Christian families; since feminism had already been constructed in Campbell’s text as a major proponent of limiting childbirth, it is again implicated here as one of the propagators of “humanistic lies.” Campbell goes on to detail the primary reason women should remain in the home with their children—to “sharpen” these “arrows” for the war: “God’s vision is to build godly generations. His plan is for parents to pass on His ways and principles to the next generation...Each man should aim to be the founder of a dynasty for God” (Campbell, 93). The ideas of transmitting a biblical values to the next generation and building a “dynasty” of influential people are repeated over and over in all three texts, accompanied by historical genealogies of particularly influential seventeenth- and eighteenth-century families that did not use birth control, lists of famous musicians, artists, and thought-leaders who would not have been born if their parents had had only a few children, and many calculations of the number of grandchildren and great-grandchildren a Quiverfull family might expect to have if they successfully pass on their anti-family planning values (if a couple has ten children who each have ten children, they will have 100 grandchildren!). But throughout the book, it remains

unclear why there is such a pressing need for so many children/arrows, until the last chapter, in which Campbell reveals who “the enemy” is to her:

The Muslim families of the world aren't limiting their families. They have an average of 6.8 children per family and is the fastest growing religion in the world because of their birth rate! In 1950, the industrial democracies of the world were twenty-two percent of the world's population. If we continue the present trend, we will only be five percent at the end of this century! The Western world that we know today will no longer be the same. Proverbs 14:28 (NLT) says, “A growing population is a king's glory; a dwindling nation is his doom!” (Campbell, 197).

The growing Muslim population and the decline of Western/Judao-Christian civilization is also a concern to Craig Houghton, author of *Family UNplanning*. He asserts that because Christians have not followed God's command to procreate without restraints, “we have started, in essence, to kill ourselves off” and refers to Christians as “a dying breed” (Houghton, 75). Houghton is not only concerned about the ratio of Christians to Muslims in the world, but also in America:

...as of 2001, the natural growth rate for Christians in the USA was 1.36, whereas in comparison the growth rate for Muslims in the USA is 2.13. We can forecast that with the growth rate of Muslims far exceeding that of Christians, that by the end of this century, Muslims will be the majority in the USA. If we cannot see the political change in North America that would entail, we need only to look at other Muslim countries around the world to see how the Christians, who are the minority, are often persecuted. If this present trend continues... only the return of the LORD will save us from the coming calamity. (Houghton, 76)

Muslims are cast as an essentially oppressive group (even though the Muslims that Houghton is concerned about would have been American citizens for a hundred years) whose procreation threatens the very character of the nation.

The Hesses briefly mention Muslim birthrates as well, in the context of concerns about the ratio of white Germans to immigrants and the supposed threat to national security the growing Muslim population represents (Hess & Hess, 75-76). However, their main concern is the

ratio of Christians to non-Christians in America, and the political and social consequences. They assert that a Christian birthrate on par with that of nonbelievers will lead to a dwindling percentage of Christians in the nation, and that this will cause “the nation’s ethics and morality” to plummet faster and faster (Hess & Hess, 107). They advocate not only supporting candidates at all levels of government that have strong biblical convictions, but see a great opportunity for Quiverfull families to *provide* some of these candidates (and supreme court justices, and leaders of corporations, and influential leaders of mass media) themselves by rearing many godly children to go out into the world and become pillars of Christian values. They claim that a lack of Christian conservative political staff hamstrung the conservative Reagan Revolution, and imply that a similar opportunity should not be allowed to pass by because of a dearth of trained Christians ready to enter the political scene (Hess & Hess, 168). The Hesses have grand visions of an American electorate much altered by several generations of high Christian birthrates:

With the nation’s low birth rate, the high divorce rate, an un-marrying and anti-child viewpoint, and a debauched nation perhaps unable to slow down the spread of AIDS, we can begin to see what happens politically... what a majority in elections the elect would enjoy... Through God’s blessing we would be part of a replay of Exodus 1:7, “But the sons of Israel were fruitful and increased greatly, and multiplied, and became exceedingly mighty, so that the land was filld [sic] with them.” And we have quite an advantage which the Israelites did not: we can *vote*. (Hess & Hess, 171)

This proclamation is followed by a fantasy of Walter Cronkite’s great-grandson announcing election returns in which Christian conservatives have swept the nation, and celebrating the social changes (the NFL changing game day from Sunday to Saturday, all-creationist science departments at Harvard and Yale) that would surely follow from such a political coup. The Hesses envision that by expanding Quiverfull-conviction to more and more families, focusing on procreation and “training up” children who will work for conservative social change, and passing

on Quiverfull values from parent to child, observant Christians will one day be a political faction to be reckoned with—one that will have enough votes to effectively veto any progressive social change that conflicts with a legalistic interpretation of the Bible.

These ideas—that no environmental crisis or population problem is imminent, and that children are tools for changing the nation’s future—were pervasive in the answers to survey questions about homeschooling, hopes and dreams for one’s children, perceived social problems, and perceived hostility towards the Quiverfull lifestyle. This last question drew the most comments about “societal manipulation related to climate change and global population.” Participants were very aware that having many children is popularly considered to be environmentally unsound, though they reject the premise that there is really anything to be concerned about:

I think the current environmental movement has something to do with it, the false idea of overpopulation or climate change (which is better explained in a creationist worldview)...

Another participant voiced similar views:

I think that some people involved in the progressive movement, or the global warming movement are very hostile because they actually believe that it is somehow hurting them for other people to have a bunch of kids.

Like the individuals interviewed by phone, several survey participants expressed the opinion that global warming and imminent environmental catastrophe are ideas concocted by the government to scare people into giving up more freedoms or by various industries to sell products. Others believed that hostility came from fears that Christian families would have many children, who would grow up to vote along with the religious right and change the character of the nation.

Only four participants out of 47 had never homeschooled their children and did not mention plans to do so in the future; among the many that do homeschool, reasons such as “God

wants us to raise blessings for his cause,” “We want them to be equipped to be able to use their talents and gifts to the best of their abilities for the glory of God and the furtherance of His kingdom” and “Yes, to be able to disciple⁶ their hearts to develop Godly character so that they can be useful by God for His glory” were fairly common, as were comments that emphasized the passing down of values and morals. These were not the only reasons Quiverfull families chose to homeschool; many also believed that they could provide a better quality, more highly individualized education to their children than could the local public school. However, the idea that the parent’s role was to train a child to be useful for God in His war was a strong theme in answers to the question, “Do you have any hopes, dreams, or expectations for your child/children?” One participant explained her view of motherhood in this way:

The hand that rocks the cradle rules the world. Not that I want to rule the world, but in the dutiful rearing of children, you influence future generations for the benefit of promoting God’s will on earth...The more children you have, the farther the reach extends—many miles, many years. Conversely, poisoned minds will poison others just as generously. It seems to be the mindset of liberals and feminists to limit or obliterate procreation altogether. To that I say, good! The God-fearing, faithful Christians will repopulate the earth, and the selfish will die out.

Others shared similar views. The following three quotes are by three separate participants:

Then the goal should be to fill all areas of society with solid Catholics—doctors, lawyers, journalists, professors, etc. I’d be happy with auto mechanics and plumbers!

They are not my children, they are Gods [sic] people who I am called to train to follow Him, He will take over and bring them to where He needs them to be

I see our children as arrows to be shot into the future. I hope our morals and beliefs will be alive and well generations after we are gone

⁶ According to the author of this quote, “disciple” is a verb used to mean “to teach or train;” the religious connotations of discipleship are intentional and integral to what is meant here by “disciple their hearts.”

Clearly all parents have high hopes for their children and want them to change the world, but the rhetoric of children as “arrows” to be shot into the future to carry on the moral legacy of their parents and the consciousness of population politics/social demographics seems particularly strong in this group. In answers to the question about social concerns, several participants named the use of birth control in Christian families to be prominent among their worries.

Free Spaces and the Generation of Collective Identity in the Quiverfull Movement

Alberto Melucci’s discussion of collective identity as an evolving “network of relationships between the actors, who interact, communicate, influence each other, negotiate, and make decisions,” (Melucci, 1995) emphasizes the dynamic formation of an in-group/out-group mentality, a mental orientation by which an individual comes to view themselves as part of one group and not another. Boundaries, consciousness, and negotiation, the three components of collective identity identified by Taylor and Whittier, show that a strong collective identity recognizes its separateness from other groups, is informed by sub-culturally specific frameworks that explain this separateness and difference, and is reinforced by the daily experience of living by values divergent from the mainstream (Taylor & Whittier, 1992). Furthermore, Fine’s concept of “idioculture”—“ a system of knowledge, beliefs, behaviors, and customs shared by members of an interacting group to which members can refer and which they can employ as the basis for further interaction” (Fine, 1995: 128-129—demonstrates that a shared sub-culture is helpful, if not vital, to the development of a strong collective identity. After reading and coding forty-seven survey responses and conducting eight phone interviews, in addition to thoroughly investigating nodes of Quiverfull activity on the internet, the means and mechanisms by which a Quiverfull collective identity is negotiated and perpetuated gradually emerged, and were particularly clear

for the feminine identity. Free spaces, locations or organizational space in which potential adherents can be socialized into a collective identity, have been shown to be important for strengthening the in-group “we” sentiment, particularly for marginalized groups, as well as for facilitating the transmission of an oppositional consciousness. Though the term “marginalized” may imply oppression, Quiverfull adherents clearly have beliefs and practices that are not only outside of mainstream American culture, but also are fairly unpopular both within and without the Christian community. Thus, free spaces—locations where adherents can receive support and find solidarity—are important to the consolidation of Quiverfull identity. However, finding and/or establishing these spaces can be challenging for a disparate grassroots movement.

Because of the strong sense of faith shared by all Quiverfull families and the ideology's own deep roots in a legalistic (strict and literal) interpretation of the Bible, one might have expected the Church and other formal religious institutions to be primary free spaces for this demographic. Surprisingly, the survey data and interview responses largely suggested otherwise. While it was clear in the survey answers and interviews that a vibrant religious life was important to all of the families, many indicated that churches and congregations could often be spaces of alienation and exclusion. Though some participants had spoken to their pastor or other leader of a religious institution about the Quiverfull ideals of renouncing active interference in reproduction and received support, very few indicated that it was a core value of their church or a widely accepted or common practice among members of their congregations. Family integration at Church—rather than the separation of children and adults during services and for the purposes of education-- was an important factor for most Quiverfull families in choosing a congregation; viewing the presence of children as a distraction or a disturbance is in direct contradiction to the

Quiverfull belief that children are always a blessing. One survey participant left her church because of this very conflict:

We do not presently belong to a church, as we were not comfortable putting our children in Sunday School. With so many children, every Sunday we were in six different rooms the whole time, and the staff turnover is such that it was a lot of people we didn't know. The pastor said that unless we could "support the leadership" by putting our children all in Sunday school, we couldn't be involved in anything else (music) in our church. So we've chosen to stay away from church until the rift can be mended. Which we are praying for.

Another participant chose her Independent Baptist church for similar reasons:

We chose it for its accurate theology and preaching, for the family-mindedness where all members of the family attend the service together; there is no Sunday school segregation. Family discipleship is emphasized... There is also no youth group to separate young people from their families, and no public/government school influences.

Preaching and teaching straight from the Bible was another important factor in many Quiverfull families' choices of church, and one that can be a source of conflict between Quiverfull families and other Christians. One participant said of her church, "the preacher is willing to preach on controversial Biblical subjects-- unvarnished truth." Others had similar priorities: "it is hard to find a church that keeps to the doctrine of Christ," "We chose this church because they follow the Bible very closely and literally, they do not add to it, or subtract from it," "a protestant church of any sort will do as long as they adhere to Scripture and only Scripture. Many say they do, but few actually do." One Quiverfull mother of ten was deeply concerned with the growing worldliness and fading obedience to the literal word of God that she had encountered in many churches:

It seems that the church is very motivated to grow their numbers with entertaining sermons, good singing, comfy seating and just the right lighting...As my close friend from Canada is wont to say "Church is now a place to water the goats. not feed the sheep." Outreach is important, but church is not the place for it. Church is the place to worship God, to learn about Scripture and to be in fellowship with believers. Unbelievers

should be welcomed into the church WITH THE EXPLICIT PURPOSE of witnessing how God is worshipped, what is actually said in Scripture, and who Christians really are. Church is not the place to draw people in and placate with watered-down messages and glitzed-up music. It is deceitful to people and dishonouring [sic] to God.

The disjointedness between the goals of many churches—to gain and keep members, sometimes through “watered-down” Christian values or more lax biblical interpretation— and the values of many Quiverfull families, who take the Bible seriously and literally enough to restructure their lives around its commandments and injunctions, contributes to a sense of alienation from mainstream Christianity. Many individuals who participated in the survey had even encountered hostility from other Christians in their congregations who either resented the presence of so many children during services and church functions or failed to understand (or accept) the connection between possessing a deep faith in God and trusting *entirely* in God to plan one’s family. Quiverfull individuals largely attribute the unfriendliness of other Christians to a perception of a sense of judgment or unspoken accusation of hypocrisy:

...most churches are less friendly to our lifestyle than the general public. It seems that we make people feel guilty about their choices (though we are careful to not say or do anything that may cause offense) and are consequently not really welcomed in many churches.

Others shared similar sentiments:

I think church people feel judged when you have a larger family, and a small number of them will think you are a saint (which i'm not) and a larger number will think you are stupid (which i am not) and none of them want to think through *why* anyone might possibly have a large family - never mind that birth control was never an acceptable practice in the church until the last few generations. And some are just plain hostile. And this is without me saying a *word*. Just showing up with seven children. Christians, on the whole, are far more hostile about this than non Christians, in my experience.

The perception that Quiverfull families are trying to "one up" other Christians by more literally and faithfully following God’s explicit and implied commandments as stated throughout the

Bible turned more than a few families away from religious institutions. Other Quiverfull individuals reported feeling frustrated with the selectivity with which some churches teach biblical values, often refusing to touch upon “controversial” topics where the literal biblical injunction runs contrary to popular culture, as with the use of birth control or even natural family planning methods. Even those individuals that did regularly attend or belong to a supportive church largely reported a lack of other Quiverfull families attending; thus, churches and other religious institutions are not primary free spaces for the development of a distinctly Quiverfull collective identity. Many families turned instead towards home-churching and fellowships in the homes of others for religious guidance and solidarity, and to the internet for the community, support, and shared convictions that they would have hoped to find in a congregation.

In response to the question “How did you first hear about Quiverfull?” 23% of respondents answered that they had first encountered the term on a website, 11% answered that they had first encountered the term from a book, and 11% from a friend. 70% of respondents additionally or exclusively utilized the “Other” section to write in the names of homeschooling conferences, seminars on leading a religious or godly life, the television program *19 Kids and Counting* which features the prominent Quiverfull family, the Duggars, and several other sources. The gender breakdown of these results was particularly illuminating. Ten female respondents had first heard the term and the ideology behind it from websites, and four had first heard of it from books on the topic. Almost half of the male respondents (7/15), however, had heard of the term and concept from their wives-- more than from any other source. Only three men had first heard of the Quiverfull movement or ideology from a website. It must be noted that three respondents directly cited the Bible as their first point of encounter with the idea of leaving

family planning entirely in God's hands and seeking to have a “quiver full” of children, as stated in Psalm 127: 3,4,5. A few female respondents had come to the conclusion that family planning was beyond their rightful control on their own, a sentiment that generally emerged out of a pro-life philosophy and/or experiences with birth control methods that failed, and only later found that there was a community of like-minded families and a wealth of biblical support for that conclusion. While these outliers are important, the data suggests that for many Quiverfull individuals, and particularly women, their first point of contact with the movement’s name and ideology was on the internet.

Lacking a reliably accepting and acceptable church congregation for communal support and the “we” sense that contributes to the emotionally satisfying aspects of belonging to a group, many Quiverfull individuals have cultivated a vibrant online life. The internet is clearly an important free space for Quiverfull couples, particularly Quiverfull women, seeking confirmation of their beliefs about birth control and family planning and support for the life changes that result from that conviction. When asked what they used the internet for, 63% of respondents read others' blogs, and 59% accessed forums focused on homeschooling, parenting, large families, or hobbies unrelated to the Quiverfull movement. These blogs and forums are often spaces of solidarity, places to find the relief of being part of a group of people with similar beliefs and lifestyles as well as to safely and comfortably grow in one’s conviction. Several interviewees emphasized the importance of the internet for connecting with similarly convicted families, both for online correspondence and to track down similar families living in their regions to build relationships in “real life.” Women consistently accessed online Quiverfull forums and sites more often than men, indicating that women serve as the primary link between disparate but like-

minded families. This extrapolation is supported by the fact that when asked “Would you say that you use the internet to connect with like-minded people?” over 90% (29/32) of women answered “yes,” while only 46% (7/15) of men answered “yes.”

Fifteen female respondents kept blogs, many related to homeschooling or encouragement for other wives and mothers of large families. Only one male respondent (the husband of a female blogger) claimed to have an equal part in the maintenance of their blog; it was clear that while some of the other blogs were nominally family endeavors, the wife/mother of the family was primarily responsible for generating the content

Bloggers are well aware of the need for online spaces of support, particularly for women, who bear the brunt of the lifestyle changes (i.e. continuous or frequent pregnancies, the responsibility of homeschooling, and learning wifely submission/biblical womanhood) inherent in becoming Quiverfull- convicted. One respondent, whose blog about how to successfully overcome the challenges of having a large family currently has over 7,600 views, said that she started her blog to “give a vision that can bring peace and encouragement to others to let God control their family size.” In a follow-up phone interview she said, “I would love to be a part of helping someone else... step out” by providing guidance and sharing information about the practical, organizational aspects of running a large household; “stepping out” was a metaphor for the leap of faith necessary to stop using birth control or family planning methods, and by showing other women that the consequences of that leap are manageable and not overwhelming, this blogger hoped to lower the threshold of intimidation that might cause a woman to hesitate.

The participant's husband, who runs the blog along with her, put it this way:

My wife and I started a blog for many reasons. The main ones would be that we have it in our hearts to share with others the blessings we have found in being

willing to have a larger than average family.... Having a blog page allows us to put this information out there not only for our known friends and family to see and learn from it [but it] has opened up doors into peoples [sic] homes we would not otherwise had the privilege to meet.

The participant wanted to share the message that the blessings of a large family can outweigh the burdens of caring for and supporting that family; again, the emphasis is on spreading information that will make the lifestyle and conviction less foreign and frightening. Another blogger shared her sentiments:

I subtitled [my blog] 'musings from my funny farm'. Its [sic] just that, musings. I usually talk about theology, I am passionate about biblical womanhood and encouraging women.

The author of a homeschooling-oriented blog echoed these sentiments, stating “I use my blog to share bits and pieces of our lives as well as encouraging other mothers, especially young moms.” Encouraging and supporting other women in their choice to leave family planning in God's hands and in dealing with the everyday consequences of that choice were strong themes bloggers' testimonies; demand for this kind of blog is probably high because women choosing Quiverfull not only bear the brunt of the lifestyle changes resulting from the conviction, but become more isolated from the company of others as a byproduct of their demanding responsibilities in the home and so seek the digital company of like-minded women. Accessing these blogs and related forums can be done at the homemaker's convenience and from within the domestic sphere.

These user-generated online spaces serve as crucial sources of socialization into the norms and values of the movement, particularly for the Quiverfull women who are their primary users. These online spaces help to codify and standardize the idiocultural (Fine, 1995) practices of Quiverfull families by positioning the bloggers' families as models for replication

in some ways; wives and families new to Quiverfull and nervous about the practical ramifications of a perpetually expanding family do not have to re-invent the wheel, but can instead turn to older “mothers of many” for the guidance and support that they may lack in their own lives, especially considering that most came from families that used some form of family planning and face rejection and alienation in most church settings. Since in the organizational scheme of a patriarchal family structure the administration of the home and the education of children falls in women's hands while the husband works to support them, it follows logically that these practical user-generated guides to homemaking and homeschooling are largely by and for women. Though concrete advice abounds in Quiverfull blogs, the information is embedded in a framework that reinforces the appropriate “biblical” feminine identity for a Quiverfull woman, rejects attempts at family planning as sinful and selfish, and, through personal testimonies in “About Me” section after “About Me” section, promotes the acceptance of Quiverfull ideology as a transformational “journey,” an emergence from materialism, feminism, or ungodly impulses into the peace of trusting in God for *all* things.

From one Quiverfull blogger's explanation of the evolution of her beliefs,

I used [birth control] between my first three children. At this point in my journey God is calling me to give up my control and trust in Him completely, which I will let you know is not easy....Taking a leap of faith is always hard. My human nature kicks in with fears galore. I had so many questions and God has patiently answered them through his Word, prayer and study. I have chosen the narrow path that goes against the grain of society. I realize I will not be viewed as using common sense by many, but feel called by God to trust in Him completely.

Another blogger constructed her story in a similar way;

I never really wanted children as a teenager, but thankfully God had other plans for my life... I've not always lived my life as God would want me to, not even close to it, but in September 2004 I truly gave my heart and soul to Him and haven't turned back...When [one of our children] was a month old the Holy Spirit

began to deal with me about using birth control. My husband and I talked and it seems that the Holy Spirit had been dealing with both of us, convicting us that it was wrong for *us* to use any form of birth control.

These stories, all versions of Fines *happy endings* template (Fine, 1995: 136), generally take a similar form. They allude to a not-so-righteous past, document a growing discomfort with birth control or family planning, and generally culminate in a decisive moment in which the woman completely turns over her reproductive capacity to God and finds peace. There is room in this narrative for faltering, wavering, and past and present imperfection in the realm of reproductive control and trust in God, which the blog is generally intended to help the reader overcome. Many Quiverfull blogs point out the key biblical passages that support viewing children as an unmitigated blessing (for example, the “Be fruitful and multiply” passages from Genesis 1:28 and the eponymous “Quiverfull” passage from Psalm 127: 3, 4, 5) and some even refer readers to the key movement texts that may have helped the blogger to her current conviction, helping to perpetuate the Quiverfull master frame through their online free spaces.

Complementing these user-generated blogs (and sometimes linked to them, in the sense that the bloggers include links on their webpage) are more formal websites created by religious organizations or prominent Quiverfull families promoting or supporting Quiverfull conviction as a consistent and logical extension of religious faith. These too are largely directed towards women. Twenty-eight of the thirty-two women surveyed (or 87.5%) read or received Quiverfull-related newsletters or digests produced by several of these online organizations, while only one man admitted to doing so (though several male participants noted that their wives occasionally would share interesting tidbits with them). Nineteen women received the *QF* (Quiverfull) *Digest*,

and sixteen received a publication called *Above Rubies*, two of the most prominent Quiverfull publications.

The *QF Digest* is distributed through Quiverfull.com, the first result that Google lists when the term “Quiverfull” is searched. Quiverfull.com, run by Quiverfull-convicted parents David and Susan Bortel, is an explicitly pro-Quiverfull site selling books and other resources promoting the movement and offering support for convicted families. Articles on the abortion-causing qualities of birth control, population politics, and the benefits of having many children are available for free. The front page of the site features the image of an infant with the superimposed words of Psalm 127:3,4,5: “Lo, Children are an heritage of the Lord: and the fruit of the womb is His reward. Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them...” Beneath the photo, the purpose of the site is stated:

We exalt Jesus Christ as Lord, and acknowledge His headship in all areas of our lives, including fertility. We exist to serve those believers who trust the Lord for family size, and to answer the questions of those seeking truth in this critical area of marriage. Whether your quiver is large or small, you are welcome.

In the “About Us” section, the Bortels state that

Quiverfull.com's first priority is to serve God through proclaiming that every child is a gift and blessing from our gracious heavenly father. Quiverfull.com seeks to serve and minister to other quiverfull families. To offer support, acceptance and understanding of the unique needs of the large and growing Christian family.

The *QF Digest*, which 59.3% (19/32) of female participants received, was first circulated in 1995. Since then, over 2,100 issues have been produced and circulated, according to the archives available to members on Quiverfull.com. The *Digest* is free, and open to all Christian couples “who eagerly accept their children as blessings from God and eschew birth control, natural family planning and sterilization,” and provides encouragement for Quiverfull families, a place

to share personal testimonies, advice about the practicalities of running a large home, and a forum to ask questions and share advice about family planning, raising children, and living a godly life. All submissions are selected to be included in the *Digest* by moderators, who keep the publication relevant and on message (the FAQ page lists many, many reasons that a post might not be included). Thus, a particular representation of the identities and concerns of Quiverfull men and women is groomed and constructed for wide circulation, certainly modeling a particular vision of godly family life and appropriate faith. Quiverfull.com also links to MOMYS.com (Mothers Of Many Young Siblings), which produces an email digest, hosts discussion forums, and has erected a social networking site particularly and exclusively tailored to the needs of Quiverfull women. From its subscription page,

We want to offer you a very blessed experience in fellowship, friendship, mentoring, living, laughing, loving, caring, sharing, and walking this path of life together keeping in mind our ultimate purpose- we do it all for the glory and worship of God.

“Walking this path of life together” implies a collective feminine identity and common goals, the particulars of which are promoted through the MOMYS email digest. The reinforcement of the image of a wife and mother submissive to husband and the Lord is critical in all of these more organized and institutionalized Quiverfull sites, and is promoted through email digests delivering this reinforced feminine collective identity into the very homes of readers. *Above Rubies*, an online organization founded by Nancy Campbell, a prominent Quiverfull author (*Be Fruitful and Multiply*, published by Vision Forum Ministries, 2003), publishes an eponymous magazine and e-gest received and read by exactly half of female respondents. This organization is even more directly concerned with promoting a specific vision of femininity and womanhood:

The Above Rubies email forums are an extension of the Above Rubies magazine and ministry to families. It is a place for you to come and find strength and encouragement

from one another, and to give help to one another - in your role as a wife and in your high calling of motherhood. You are involved in the greatest career in the nation as you train the next generation. Its [sic] not easy and we know that you have many questions and cries for help. This is not a place for debate, but a place to lovingly encourage, help, undergird, and pray for one another.

Like the *QF Digest* and MOMYS digest and forums, Above Rubies email forums are explicitly not a space for dissent or refutation, but one for building solidarity and encouraging a particular form of womanhood that views motherhood and wifedom as “the greatest career” and the highest calling a woman can aspire to. The language of “encouragement” again surfaces, implying an urging along of women on their journeys towards a deeper trust in God and a biblical order of obedience to husband and Lord, particularly in family life and reproduction. The language of “encouragement,” both in user-generated blogs and in these more formalized and moderated websites, is code for standardization of beliefs and of the practices emergent from those beliefs among Quiverfull families. Women, who visit more blogs, receive more Quiverfull-related online media, and more often use the internet as a way to connect with like-minded people, are the primary receptors for these messages of collective identity that increasingly unify the group. These online free spaces certainly contribute to the fulfillment of Taylor and Whittier’s three components of collective identity: boundaries, consciousness, and negotiation. Boundaries are drawn through the testimonies of bloggers between their prior untrusting self and the new Quiverfull self that accepts God’s guidance in family planning, and between Christians that have given up all reproductive control to the Lord and those that still resist. A “consciousness” framework of supporting logics exist; these logics suggest that a woman’s obedience to her husband and to the literal word of God should be primary values but are all too often lost in the push towards modernity and secularism, and that this loss degrades or otherwise harms the

family. Finally, and importantly, Quiverfull conviction requires substantial lifestyle changes, particularly on the part of the wife and mother; therefore, practical advice and guidance on how to negotiate being a “biblical” woman in modern times—from pregnancy and childrearing to homeschooling and stretching a tight budget-- is crucial to ensuring that Quiverfull adherence appears accessible, so that more women will be encouraged, in the words of one blogger, to “step out.”

Master Frames and Free Spaces in the Quiverfull Movement

Free spaces, particularly online spaces such as blogs, interactive e-gests, and sites for Christian homeschool resources, are clearly important to negotiating and inculcating a particular collective identity in Quiverfull individuals. As hypothesized, the free spaces and the identities they propagate are highly gendered and largely aimed towards “encouraging women” in their particular roles; spaces for men were harder to identify. The particular gender roles (wife, mother, homeschool teacher) and types of femininity (rigidly “biblical” or traditional) that these spaces were set up to encourage are a result of the Quiverfull rejection of feminist analyses positing the socially constructed nature and oppressive quality of gender roles. These online spaces model acceptable visions of womanhood and provide guidance for the daunting task of mothering an unpredictably expanding family, helping other women to “step out” and trust in God to plan their families, contributing to the growth of the movement. Judging by the number of women who learned about the Quiverfull movement from websites (23%, higher than any other source), these spaces are fairly effective.

While these spaces are definitely important as tools of support and “idiocultural” gender standardization among movement adherents, their other functions are perhaps even more

influential: they provide places for like-minded people to “gather” and find their worldviews reinforced. These worldviews, which focus particularly on the rejection of feminism as a force for social destruction through low birthrates (due to family planning methods) and gender chaos, are perpetuations and reiterations of the worldviews expressed in key movement texts; the online free spaces are either created by the same movement leaders that write the books (as with Nancy Campbell and the “Above Rubies” website and email digest) or are created by movement adherents that have encountered this material and chose to structure their lives around it. The true impetus for the creation of these spaces of “encouragement for women” is the perpetuation of the Quiverfull worldview and lifestyle, which relies heavily upon convincing women to substantially alter their needs, desires, expectations, and responsibilities.

The Quiverfull movement’s master frames are largely oriented towards “debunking” feminism’s tenets and goals (and have the simultaneous effect of scaring Quiverfull women away from learning more about it) with several key themes: feminists are driven by selfish materialism, feminism deludes women into believing they can find satisfaction outside traditional roles, and feminism destroys the fabric of society through abortion, family planning, and gender confusion. Feminists are portrayed as uncritical followers of Margaret Sanger, who is identified as God-hating and child-hating. Feminists are also portrayed as hating stay-at-home-moms. These portrayals rely upon exaggerations, misconceptions, historical revision, and occasional outright lies, but are effective because the feminist movement is largely misunderstood even in popular culture. Regardless, feminists (and behaviors associated with feminism like having a career or using family planning methods of any kind) are firmly positioned as an identifiable “opposition” or “enemy” that are poisoning western society and

may be tools or servants of Satan. Any remaining concerns about the environmental impact of having many children are dismissed with the strong statistically-backed assertion that there is no overpopulation problem or resource shortage. Finally, Christian families that reject birth control methods are celebrated for their role in battling feared demographic changes (like the growing population of Muslims in the nation and the world, the reduction of Christian individuals, and the continued cultural dominance of secular humanists and feminists) that are predicted to wipe out American/Judao-Christian culture, and for providing an “army” of future voters who will help to shift the American political scene back towards a Godly, biblical state. The remarkable absorption of all of these themes and interlocking “common senses” about feminism, environmental (in)stability, and population politics shows that Quiverfull adherents thoroughly learn the worldview espoused by movement leaders, find it to be flexible enough to maintain credibility through quotidian social and political changes, and find it convincing enough to alter their reproductive lives to embody and practice their new Quiverfull identities.

In the case of Quiverfull women, whose traditional “biblical” feminine identities are inextricably linked with the activism (childbirth for political and demographic change) that results from their anti-feminist oppositional consciousnesses, it is particularly hard to see where collective identity ends and oppositional praxis begins. These women are, largely, birthing and raising their children for a particular purpose, a perceived greater good, and so might be viewed in terms of Taylor and Whittier’s concept of “negotiation,” the practical, day-to-day ways in which movement members alter their lives to resist cultural hegemony (Taylor & Whittier, 1992),. However, consistent with an oppositional consciousness intervention in Taylor and Whittier’s analysis, the logic behind this key feature of the Quiverfull movement—the rejection

of family planning methods of all kinds—is derived from deep faith in combination with the master frames described above; movement growth for this particular group is more closely bound up with master frames that stress an urgent need for many new Christians than with a particular collective identity, gendered or otherwise

Conclusion

In much the same way that Lori G. Waite determined that collective identity and oppositional consciousness are not monolithic within a group, but are instead influenced by the relative social and structural positions of movement members (Waite, 2001: 200), oppositional consciousness is strikingly consistent among Quiverfull participants, but collective identity is definitively gendered: there are specific, separate spheres and spaces occupied by Quiverfull men and women that result in particular gendered identities. While free spaces certainly played a role in the Quiverfull movement, particularly for establishing and standardizing a gendered collective identity and a particular model of “biblical” femininity, they were also important tools for transmitting the master frames established in the key movement texts, consistent with my application of oppositional consciousness interventions into the study of free spaces. An analysis of key movement texts, websites, surveys, and interview answers revealed that the master frames identifying the movement’s systemic enemies and long term goals created a strong and consistent oppositional consciousness that carried into user-generated internet content and further into the responses of Quiverfull individuals. The logics and worldview provided through these frames were highly effective in convincing individuals to adopt the Quiverfull ideologies and decide that the accompanying lifestyle was right for them.

It is important to note that the twisting or misrepresentation of the goals of feminism, revision and erasure of the history of birth control use, and the causal attribution of *economic* problems or faults in American capitalism to feminism, were important tools for creating such strong opposition to feminism. This reveals how deeply misunderstood feminism and the feminist movement's goals and ideology are not only in the Quiverfull idioculture, but also in popular culture. The "truth" about feminism seems fairly inaccessible to the average American, making it easier for anti-feminist movement leaders to mislead their followers and to construct feminists as ideal enemies, "evil" in opposition to Quiverfull's "good." Similarly, the rejection of ideas about global overpopulation or resources shortages reflects either a lack of exposure to global events, or a failure of the education system to give citizens certain analytical tools; while the common Quiverfull practice of homeschooling helps to isolate children and young adults from certain ideas, there is ambivalence about global warming and other environmental scares even in mainstream culture and among graduates of the public education system. Lack of exposure to knowledge and experiences of various kinds among movement members—of accurate history, more nuanced presentations of feminist thought, and global current events—helps to bolster the effectiveness of Quiverfull leaders' constructions. The failure of the American feminist movement to clearly articulate its true stances and objectives in an accessible way, as well as its sometime-failure to be inclusive of different classes and to tackle hard economic issues (like the death of the family wage, the provision of childcare and support for working mothers, and pursuit of a healthier work-life balance for all workers so that no woman feels she must choose between children and career), has provided ammunition for backlash movements like the Quiverfull.

This study had several distinct limitations. Time constraints prevented me from building trust and doing multiple interviews with each participant to deepen trust and perhaps gain more insight into the factors influencing the fraught decision of leaving family planning up to God, and from interviewing every person who volunteered. Financial constraints limited my ability to conduct interviews in person. Future directions for research should seek to determine if the lack of male-oriented free spaces leads to a weaker collective identity among male Quiverfull individuals, leaving them feeling less bound to the movement than their female counterparts. The effective transmission of gendered collective identities and Quiverfull oppositional consciousnesses from parent to child in the domestic/homeschooling setting is also worth studying to determine the likelihood that children raised in these households will actually grow up to share their parents' convictions and choices. From the perspective of the leadership and recruitment, one could study the pervasiveness of Quiverfull materials, books, and information being disseminated at homeschooling conferences throughout the nation. How likely is it that a homeschooling family will encounter this ideology? How quickly can we expect this movement to spread? How attractive is the anti-feminist oppositional consciousness constructed in Quiverfull texts, and might it spread beyond this small community and into the larger Religious Right?

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