

The Second Wave of the Women's Rights Movement:

Different Women, Different Missions

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HISTORY 489

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Abstract

Many people believe that all women of various ethnic backgrounds in the United States involved in the Women's Rights Movement during the late 1960s and early 1970s were fighting for the same issues but this may not be true. **This paper compares the mainstream women's rights movement and the feminist movement of Wisconsin Native American women during this era. A comparison of *Ms. Magazine* articles of the early 1970s and *Wisconsin Tribal Women's News: Najinakwe* demonstrates that there was a significant difference in each group's mission even though their goals were similar.**

Throughout history, women of different cultural backgrounds have had accessibility to different degrees of "equality." This paper argues that while there was a feminist movement within the Native American community, their mission was explicitly for the betterment of women involved as well as their communities. Throughout history Native American women have had a greater sense of equality within their communities or they have not seen their work as beneath that of the men of their society. This was something the women of the mainstream movement did feel. They thought that their work and gender were under-appreciated in American society. The Native American women argued that their work as mother and nurturer gave them power and was seen in their society as the most power a woman could have, the power of reproduction. The middle class white woman saw their ability to reproduce as their yoke of burden. They loved their children but thought they could do more in the world outside of their homes and families.

Introduction

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To do this topic justice both Native American culture and the second phase of the mainstream women's rights movement had to be researched but also the background of both topics had to be delved into to create an understanding of why this dichotomy occurred. There is comparatively little scholarship that looks at both American and Native American feminist movement which means that there are two separate historiographies. If Native American women are mentioned in mainstream scholarship it usually consists of one or two paragraphs.

The historiography of Native American women within Wisconsin and their cultural gender traditions began with the works of Ruth Landes in the 1930s.¹ But the actual historiography of a women's movement within the Native American community began at about the same time as the subject of Indian Activism during the early to mid 1970s. Contemporary authors on the subject of women within Native American society are Rayna Green and Patty Loew. The historiography of the second wave of the Women's Rights Movement began during the late 1960s even though the topic of women's rights can be found as early as the mid 1800s which discussed the first wave of the movement that resulted in the ability for women to vote.

Over time, there has been a shift in how of the Second Wave of the Women's Rights Movement and Native American women's rights and culture have been explored. First, the attitude about the Women's Rights Movement has changed over time in regards to the positions the authors took while describing the movement. Written works on the topic of women's rights began as empowerment pieces and in t which were authored by women involved in the movement. The true historiography on this topic began in the late 1980s. Sheila Tobias author of *Faces of Feminism: An Activist's Reflection on the Women's Movement*, gives a good overview

¹ Landes, Ruth. *The Ojibwa Woman*. 2nd. New York: AMS Press, 1969.

of the events that led up to the feminist movement and then goes into more detail about specifics of the movement. Another historian who wrote about the feminist movement in the United States was Alice Echols. In her work, *Daring to Be Bad: Radical Feminism in America 1967-1975*, Echols describes why women felt a need to fight for equality and their tactics. Many contemporary books and articles state that the Women's Rights Movement was not as forward moving or the opposite that it was too far moving.² The shift involving Native American women is more about who writes the history. In the past, it was mainly European-Americans writing about the Natives "found" in America but within the last four decades a shift has occurred. Many Native American scholars and laypeople are now speaking out about their history, culture, beliefs, and the wrongs that were done to them by the "White man".

A most profoundly helpful source found on the topic of Native American women and their struggle for women's rights was an article entitled "Revision and Resistance", written by Lisa J. Udel. Found in this article was information used to establish the thesis of this paper and it suggested many other ways to research the topic. One idea proclaimed by Udel is that "several Native women condemn Western feminism for what they perceive as a devaluation of motherhood and refutation of women's traditional responsibilities."³ It also discussed why many Native American women did not and still do not affiliate themselves with the Mainstream Women's Rights Movement. They see the mainstream movement as working toward individuality and Native women are more concerned with protecting and holding together their society.⁴ This article also stated that Native women see what they call "motherwork" as the

² Echols, Alice. *Daring to Be Bad: Radical Feminism in America 1967-1975*. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989).

³ Lisa J Udel, "Revision and Resistance," *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies* 22, no. 2(2001):Abstract.(accessed November 2008).

⁴ Ibid, 43

ability to “procreate and nurture their children, communities, and the earth.”⁵ Udel’s article argued that Native American women see the need for an emphasis on their traditional responsibilities and Western feminists put their emphasis on equal rights.⁶

Jane Lawrence approached the topic of rights among Native American women by delving into the controversy of mass sterilization of executed Native American women during the 1960s and early to mid 1970s by the Indian Health Service. According to Lawrence, many Native American women were sterilized without consent or with consent that was given while the women were in the throes of labor. She states that the doctors thought they were helping society by eliminating or limiting the reproduction of the poverty-stricken. This act of forced sterilization was not exclusively conducted on Native American women but because many of these women lived on reservations, their only health care was provided for their community by the United States government. This took the choice of where Native American women received their care.⁷

“Whitestream Feminism and the Colonialist Project: Toward a Theory of Indigenista”, author Sandy Grande questions “whether the dominant whitestream discourse has indeed given way to more complicated readings of gender and power”.⁸ Much like what I have discussed earlier, Grande takes note of the lack of information to be found on Native woman prior to the mid-eighteenth century. Within this chapter, Grande wrote quite a bit about the contemporary feminist’s movement and how it demanded a “sex-neutral society.” While doing this, the

⁵Ibid, 43

⁶ Ibid, 43-44

⁷ Lawrence, Jane. "The Indian Health Service and the Sterilization of Native American Women." *American Indian Quarterly* 24, no. 3 (Summer 2000): 400-419.

⁸ Sandy Grande, “Whitestream Feminism and the Colonialist Project: Toward a Theory of Indigenista,” in *Red Pedagogy: Native American Social and Political Thought* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2004) 126.

mainstream movement failed to understand the differences in cultural background and may have harmed instead of helped some racial groups in the United States such as Native Americans.

This piece within Grande's book enabled me to understand why not all women saw the mainstream Women's Rights Movement as a good thing and what repercussion it may have had on the Native American community.

Judith Hole and Ellen Levine's book entitled, *Rebirth of Feminism*, gave an insightful and close look at the Mainstream Women's Rights Movement because it was written in 1971 by two feminists at the pinnacle of the movement. It described what the women of the era were struggling for instead of how a person of today may perceive their struggle. This work was very useful in the writing of this paper because it broke down the movement into what the author called "Areas of Action" or what this paper identified as "goals". The goals of the movement included equity in education, the workplace, the home, and in politics, reproductive autonomy, and the breaking of traditions.⁹

Another mainstream feminist source was a history of *Ms. Magazine* and what this iconic magazine meant for the movement. *Yours in Sisterhood's* author Amy Erdman Farrell proclaimed that it would prove that the story of *Ms. Magazine* was in fact the story of the second wave of the Women's Rights Movement. Farrell fulfilled her promise by producing many examples of how *Ms. Magazine* represented the feminist movement. While creating this representation of the movement, Farrell also revealed the monetary and popularity motives urging the publication of *Ms. Magazine*. This work was almost as valuable to this paper as the actual magazine itself was.

⁹ Hole, Judith, and Ellen Levine. *Rebirth of Feminism*. (New York: The New York Times Book Co., 1971).

Issues of *Ms. Magazine* spanning the two years of 1972 and 1973 were invaluable in the search for the goals of the mainstream women's movement. It gave insight to this paper about who the audience was of *Ms. Magazine* was at its establishment. The investigation of the multitude of Native American Tribal Websites and women's organizations was extraordinarily useful in that most of these websites were written or created by Native Americans, giving a different perspective of Native history and tradition. A similar publication to *Ms. Magazine* was created by the Native American women of Wisconsin during the early 1970s and entitled the *Wisconsin Tribal Women's News: Najinakwe*. It was established by a women's organization named the "Wisconsin Tribal Women, Inc." and its informative content was useful and educational for Native women.

All of the afore-mentioned sources have come together to create an understanding of this paper's topic as well as support of its main argument. The primary and secondary sources aided in the reinforcement of the idea that in the late 1960 and early to mid 1970s both the Native American and mainstream women struggled for gender equality in many similar ways but for quite different reasons. Native American women saw the betterment of their women as a betterment for their society and mainstream women saw a need for a change in their society so there could be a positive change for women.

Causes of the Second Wave of the Mainstream Movement

After much work by the women's suffrage movement of the mid to latter part of the 19th century, the 19th Amendment to the United States Constitution was passed, giving women the right to vote. It stated, "The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex. Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation."¹⁰ The women who fought for this amendment saw it as advancement in the positions of women. They were women who before this amendment,

had literally no civil under the law, who were pronounced civilly dead upon marriage, or remained legal minors if they didn't marry, who could not even sign their own wills, or have custody of their own children upon divorce, who were allowed to go to school at all, let alone college, were, at best, equipped with a little knowledge of embroidery, French, or harpsichord as their sole political education, who had no political status or weapons whatever.¹¹

As time passed, women began to realize that their right to vote was not as cut and dry as they had originally thought. They had believed that the right to vote for women would be their "savior" but it turned out that in many families it was seen essentially as a second vote for the husband. In an article by Shulamith Firestone in 1968, she wrote, "For what is the vote worth finally if the voter is manipulated? Every husband knows he's not losing a vote, but gaining one." She also stated that "women still voted as wives, just as they govern as wives" even after 50 years had passed since the 19th Amendment had been implemented.¹² Politically women did not thrive in

10 "The Constitution: The 19th Amendment." U.S. National Archives and Records Administration. <http://www.archives.gov> (accessed March 2, 2009).

11 Firestone, Shulamith. *The Women's Rights Movement in the U.S.A.: New View*. 1968. <http://cwlherstory.com/CWLUArchive/womensrights.html> (accessed February 14, 2009).

¹² Ibid.

the first half of the 20th century. Their position as voters was connected much to the ideologies of their spouses and they were not perceived as educated voters. Women were not expected to understand politics and because of the powerful male dominant political sphere they were not suppose to be involved in politics. The political arena was envisioned as immoral and dirty work that women should not be associated with. This is one of the reasons that in the mid to late 1960s and early 1970s, women began to push for more than just the right to vote, but for many other rights, such as the control over their own bodies (birth control and sexuality), the right to be educated, to have political power, economic freedom, and in general they extolled that anything men they could accomplish also.

During World War II, women took the place of the men sent overseas to fight in the war. The War Industry was thriving and the only way to fulfill the needs at this time was for women to step outside of their homes and begin to work in these factories. As soon as the war ended and the men returned, most women were put right back into their domestic roles. The women who continued to work did so in lesser paying, inferior jobs such as secretarial or waitressing positions. The worlds of medicine, law and science were still banned from most women. June Sochen, author of *Herstory* conquered that, “The elite professions continued to discriminate against women, blacks, and other minority groups well into the 1960s.”¹³

Women of the 1950s were seen as caregivers to their children and husband. They were the homemaker who made sure everything and everyone was where it should be. The home was believed to be a sacred institution that housed the nuclear family, meaning that each woman had to take care of their individual families, unlike communities such as the Native American where the care of the children was the responsibility of all the women (group care—much like a child

¹³ Shochen, June. *Herstory*. (New York: Alfred Publishing Co., 1974) 355.

care system).¹⁴ This idea is shown through the “Suburban Wife-Mother’s Schedule” of the 1950s and early 1960s which espoused,

7:00 A.M. Rise and shine (?)
7:30 A.M. Waken any children who are still in bed.
7:35 A.M. Prepare breakfast.
7:45 A.M. Make school lunches.
8:00 A.M. Supervise breakfast. Drink a cup of coffee.
8:15 A.M. Walk the children to the school bus stop.
8:20 A.M. Drive husband to train station.
8:30 A.M. Sit down and have another cup of coffee.
9:00 A.M. Go to P.T.A. board meeting.
11:00 A.M. Return home, and await arrival of nursery school child who attends school only in the mornings.
12:00 P.M. Prepare lunch for herself and the child.
12:30 P.M. Put the child to bed for a two-hour nap.
12:30 P.M.-2:30 P.M. Free time—for housework.
3:00 P.M. Await arrival of other children from school.
3:30 P.M. Take the two older children to their piano teacher for lessons (once a week).
4:30 P.M. Return home. Begin to prepare dinner.
6:30 P.M. Pick up husband at train station.
7:00 P.M. Serve dinner to family.
7:45 P.M. Get children ready for bed; bathe them, play games with them, tuck them in.
8:30 P.M. Do the dinner dishes.
9:15 P.M. Free time.¹⁵

This schedule represents the day of a large portion of women during the 1950s. Many began to see the family home as a prison or a trap in which women had fallen. Women also began to believe that their positions in the home were not equal to men because they were seen as caregivers and not receivers. The film, *Adam’s Rib*, produced in 1949, did not represent the typical marriage or the attitudes of marriage when Katherine Hepburn’s character stated,

Balance. Equality. Mutual everything! There’s no room in a marriage for what they used to call “the little woman.” She’s got to be as big as the man is.....Sharing! That’s what it

¹⁴ Shochon, June. *Herstory*. (New York: Alfred Publishing Co., 1974) 356.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 356-357.

takes to keep a marriage from getting sick.....No part of life is the exclusive province of any one sex.¹⁶

Women saw the idea of seeking a career outside of the home as competing with their roles as mothers and wives. They had been taught for so long that this was the nurturing role they should play that many felt guilty when they felt a need for more.

As mentioned before, women were not admitted into certain programs within higher education, such as medical (doctor), law, and science. Early in the 20th century stretching into the 1960s, women were admitted into jobs of “nurturing” such as nursing and home economics. Colleges did not lend themselves to facilitating the needs of women. This was evident in lack of washrooms and childcare facilities.

Reproductive autonomy was not assumed by women during the first half of the 20th century as it is in today’s world. Again, a woman’s main roles were that of mother and caretaker. Following World War II, families grew tremendously because death was very familiar to people and when this happens procreation is the only solution. This growth of the family propelled women from the independent, industrial worker into the role of nurturer and homemaker. The oral contraceptive pill was introduced in women in 1960 which use was looked at by conservatives as a black mark against the user. Many people saw the use as something a “bad girl” would do. By using the “pill” women were either asserting their sexual independence or as on lookers would state, making a statement of their sexual activity.¹⁷ This topic was seen as a moral issue by many and as a freedom issue by others.

¹⁶ Ibid., 358.

¹⁷ Gatlin, Rochelle. *American Women Since 1945*. (Jackson, Mississippi: University Press of Mississippi, 1987), 55.

The Oppression of the Native American People

In order to understand the reasons that Native American women would be striving for the betterment of their communities, one must first have an understanding of the oppressed state of the Native American people. This section will describe some of the policies implemented into Native American society during the late 1800s and early to mid 1900s. During this time there was a great push by mainstream Americans and the United States government for assimilation into the American “norm” starting in the early 20th century. No one group found this as true as did the Native Americans. Allotment, Boarding schools, and forced sterilization were a large part of this push for the Indian assimilation into mainstream American society.

Allotment was actually implemented during the late 1800s but had much impact on the Native American society. Allotment was a way to abolish the tribal system of the Native American people. It got rid of the communal ideology of these people who believed that no one person could own the land but that it should be accessible to the whole tribe. European Americans believed in individual ownership of land. An example of the importance of land ownership to Americans was shown through the initial requirements established by the United States government for a person to be able to vote. In early America men had to own land to be able to assert this right. This dichotomy was a great conflict between these two societies. The Dawes Allotment Act of 1887 stated that 160 acres would be given to each head of families with younger and orphaned receiving a lesser amount of land. Indians could select their own land but if they did not before a certain deadline the U.S. government would appoint land to them. The government would hold the title to the land for twenty-five years, which would prevent its sales until the Indians, learned to treat it as real estate (this was enforced until 1906, when the Burke

Act said that the Indians who were declared competent could sell their land). All Indians who abandoned their tribal ways and became “civilized” were granted citizenship and “surplus” reservation land could be sold. The Burke Act of 1906 caused many problems for the Native Americans because it stated that any Indian found competent could sell his land.¹⁸ Many Indians were taken advantage of and were declared “competent” because their land was valuable or desirable. Much of the Native American land was lost to them during this time, especially the more desirable land. It was also quite common for an Indian to “own” twenty acres of land but to have it split up into small sections all over the reservation with other people’s land between the parcels. The loss of land and poverty was detrimental to Native American men self-esteem. It caused great despair and demoralization among the men of the tribes. This loss of power invited the men to drink and to find power in another way, which was what could have led to the abuse of their wives and children.¹⁹

The Meriam Report was published in 1928; it consisted of a survey of the Native American struggles which included poor diet, housing, and sanitary facilities. It also described what was seen as the cause of these problems. It stated the main reason of Indian despair, demoralization, and poverty to be the implementation of the Dawes Allotment Act. Even though the Meriam Report was critical of the policies established at the time, it still agreed with the philosophy of assimilation.²⁰

Boarding schools were also established in the late 1800s and early 1900s as a way to assimilate or wipe out the Native American culture. Children were taken away from their

¹⁸ Iverson, Peter. *"We Are Still Here": American Indians in the Twentieth Century*. (Wheeling, Illinois: Harlan Davidson, 1998), 30-34.

¹⁹ Lurie, Nancy Oestreich. *Wisconsin Indians*. (Madison: The Wisconsin Historical Society Press, 2002) 35-36.

²⁰ Iverson, Peter. *"We Are Still Here": American Indians in the Twentieth Century*. (Wheeling, Illinois: Harlan Davidson, 1998), 75.

mothers and families to attend “reform” schools which emphasized trades and “Americanization”. The children wore uniforms and had to cut their hair in a more “civilized” fashion. Boys were taught manual skills while girls learned mainstream domesticity.²¹ Both were taught to read and write in English and were punished if they reverted back to their native language. One positive aspect of this was that Native Americans, who could not communicate in their native languages because of the large diversity in languages, could now speak to each other in English, forming a more consolidated group of Native Americans. Native American women were distraught during this time because many children were not allowed to visit their homes while attending the boarding schools. It was thought that they may revert back to their native languages and that their families would be bad influences when it came to assimilation.

Another form of oppression was the forced or secretive sterilization of Native American women during the mid-1900s. Many women were sterilized when they had to have routine operations such as appendectomies or directly following child birth. They saw this as an affront to them as women because they believed a women’s most important role was that of the reproduction of the next generation. They did not think that having children was a choice but something they were created to do. It was their utmost role as women and they were held in high esteem in their society for this ability. Udel suggested that, “First Nation women are respected as the centre of the nation for [this] reason.”²²

Native American women saw this oppression as something they had no control of, which created a feeling of uselessness and as second- or possibly third-class citizenship for their

²¹ Child, Brenda J. *Boarding School Seasons: American Indian Families 1900-1940*. Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 1998.

²² Lisa J Udel, “Revision and Resistance,” *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies* 22, no. 2(2001):Abstract.(accessed November 2008).

gender. Their sense of helplessness was emphasized by both being a woman and a minority in a country that favored the white male.

Goals of the Movement

In this paper goals are defined as certain aspirations of the second wave of the feminist movement dealing with education, reproductive autonomy, personal or family life, work place and pay, and the political arena. These were aspects in women's lives that they saw that needed change. Both the Native American women and the mainstream women's feminist movement made huge efforts to change these facets of female life as an end to a means, meaning they needed change to be able to attain their missions or objectives.

Many women in mainstream America saw education as an entrance into the "man's world". There was an inequality in admissions into the world of higher education. Many universities implemented a quota system where they split admissions between men and women right in half. When the universities received applications and Standard Aptitude Tests (SAT) results they would automatically split them up into two groups by gender. Ann Scott wrote for *Ms. Magazine* in July of 1972 that, "If there was room for, say, 2,000 first-year students, they admit the thousand top-scoring women and the thousand top-scoring men."²³ The universities saw this as an aide to equalize the admissions between the genders but it still did not create equity. Many women had scored higher than some of men who had been admitted. Using the prior example, the universities did not admit the 2,000 people who had scored the highest on their SATs. They had separated the genders instead of combining them.²⁴

Women also wanted the access into the Medical, Law, and the science programs which had been banned from them. In the past women were not accepted into these fields because they were seen as "man work". Careers that were seen as women's were nursing or what was seen as

²³ *Ms. Magazine*. July, 1972.

²⁴ *Ibid*.

lower education, mostly elementary. In *Rebirth of Feminism*, activists Judith Hole and Ellen Levine wrote that, “in 1968, 42 percent of all professional women were teachers.”²⁵ This was evidence of the education and career options for women of the era. The establishment of what women should learn compared to men also occurred in high schools. In 1969, there were three public schools in New York that specialized in the sciences, only one of the three allowed admission to girls. Alice de Rivera challenged this and was admitted before a court could rule on her case, which did not set a precedent. During this same year, a junior high student in the New York Public School System sued the Board of Education because she was not allowed to take a shop course. In Washington State, a girl sued the Board of Education because she was required to take home economics for graduation but boys were not.²⁶

These problems did not only occur in higher education but also in elementary schools. Elementary schools did not tend to discriminate against girls but the curriculum and books accessible in elementary schools depicted women in only certain occupations such as mother, nurse, or teacher. Another example of indirect discrimination in elementary schools could be found in the selection of toys available to the students.²⁷ An article entitled, “A Report on Children’s Toys and Socialization to Sex Roles” written for *Ms. Magazine* in 1972 established the difference between “boy toys” and “girl toys” during the late 1960s and early 1970s. The author of this article, Nancy Lyon stated that there were three categories of toys, boys’, girls’ and neutral. She described masculine toys as, “more varied and expensive, and are viewed as relatively complex, active, and social”, neutral toys as, “Creative and educational”, and feminine toys as, “simple, passive, and solitary.”²⁸ This distinguished male toys to be items such as

²⁵ Hole, Judith, and Ellen Levine. *Rebirth of Feminism*. (New York: The New York Times Book Co., 1971), 317.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 331.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 333-337.

²⁸ *Ms. Magazine*. December 1972, 54.

trucks, Erector-sets, and doctor kits (fully loaded with doctor equipment and female toys to be dolls, craft kits, and nurse kits (which included a “nurse apron, cap, plastic silverware, plate, sick tray with play food”).²⁹ Women of the Feminist Movement wanted this stereotyping to end. They asked the question of why do girls have to play with dolls. Why can they not play with cars and trucks?

Many Native American women wanted access to higher education. Unlike the mainstream movement, higher education was new to Native Americans and the women saw this as a way to bring education back into their communities. Education and health care were very popular majors for Indian women. They believed that in bettering themselves they could return and help better their communities. This is depicted in first issue of the *Wisconsin Tribal Women's News: Najinakwe* in August of 1974. In this first issue, the Native American women's group that published the newsletter/magazine, “Wisconsin Tribal Women, Inc.” listed the purposes of the organization. The number one purpose of the women's group was that of promoting a better future for all Indian people and to improve the nurturing of Indian infants, children, and elderly but to fulfill this goal, the women also listed that there was a need for the aiding of Indian women to use their potential and capabilities to the fullest. They also thought that they need to develop leadership among Indian women and to aid the women in understanding their rights as both women and Native Americans and legislative procedures to aid in the changing of policies regarding Native Americans.³⁰ Native women saw education as a portal to the many issues facing their Native American communities. Many articles within the

²⁹ *Ms. Magazine*. December 1972, 54.

³⁰ Sokaogon Chippewa Community Tribal Archives Project Collection, 1851-1980. Northland Micro 11:Micro 1033. Wisconsin Historical Society Archives. Northern Great Lakes Center Area Research Center--Ashland. Ashland, Wisconsin, *Wisconsin Tribal Women's News: Najinakwe*, August, 1974.

newsletter produced by Wisconsin Tribal Women, Inc. involved education. Either they discussed educational options for the Native women or celebrated the accomplishments of Wisconsin Native American women in education.

During this time women were struggling for the admission from society that their as mothers and housewives was valued. In an article in the July 1972 *Ms. Magazine* article Ann Crittenden Scott discussed just this topic. The article's title, "The Value of Housework: For Love or Money?" illustrated the argument. Scott claimed that nearly 30 million women were described as "nonworking," "married, not in the labor force," or commonly "housewife."³¹ Being a mother and providing a nurturing environment for her family was not seen as true work during this time. Scott explained in her article that, "The housewife is the subject of endless jokes and social put-downs; she is patronized, condescended to, and considered unemployed." Beyond the ridicule of the position of housewife, the women whose life work was to take care of their homes and families had little rights. In 42 states, a married woman had no rights to her husband's earnings or property and had no rights to payment for any work she had put into her marriage.³²

Another goal of the feminist movement during the second wave was to shift expectations of women from the domestic arena to the workplace. With this shift came a conflict over equal pay. Women during this time were being paid much less than their male counterparts but the inconsistencies did not only deal with wages but also included the different opportunities for promotion. An article in *Ms. Magazine* of December of 1972 discussed this topic by comparing male and female wages in many common careers. The author, Caroline Bird listed some of the differences in a chart which stated that in 1970 the average hourly wage (including tips) for

³¹ *Ms. Magazine*. July 1972, 56-59.

³² *Ibid.*

waitresses/waiters were \$3.80 for men and \$2.85 for women. It also illustrated the great contrast in wages for a female and a male Public Relations Coordinator with equal years of experience and time with the firm. A female in this position earned \$16,500 per year and her male counterpart earned \$25,500. Bird stated that this was in opposition to the Equal Pay Act of 1963 but that many loopholes allowed this disparity to occur. One way to get around the equal pay issue was to give different titles to women for the same job as a man. An example of this was the use of “janitor” for males and “maid” for females or calling a man who interviewed applicants for a job, an “interviewer” and the female conducting the same work, a “clerk”.³³ Women during this time fought against this type of discrimination through the court systems by pushing for a change in the wording of the comparison of jobs. The courts changed its criteria for equal pay in equivalent jobs from the “skill, effort, and responsibility” having to be identical to “substantially equal”. This meant for example that a man could not get paid more because he was sent out as a bank teller on an occasional field investigation, when the female did not have this opportunity.

Native American women were concerned with this pay differential also. In the December 1974 issue of the *Wisconsin Tribal Women's News*, an article was written entitled, Vocational Training and Wage Study. It described a study done by the Governor's Commission on the Status of Women which stated that 94 percent of students in agriculture were male and would eventually earn a monthly salary of \$600 and that 92 percent of students in trade and industry were men whose average monthly wage would be \$663. The article then explained that 94 percent of the students in the health care fields were women who would eventually make \$484 on a monthly basis and 72 percent of students enrolled in business courses (secretarial) were women who were looking at about \$470 per month. That was the extent of the article but it

³³ *Ms. Magazine, December 1972, 81-86.*

seemed that by just printing this data made a statement about the differences in wages between men and women and the career choices available to both men and women during this time.³⁴

Reproductive autonomy was another issue that women wanted included in the changes of this time. Both the mainstream women and Native American women were pushing for the right to control their own bodies but for very different reasons. The mainstream group was looking for the right to use birth control and to have the choice not to become mothers whereas the Native American women were struggling for the right to have children which had been taken away from them by the dominant society.

In the mainstream movement this right is connected with the right to work outside of the home and the ability of these women to do the job as men have done for so long. According to Sheila Tobias in her work, *Faces of Feminism*, before the movement began, women were expected to stay at home and have children during their child bearing years but because women wanted to be able to work outside of the home, they needed to be able to have control over how many children they bared and at what time in their lives they had these children.³⁵ This became a two-sided moral issue in many American's eyes. Judith Hole and Ellen Levine of *Rebirth of Feminism* argued that, "feminists claim as an unassailable moral right a woman's complete control of her reproductive capacity."³⁶ Women began to use the "pill" as a contraceptive that was in their control. They also began to fight for the legalization of abortion. In *Herstory*, authored by June Sochen, it stated that in January of 1973 the Supreme Court ruled that all state

³⁴ *Wisconsin Tribal Women's News: Najinakwe*, December 1974.

³⁵ Tobias, Sheila. *Faces of Feminism: An Activist's Reflections on the Women's Movement*. (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1997) 46.

³⁶ Hole, Judith, and Ellen Levine. *Rebirth of Feminism*. (New York: New York Times Book , 1971) 185.

laws which prohibited first trimester abortions were unconstitutional based on it was the sole right of the woman and that the decision should be between her and her doctor.³⁷ The other side of this moral issue came mainly from the Catholic Church which who saw this as a sin. This is still a controversial issue in today's society.³⁸ Another reason people saw the issue of contraceptives and abortion a moral one is that many people believed it woman had a reproductive duty and she should fulfill this duty.

In Native American society women were cherished and admired for their reproductive abilities so there was little issue over contraception or abortion. They had different problems concerning their reproductive autonomy. Firstly, Native American women were struggling with the loss of their children to the Indian Boarding schools. Many of their children were returning with a loss of the relationships between mother and child. Many of these relationships were never reformed. Secondly, during the late 1960s and early 1970s there was a push for sterilization of low-income women and Native American women were a large part of this. According to Jane Lawrence's article, *The Indian Health Service and the Sterilization of Native American Women*, at least 25 percent of Native American women between the ages of fifteen and forty-four were sterilized by the Indian Health Services (IHS). IHS was an implementation of the Public Health Services and Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. It provided family planning services to the Native American community. Many women using the services of the IHS were sterilized without their consent or the consent was given after the procedure. Doctors of HIS would use the threat of taking children away from their mothers if the women would not consent to sterilization. Many women were sterilized following giving birth or another operation

³⁷ Sochen, June. *Herstory: A Women's View of American History*. (New York: Alfred Publishing Co., 1974) 396.

³⁸ *Ibid.*,396-397.

such as appendectomies. An example of this was when a Native American woman named Diane gave birth to her son through a Cesarean section and during this procedure the doctors performed a full hysterectomy on her. Following this procedure she could not remember signing a consent form and asked for the doctors to “fix” it and was told they could not. She stated that, I still get depressed about it when I think about it. But now I get angry, too.” In 1976, the Indian Health Care Improvement Act was passed by Congress, giving tribes the right to control their own HIS programs.³⁹ This is evidence that the Native American women were fighting more for the right to have children.

³⁹ Lawrence, J. (2000). The Indian Health Service and the Sterilization of Native American Women. *American Indian Quarterly*, 24 (3), 400-419.

Missions of Each Cultural Group

Both of these groups of women had the same goals but their missions or what their main objective was, differed in individuality and community importance. Mainstream women saw their work as the creation of equality between men and women in all sectors of society. Their main objective was not directly stated in any source but the lack thereof indicates that the importance for mainstream women was to change societal views and policies to create a better place for women in their communities.

The Native American women saw the betterment of themselves contributing to the betterment of their communities. This was illustrated in the first issue of the *Wisconsin Tribal Women's News* of August 1974. The publication was created by the Wisconsin Tribal Women, Inc. and in their premier issue the women's organization printed their fifteen purposes or objectives. Only one of the first four objectives even mentioned the word women but they did imply the importance of the Native American community and its improvement. The foremost objective of these women was "to promote a better future for all Indian people."⁴⁰ The organization also stated as some of their goals, to promote pride in Native American heritage, to produce a more supportive community, to improve the caring for of their children and elderly, and to better inform Native Americans of their rights. These objectives prove that Native American women were searching for ways to better their communities' situations. The women were also fighting for women's rights also but these rights were a way to create a better society for all, not only women. Objectives stated that involved only women were to develop leadership among Indian women, to aid Native women in using their capabilities to the fullest, and to help

⁴⁰ *Wisconsin Tribal Women's News: Najinakwe*, August 1974.

Native women to use and recognize opportunities for education.⁴¹ These objectives were seen as important goals to accomplish for the women to help their societies.

⁴¹ Ibid.

Audience of Each Movement

According to the “Letters” section of Ms. Magazine, their audience was vast and varied. About one-fourth of the letters sent in were from men who supported the feminist movement. The age of writer ranged from 6 to the elderly. There are many examples of this in each Ms. Magazine “Letters” portion of the magazine. In the February 1973 issue Robert MacBain from Toronto, Ontario wrote, “I am not males. You are not females. We are individuals.” and talking about gender roles he stated, “But, as free agents; we need not act out those roles in docile subservience. We can write our own scripts.”⁴² This insinuates that he believed that men and women are equals and should not follow the rules or roles set up for them if they think it is better for humankind. Another male reader from Stevens Point, Wisconsin proclaimed that when he received an offer for a free issue of Ms., he sent for it, thinking it would be quite entertaining and funny. When he sent for the magazine and read it his thoughts changed. He then said in the letter he wrote that, “I can plainly see that there is a problem. And that the problem isn’t new. But what can be done? Perhaps you have started on the solution.” Another example came from a very young author who was not yet sixteen years old. Her name was Ava Nodelman from New Haven, Connecticut. She was quite an angry young woman and asserted her anger throughout the letter she wrote to Ms. She explained how she was tired of men’s catcalls and whistles and stressed, “I’m so tired of measuring myself against other people, mainly women. There is no earthly reason why I should compare my attitude, my form of dressing, or my physical looks with other women.”⁴³ It seems incredible that a young woman of her age would have these feelings but Ms. Magazine brought them out.

⁴²*Ms. Magazine, February 1973.*

⁴³*Ms. Magazine, September, 1972.*

It seems that the organization of the, “Wisconsin Tribal Women, Inc.” who created the Native American Tribal News letter did not continue because there was no evidence of the group on the internet or in a search of sources. This causes difficulty in understanding of who the magazine’s audience was but it would seem that it was written for young to middle-aged women of the many Wisconsin native communities. There was not a “letters” portion to the publication but at the end of each issue there was an invitation to join the Wisconsin Tribal Women. Membership was offered to tribal women, the spouse of tribal women, non-Indians, and organizations. This implicated that there may have been more than just Native women reading this publication but also men and non-Indians.

Conclusion

Through the use of *Ms. Magazine* and the *Wisconsin Tribal Women's News: Najinkwe*, this paper created a distinction between the missions of each of these groups of women. Both publications described the many common goals that each of these women's groups had through articles that discussed the same rights that they saw that were being kept from women. *Ms. Magazine* illustrated these goals but never actually stated the main objective for the feminist movement but through the many articles published created an assumption that women wanted to have equal status of the men in American society. On the other hand, Native American women wanted to accomplish the same goals such as equal pay, education, opportunities and reproductive autonomy but they saw these goals as a way they could better their society. Although many people believed that there was consistency in the feminist movement's mission, there were diverse missions because there were diverse women, coming from different backgrounds and lives.

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