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CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, SAN MARCOS

A Space of Intersections:
Campus-based Women's Centers and the Third Space
between Public and Private Spheres

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements
for the degree Doctor of Education

in

Educational Leadership

by

Emelyn A. dela Peña

Committee in Charge:

University of California, San Diego

Professor Carolyn Huie Hofstetter, Chair

Professor Olga Vasquez

San Diego State University

Professor Joseph Johnson

2009

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Chair

University Of California, San Diego
San Diego State University
California State University, San Marcos

2009

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to Mom and Dad, who instilled in me the love of learning and passion for discovery.

EPIGRAPH

A woman's place is in the struggle. Her home is with the people.

~Liza Maza, GABRIELA Women's Party

Instead of getting hard ourselves and trying to compete, women should try and give their best qualities to men - bring them softness, teach them how to cry.

~Joan Baez

Who, me confused? Ambivalent? Not so. Only your labels split me.

~Gloria Anzaldua, in This Bridge Called My Back

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Shaun Travers and Edwina Welch, without the two of you I would never have made it through the last three years nor had the courage to even start the journey. Your friendship and support helped me through the most difficult times. Your desire for my success pushed me to always do better. To Krysti Dezonias thank you for the wonderful job editing my work and for the needed words of inspiration in the final days of completing the manuscript.

To the staff of the Women's Center, thank you for your understanding and hard work during my stretches of writing, for being my sounding board for emerging ideas, and my cheerleaders to the end. And to all the beautiful women and men who have touched my life at the Women's Center, especially those who gave their time to participate in this study—you are my inspiration and motivation.

To my family, especially Jordan, Genie, and Bubba, I appreciate your patience and understanding during my long absences. I hope that you too will someday reach for the highest achievement you can possibly dream of. And to Paul Martin, thank you for doing my laundry and running my errands when I barely had time to look up from the computer.

Dr. Joseph Johnson and Dr. Olga Vasquez, your thoughts, comments, and insight pushed my scholarship and research. Your guidance and willingness to ask tough questions helped me to bring the research back to where it belongs—my workplace as my laboratory.

Finally Dr. Carolyn Huie Hofstetter, your unwavering support and belief in me as my chair helped to get me over the final hump. Your patience and mentorship throughout this process has been so appreciated. I am forever grateful.

VITA

- 2009 Doctor of Education, Educational Leadership,
University of California, San Diego; San Diego State
University; California State University, San Marcos
- 2002-present Director, Women's Center
University of California, San Diego
- 2000-2002 Assistant Director, Women's Center
University of California, San Diego
- 1998 Master of Arts in Education, San Diego State University
- 1997-2000 Residence Hall Director, Pitzer College, Claremont, CA
- 1995-1997 Residence Hall Coordinator, Living Learning Center, San Diego
State University
- 1995 Bachelor of Arts in Ethnic Studies, University of California,
San Diego

INVITED PRESENTATIONS

Queer Brown Grrrl: Cross-Cultural, Women's, and LGBT Campus Centers Working
Together and Strategies for Success
American Educational Research Association Conference, April 2009

Intersectionality: Does working together work?
California Council of Cultural Centers in Higher Education Conference, October
2008.

Feminist Leadership within Campus-based Women's Centers
National Women's Studies Association Conference, June 2007

UCSD Chancellor's Undergraduate Diversity Leadership Institute: An Innovative
Model for Promoting Social Justice Action Across and Within Race/Ethnicity,
Gender, and Sexuality
National Conference on Race and Ethnicity in Higher Education, June 2005

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

A Space of Intersections:
Campus-based Women's Centers and the Third Space
between Public and Private Spheres

by

Emelyn A. dela Peña

Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership

University of California, San Diego, 2009
San Diego State University, 2009
California State University, San Marcos 2009

Professor Carolyn Huie-Hofstetter, Chair

The purpose of this study was to explore the cultural dimensions of the UC San Diego Women's Center and to understand how actual users engage in the space. Experience suggests that users of the Women's Center value the affective work of the organization, while university demands dictate the need to produce quantifiable

measures of success. Therefore, the Center was examined through the theoretical frameworks of public sphere, private sphere and third space to understand how private sphere activities intersect with and/or compete with public sphere actions.

A single exploratory case study was designed with four participants who engaged in computer-assisted journaling. Two focus groups were conducted with student interns and participants of a weekly discussion program and an assessment survey was administered to general users of the Women's Center. Data revealed the importance of safe space, community, resources and the physical setting within the private sphere domain. Specifically, access to resources and comfort in the physical setting contributed to feelings of safety and belonging for participants in the study. Within the public sphere realm, themes of social justice and dialogue emerged, while the hybrid nature of the Center revealed the intersection between the public and the private as experienced by the users. A third space framework was used to understand this interplay between public and private sphere work within campus-based Women's Centers, such as at the intersections of safe space and social justice.

In bringing together the elements of safety, belonging, and social justice, the UC San Diego Women's Center creates an environment that promotes the wellness of the community of activists who frequent the space, as well as the positive well-being of all its users. The Women's Center expands Davie's (2002) concept of a *delicate balance* between "binding wounds" and "changing the world," creating a space in which the act of healing wounds *facilitates* the work of changing the world. In this

way a new third space is created which rejects the dualism of the public/private divide and enacts innovative forms of feminism and activism.

Chapter I

Introduction and Rationale

Campus-based Women's Centers across the county have varied missions and objectives that reflect their institutional cultures and traditions. However, many of them share common characteristics, such as addressing safety, providing education, housing support services, and building an equitable campus community (Davie, 2002). More than 460 college and university Women's Centers in the United States offer support, information and referral resources, and education around gender and equity issues (Kasper, 2004b). Although the first campus-based Women's Center was established at the University of Minnesota in 1948, the vast majority were established in the 1970's as a response to issues of gender equity raised by students, staff, and faculty in institutions of higher education (Koikari & Hippensteele, 2000).

Most centers were established as an outgrowth of the women's movement, yet there is very little research or writings about their history, development, and scope. Despite the lack of empirical research about the work of campus-based Women's Centers, however, there are published guidelines and guidebooks to assist Women's Center practitioners. For example, according to the 2006 *Women Student Programs and Services Standards and Guidelines* published by the Council on the Advancement of Standards (CAS) in Higher Education, "Women's Centers are examining ways to broaden their purview by partnering with academic areas to conduct research, providing undergraduate and advanced classes, creating internship and practicum

opportunities for students, and supporting leadership opportunities” (Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education, 2006).

In a recent study of 75 Women’s Centers in the United States, many directors of college and university Women’s Centers expressed concerns about the climate of budget cuts, scarce resources and the growing sentiments that Women’s Centers are no longer needed or relevant to students’ lives (Kasper, 2004a). Additionally, according to a campus-wide survey conducted by the previous Director of the Women’s Center, much of the campus community is unfamiliar with the work of the UC San Diego Women’s Center (Loevinger, 2001, unpublished).

Such concerns have prompted many campus Women’s Centers to document the need for their resources and services as well as broaden their purview. Moreover, some Women’s Centers are reaching beyond student service-oriented activities to align their work more closely with the academic mission of their respective colleges and universities and expand the scope of their influence (Byrne, 2000). For example, the National Women’s Centers Training Project report *Increasing the Effectiveness of Women’s Programs on College Campuses* identified “affecting policy and decision-making on campuses” (Bengiveno, 2001, p.44) as an area of concern for college and university Women’s Centers. This suggests a need and an opportunity for Women’s Centers to organize and affect campus policies that have gendered implications.

While effectively required to more vigorously address stakeholders and affect university policy, experience suggests that participants of the Centers themselves value work such as providing a comfortable home environment and creating a sense of

community for the students, staff and faculty on campus. This is especially critical given the information found in the 2006 Council on the Advancement of Standards *Women Student Programs and Services Standards and Guidelines* which indicates the need to foster meaningful interpersonal relationships in all women student services and programs (Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education, 2006). The potential differences between stakeholders, university policy demands, and internal Center services in this time of scarce resources makes an examination of the UC San Diego Women's Center's work crucial. It is especially critical to examine the Women's Center using theoretical lenses that consider how key stakeholders utilize the space, participate in the activities and value larger policy activity. The following section examines some of the theoretical lenses that best inform current research on the role of campus-based Women's Centers.

Theoretical Frame: Public and Private Sphere Influences

The research regarding feminist leadership, feminist community organizing, and campus-based Women's Centers highlights the tension between public and private sphere issues within women's work. The relationships between larger university stakeholder participation and actual user services indicates a conflict between what is referred to as the spheres of *public* and *private* work as mediated by such Centers. The private sphere encompasses the domain of the family and home--what has traditionally been considered women's work--while the public sphere is considered the domain of government and politics—historically dominated by men (Daniels, 1987; Yuval-Davis, 1997; Wyatt, Katz & Kim, 2000). With the distinction between these being

duly noted, Ashcraft (2000) explained, “dominant discourse defines the public arena as the legitimate site of production and politics; the same discourse aligns emotion, intimacy, sexuality, reproduction, family and domestic issues with the private realm, the concern of women” (p. 354).

Stall and Stoecker (1998) extend their notion of the private sphere to include the neighborhood or small, local community. These researchers discuss a historical separation in American society between public work done mostly by men in the “formal economy and government” (p. 732) and private work performed in the home and local community primarily by women. Consequently, the construct of public/private sphere activity has been historically seen as describing not only differences in work locations, but gender differences as well (Yuval-Davis, 1997). Drawn from such theory and knowledge, the conception of women’s work, often seen as relegated to private sphere activity as opposed to professional and rational pursuits of men in public spheres, situates gender and associated public activity as a particularly masculine ideal.

Campus-based Women’s Centers strive to maintain a balance between private and public spheres—between what many consider domestic issues and the struggle for institutional change (Bengiveno, 2001). As Davie (2002) noted in her seminal work on campus-based Women’s Centers, the delicate balance of Women’s Center work is situated between “binding wounds” and “changing the world” (p. 7). Based in these historical distinctions, associated activities, theory and experiential knowledge, it is reasonable to assert that a campus-based Women’s Center serves as both a negotiated

space and a bridge of public and private sphere activity (Bengiveno, 2001). Therefore, examination of public and private sphere influence on the work of the Center represents a reasonable theoretical frame.

In the case of Women's Center functioning, the assertion itself is the expectation that within the Women's Center, the work is often seen as belonging in the private sphere, particularly in the area of caring labor and family issues. Based on the relative paucity of research concerning such Centers and as the Director of the UC San Diego Women's Center, I wondered about the extent to which this tension is perceived at UC San Diego, and if so what is the nature of it? How, for example, does a Women's Center negotiate its placements in the private realm within the public context of a university campus? In particular, how does a Women's Center manage the fine line between public and private sphere and provide its constituents a space that both heals and builds on feminist activism?

Not Public, Not Private, but a Third Sphere

A negotiated third space may be a useful framework for understanding this balance between public and private sphere work within campus-based Women's Centers. The concept of *third space* represents a space of hybridity, extended opportunities and expanded learning (Bhabha, 2004; Gutierrez, Baquedano-Lopez, and Tejada, 1999). The third space is a negotiated site of fluidity and resistance where new categories are created and reconstructed from the space that is betwixt and between (Boltagici, 2004). Specifically as it relates to women, English (2004) writes:

Third space, migratory, hybridity, liminality, and interstices are all terms that...have entered research methodologies as working the hyphens, allegorical

breaching, and troubling the categories; they reflect in some way the paradoxical and contradictory ways that woman's identity is too often coded. Women's identity is more helpfully understood as in flux, as a process of negotiating the spaces and the hyphens (p. 99).

Additionally, within an activity setting, three planes of analysis are simultaneously present and inseparable: personal, interpersonal, and community/institutional. An analysis of the hybridity of each dimension within the activity setting increases our understanding of the underlying tensions within the work (Engeström, Y. & Engeström, 2001). In this way, third space theory provides a useful tool to understand the negotiated space between "binding wounds" and "changing the world" occupied by campus-based Women's Centers (Davie, 2002, p. 7).

Purpose: A VIP Lens into the UC San Diego Women's Center

The UC San Diego Women's Center is one of three Campus Community Centers, which include the Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Resource Center and the Cross-Cultural Center. Although all three Centers share a common goal of building community on the UC San Diego campus, each Center has a unique mission, a separate physical site, separate staff of varying size, and different budgets. The mission of the Women's Center encompasses students, staff, faculty, and the greater San Diego community; however records indicate that approximately 85% of users who enter the physical space are students (UCSD Women's Center attendance records, 2005).

I proposed an exploratory study that examined, theoretically and empirically, the unique features and cultural dimensions of the UCSD Women's Center, and the ways in which the work of the Center may be situated within public and private sphere

domains. More specifically, in taking a public/private spherical perspective, using naturalistic methods, I hoped to identify the main areas of involvement at the Women's Center through the eyes of its participants. As such, the following research questions guided the study:

1. What are the major categories and dimensions through which users of the Women's Center participate? What are the unique cultural features of the Women's Center?
2. How do users participate at the Women's Center? In activities are they engaged?
3. In what ways does the work of providing support services and assistance to women (private sphere work) intersect with and/or compete with the work of influencing policies, and campus-decisions (public sphere work)? In what ways does the work represent a third and blended sphere?

Methods

Since the fundamental questions posed in the study were *what* and *how* questions, the exploratory case study approach was an appropriate method to answer the research questions. Specifically, the Women's Center as a bounded system created a single case for the overall study. Utilizing a case study approach allowed me to reveal the contextual conditions in which the Women's Center operates, define its status and examine the factors that contribute to its work.

Using a single case study design, data came from three sources—the researcher, users of the Center, and archives, such as founding documents, annual

reports and artifacts from a public art project. Data were collected through participant observation, participants' journaling as action researchers, focus groups, an assessment survey, and document review. Drawing upon three main data sources, I was able to triangulate the results of the evidence collected (Brewer & Hunter, 1989; Merriam, 1998; Yin, 2003). Code lists identified through the conceptual framework were developed to identify events of either public or private sphere nature prior to any data collection.

Like many exploratory investigations, the results of this study are preliminary (Yin, 2003). However, this study serves as a useful foundation for further empirical investigations of campus-based Women's Centers through public, private, and third sphere lenses. Furthermore, this is an examination of only one Women's Center at a public university. As an added consideration, because the study was conducted at the researcher's workplace, special attention was placed on my own perceptions and the possible effect to the environment, staff, and users of the Center, as well as any potential impact on the analysis and interpretation of the data.

Assumptions and Experiential Knowledge: A Historical Sketch of the Women's Center

The researcher is the second Director of the Women's Center at UC San Diego, which was established in October 1996. At that time the Center's first Director reported to the Provost of one of the six colleges at the University, within the Division of Student Affairs. Although its mission includes advocacy, service and support for students, staff, faculty and the San Diego community, most perceive the Women's Center as a student service organization, providing a physical space where female

students seek support. Seven of the nine University of California Women's Centers report to the department of Student Affairs, as do most Women's Centers across the country, reinforcing the idea that Women's Center work is about providing support and resources primarily for student services.

As the Director of the Center, observations of differential treatment among the three Campus Community Centers motivated an examination of the public and private sphere tensions within the work of the Center. This study represents a first attempt at exploring those areas of the UC San Diego Women's Center that are not easily quantified through surveys and other quantitative methods. It provides a rich narrative of the experiences of Center users and the work of the Center within the tension space between public and private sphere. Additionally, this study provides an added qualitative dimension to the descriptive data already collected by the Center.

Significance

With these considerations in mind, although the public and private sphere tension has been described by several researchers within the areas of campus-based Women's Centers, feminist leadership, and feminist organizing, little has been written about the possibility of Women's Center work within a third and blended sphere. I propose that the work of the Women's Center belongs within the tension space between public and private, creating a third space where elements of both personal and political intersect to create a dynamic community of feminist activism.

This research explored the ways in which a third and blended sphere may serve as space where users of the Women's Center learn strategies for combining service,

activism, and feminist leadership in advancing issues of gender equity and social justice. Additionally, the research was important due to the Women's Center's place and role within the campus community. The UC San Diego Women's Center reports to the office of the Chancellor, with direct supervision of the director by the Associate Chancellor and Chief Diversity Officer of the University. Its inclusion in the Chancellor's office gives it high visibility in the organizational structure. Additionally, the Women's Center is situated in an ideal location to be a site for the practice of feminist principles and provide feminist leadership guidance in affecting policy and decision-making on campus.

Finally, feminist organizations, including campus-based Women's Centers, may be integral to "understanding and perpetuating the development and spread of feminism as an instrument of personal and collective change" (Martin, 1990), bridging private and public spheres. Further, careful investigation of the specific ways Women's Centers extend the perceived private sphere into public view dispels the notion that women's work belongs strictly in the private sphere or that political activity is always in the public sphere.

Chapter II

Review of the Literature

This chapter seeks to clarify the role of college and university Women's Centers, outlining their scope of work and defining their target constituencies. The areas of feminist leadership and feminist community organizing will be explored as foundational elements of campus-based Women's Centers, highlighting a common theme which spans the three areas of the literature. Finally, the notion of third space will be explored as an alternative space from which to view women's work and activities of campus centers.

The literature indicates that over the years, Women's Centers have expanded their roles as active players within the university policy arena, developing and leveraging feminist leadership as a model for active deliberation and democratic decision-making throughout the university community. Feminist leadership has its roots in a post industrial leadership model as well as common themes with the areas of campus-based Women's Centers and feminist community organizing. These common themes suggest opportunities for campus and university Women's Centers to activate feminist leadership through a feminist community organizing model. Feminist organizing is explored as an alternative to traditional community organizing, highlighting ways in which college and university Women's Centers can utilize the model to create new ways for feminist activism, as it was this activism that advanced the establishment of such Centers during the early women's movement.

In the 1970's, at the height of the early women's liberation movement, many post-secondary institutions established an array of educational programs and student services intended to support rights of women and students of color. Among those initiatives was the creation of campus-based Women's Centers (Koikari & Hippensteele, 2000). These Centers vary from student-staffed to professionally-staffed (Bengiveno, 2001). Some have no institutional funding while others have budgets of several hundred thousand dollars (Davie, 2002). Their missions and scope vary and their structures are diverse. Organizational and leadership structures vary from Centers that have a director who makes all decisions to ones where there is no director, but are led by a group of people acting collectively.

Some are structured to serve primarily students. Others are charged with serving students, staff, faculty, and the off-campus community. What is common among them is that they serve as valuable resources for advocacy and service, working to transform their institutions for social change. More than 460 college and university Women's Centers in the United States offer support, information and referral resources, and education around gender and equity issues (Kasper, 2004b).

In a study of 75 Women's Centers in the United States, many directors of college and university Women's Centers expressed their concerns about the climate of budget cuts, scarce resources, and growing sentiments that Women's Centers are no longer needed or relevant to students' lives (Kasper, 2004a). These concerns have prompted many campus Women's Centers to document the need for their resources and services. In addition, some Women's Centers are reaching beyond student

services oriented activities to align their work more closely with the academic mission of their respective colleges and universities and expand the scope of their influence beyond student services (Byrne, 2000). Further, the National Women's Centers Training Project report *Increasing the Effectiveness of Women's Programs on College Campuses* identified "affecting policy and decision-making on campuses" (Bengiveno, 2001, p.44) as an area of concern for college and university Women's Centers. This shift to expand the scope of campus-based Women's Centers from primarily student services to policy and decision-making indicates an effort to include both private and public sphere activities within such such centers.

Exploring the Public and Private Sphere

The dearth of available research specifically about campus-based Women's Centers prompted an expanded search into the area of feminist leadership and feminist community organizing. Feminist leadership and feminist community organizing serve as possible antecedents to the formal establishment of institutionally-funded campus-based Women's Centers. Today they remain integral as elements of both Women's Centers and women student programs and services in general. The 2006 *Council for the Advancement of Standards Women Student Programs and Services* (WSPS) *Standards and Guidelines* lists the following guidelines as part of any WSPS program:

1. WSPS should provide models of non-hierarchical and collaborative leadership
2. WSPS should provide social activism opportunities that allow for the integration of theory with practice.

Little has been written about campus-based Women's Centers. However an examination of the literature which includes feminist leadership and feminist community organizing reveals related themes among these areas: the tension between the public and private sphere.

Across these three areas of the literature Women's Center staff, women, leaders, and organizers expressed their struggle to balance private-often considered domestic-issues and public—often considered political—issues. The review of the literature, therefore, begins with an exploration of the meanings of public and private sphere work within a broader context of feminist economics and caring labor. In order to highlight the related themes within each area, the review then goes on to discuss the specific public and private sphere tensions within Women's Center work, feminist leadership, and feminist community organizing.

Public and Private Sphere

Generally, the private sphere encompasses the domain of the family and home, while the public sphere is considered the domain of government and politics (Daniels 1987; Yuval-Davis, 1997; Wyatt, Katz & Kim, 2000). Similarly, Ashcraft (2000) explained, “dominant discourse defines the public arena as the legitimate site of production and politics; the same discourse aligns emotion, intimacy, sexuality, reproduction, family and domestic issues with the private realm, the concern of women” (p. 354). In the middle nineteenth century, women's activities were confined to the domestic private sphere to protect them from what was considered a corrupted public sphere. Consequently, these two dimensions have often been used to describe

not only differences in work locations, but gender differences as well (Yuval-Davis, 1997).

Ashcraft (2000) warned against the gendered consequences of strictly separating the public and private sphere as this dichotomy may result in gender discrimination. In an ethnographic study of a feminist organization's attempt to personalize professional relationships, the researcher described the public sphere as professional and rational. In contrast, the private sphere was described as personal and emotional. This definition of women's work (private sphere) as oppositional to professional and rational privileges a particularly masculine ideal.

Feminist Economics

"Feminists have long seen 'the economy' as a gendered site" (Cameron & Gibson-Graham, 2003, p. 145). In the nineteenth century, women were excluded from paid economic activity. In the twentieth century, feminist scholars began to call attention to the exclusion of women's unpaid activities and so-called feminized activities from recognition in the formal economy (Cameron & Gibson-Graham, 2003; Himmelweit, 1995). Feminist scholars have pointed out the limitations of mainstream economics, with its emphasis on competition and production, in incorporating the complexities of the economy as it relates to women's caring labor and domestic activities (Donath, 2000; Folbre & Nelson, 2000; Woolley, 1993).

Traditionally, the public sphere of competitive markets and paid labor has been the realm of men, while the private sphere of family and social relationships has been the realm of women (Folbre & Nelson, 2000; Daniels, 1987). In the 1960's, feminist

economists attempted to incorporate women's domestic labor into the analysis of traditional economics as a form of work just as valuable as paid work (Himmelweit, 1995). In addition, Donath (2000) points out that not only unpaid domestic labor is part of the alternative economy as healthcare and educational institutions are important non-household sites of the other economy (p. 117).

Feminist economics insists that alternative economic models are equally as important as traditional models based on competitive markets and production. Some scholars have described this alternative economy by contrasting paid labor with unpaid labor (Folbre & Nelson, 2000; Daniels, 1987). Others describe non-capitalist forms of economy such as non-profit businesses, economics of generosity, and enterprises driven by social ethic (Cameron & Gibson-Graham, 2003). Donath (2000) describes this alternative as the "other economy," which is concerned with the direct production and maintenance of human beings (p. 116). Whatever it is called by different scholars, this alternative economy is characterized by gifts, cooperative behavior, and the absence of traditional production within the competitive market.

Feminist economics is different from what is considered traditional because it asks different questions than mainstream economics. Specifically, it seeks to answer feminist questions, with specific interest in how the economy affects women and vice versa (Donath, 2000). Within this field of study, scholars contend that women continue to occupy a different position in the economy than men (Woolley, 1993; Donath, 2000; Badgett & Folbre, 1999).

While men have stereotypically been associated with autonomy and individual accomplishment, women have traditionally been identified

primarily through physical and social connections, as bearers of children, cooks, wives, and so on. Neglecting the ‘connected’ aspects of human life—including physical need, responsibility for others, and altruism—is a form of gender bias, in that aspect of human life traditionally associated with femininity are being irrationally downplayed (Badgett & Folbre, 1999, p. 123).

Feminist economists contend that the traditional assignment of economic duties based on sex oppress women and should be challenged (Woolley, 1993).

Caring Labor

In many societies, including the United States, the care of others has been associated with being female (Badgett & Folbre, 1999; Folbre & Nelson, 2000). Folbre (1995) defines caring labor as “labor undertaken out of affection or sense of responsibility for other people, with no expectation of immediate pecuniary reward” (p. 75). Employees in these types of professions are typically paid less and women are disproportionately over-represented in these jobs.

Several feminist scholars have proposed that women’s work is undervalued, and women in particular are penalized, by close association to work that involves care, comforting, and nurturing (Daniels, 1987; Folbre, 1995). Consequently, social norms, traditions, and economic models that associate being female with care of others contributes to women’s economic disadvantage and oppression. As such, caring labor has traditionally been ascribed to the private sphere, which has traditionally been less valued than public sphere work (Cameron & Gibson-Graham, 2003; Daniels, 1987; Marshall & Anderson, 1994; Badgett & Folbre, 1999).

It is important to point out, however, that women of color and poor women have often been excluded from the protected family domain (Naples, 1991; Glenn,

1985). Rather, women of color and low-income women have been considered laborers, often permeating the boundaries of public and private spheres through extended networks of family and community. In these ways, women of color and poor women have provided examples of ways to bridge these two seemingly disparate dimensions. In addition, feminist organizations, such as campus-based Women's Centers, may be integral to "understanding and perpetuating the development and spread of feminism as an instrument of personal and collective change" (Martin, 1990), bridging private and public spheres through collective organizing around traditionally private issues.

College and University Women's Centers

Recent research and scholarship on campus-based Women's Centers indicates support services and the planning of programs and events continue to constitute the primary work of many Centers (Bengiveno, 2001; Byrne, 2000; Davie, 2002; Kasper, 2004a). In fact, several Centers have also created an even narrower role, limiting their activities to violence against women related programs and resources (Kasper, 2004b; Koikari & Hippensteele, 2000). In all likelihood, these services were the catalyst for the establishment of such Centers, as students involved in the women's movement demanded support for their rights and concerns.

While the service and violence prevention work continue to serve an important function on many college and university campuses, Bengiveno (2001) argues that Women's Center work should not be defined entirely by programs, events, and student services. This researcher underscores the problematic tension between the perceptions

of Women's Center as agent of social change and Women's Center as campus service resource. Similarly, Davie (2002) addresses the delicate balance of Women's Center work between "binding wounds" and "changing the world" (p. 7), that is, to provide care and service to their constituents, and affect campus policy, climate, and leadership on a much broader scale.

Thus, Women's Centers strive to maintain a balance between private and public spheres—between what many consider domestic issues (*binding wounds*) and the struggle for institutional change (*changing the world*) (Bengiveno, 2001, Davie, 2002). As revealed in the literature, this balancing act is also present for women leaders and in the different styles of community organizing (Clark, 1999; Stall & Stoecker, 1998).

In this regard, Sanders-Lawson, Smith-Campbell, and Benham (2006) argue that the traditional view of feminism as a movement of caring and concern serves only to further marginalize women economically, socially, and politically. This is particularly true for women of color. These scholars urge researchers to "move beyond valorizing the niceties of feminine values to a deeper embrace of feminism that attends to the issues of social relations and social justice" (Sanders-Lawson, Smith-Campbell, & Benham, 2006, p. 34). For campus-based Women's Centers, this tension between service and activism remains, stemming from Women's Centers' origins as service agencies. Centers continually negotiate these two roles, particularly if they receive student funds (Bengiveno, 2001).

Transformational and Feminist Leadership

Feminist leadership principles may provide an effective theoretical foundation for mobilization of the campus community, with campus-based Women's Centers cultivating such leadership on behalf of the community at large. Davie (2002) states passionately:

Women's Centers have the capacity to open the doors of institutions of higher education, which took many years to open to women at all, in new ways...The goal is no less than full recognition of the potential of all women and men in colleges and universities and a climate in which that potential can flourish—for learning, for living, for leadership (p. 15).

The industrial model of leadership has patriarchal roots grounded in a traditional hierarchical structure (Rost, 1993; Kezar, 2000; Yoder, 2001). Kezar (2000) suggests that early leadership research may share these particularly masculine characteristics due to a shared research base consisting primarily of all male and mostly white research samples. Current scholarship in management and leadership indicates a shift from these traditional paradigms toward a more collaborative and collegial style of leadership, embracing the notions of shared leadership, value-based leadership, collaboration and community building (Bass, 1999; Eagly, 2005/6; Rost, 1993; Kezar, 2000). Characteristics once considered as particularly feminine attributes emerge as viable leadership characteristics, creating new opportunities for women in leadership roles (Eagly, 2005/6).

This post-industrial model of leadership serves as a useful foundation for a feminist leadership model. In addition, transformational leadership is a useful framework for Women's Center work and the pursuit of feminist leadership principles,

even within a bureaucratic structure. An analysis of recent scholarship on post-industrial leadership reveals four dominant themes: 1) leadership is value-based; 2) leadership is congruent; 3) leadership is relationship-based; and 4) leadership is about community building.

Leadership is value-based.

Leaders conscious of their values have a base from which to make leadership decisions (Drucker, 1999). In this regard, Schwahn and Spady (1998) state that “Total Leaders intentionally create their value base” (p. 30) in order to have a foundation from which to operate their moral compass. Once values are determined, leaders must then act with congruence.

Leadership is congruent.

Leaders are congruent with both their own personal values as well as with the values and missions of their organizations. “Congruence refers to thinking, feeling, and behaving with consistency, genuineness, authenticity, and honesty toward others. Congruent persons are those whose actions are consistent with their mostly deeply-held beliefs and convictions” (Astin et al., 1996, p. 22). Another version of this can be seen in the literature on authentic leadership (Eagly, 2005/6). In addition to congruence with personal beliefs and values, Eagly (2005/6) contends that “authentic leaders advocate goals that are grounded in shared values, and they intend that their actions promote goals that benefit the larger community” (p. 460).

Leadership is relationship-based.

Drucker (1999) asserts leaders are responsible for cultivating a leadership relationship. Similarly, according to *A Social Change Model of Leadership Development* (1996), “the process of leadership cannot be described simply in terms of the behavior of an individual; rather, leadership involves collaborative relationships that lead to collective action grounded in the shared values of people who work together to effect positive change” (p.16) . Said in another way, leadership does not happen in isolation, but instead is exercised through interpersonal relationships within a social group (Reicher, Haslam & Hopkins, 2005; Rost 1993).

Leadership is about community building.

According to Rost (1993), usually more than one follower and more than one leader exist within a leadership relationship. Because it takes more than two people to create a leadership relationship, this idea of relationship building is strongly connected to the idea of building community. “We must learn to think of leadership as a ‘communal relationship,’ as a ‘community of believers’” (Rost, 1993, p. 111).

While some scholars refer to this leadership paradigm shift as a post-industrial model of leadership (Rost, 1993; Schwahn & Spady, 1998), these principles clearly have their roots in transformational leadership models. These models share feminist principles of egalitarianism, collaboration, empowerment, and service to others (Ashcraft, 2000; Martin, 1999). Thus, this paradigm shift toward a more democratic style of leadership is consistent with the values of feminism (Eagly & Johnson, 1992; Eagly, 2005/6; Marshall & Oliva, 2006; Reicher, Haslam, & Hopkins, 2005/6; Rost,

1993; Yoder, 2001). These emerging concepts about leadership embrace the notion of leadership that is value-based, transformational, collaborative, and community building.

A corresponding trend in leadership literature upholds the ideal of follower agency. Put simply, followers have as much voice in the leadership relationship as leaders. Transformational leadership models recognize the collective agency of leaders and followers and the mutual influence between them (Reicher et al., 2005/6; Rost, 1993). These models emphasize relationships over hierarchy and community over the individual leader (Astin, Astin, & Higher Education Research Institute (Los Angeles, CA), 1996; Reicher et al., 2005/6; Rost, 1993). In doing so, transformational leadership very closely aligns with social justice and feminist leadership principles.

Although there is no single unifying definition of feminism (Ashcraft, 2000; Martin 1990), liberal feminist scholars generally agree that “feminist practice confronts the gendered nature of ‘traditional,’ bureaucratic organization with alternative, gender-conscious patterns and practices that enact empowerment ideology” (Ashcraft, 2000, p. 351). In addition, feminism is, at the very least, a multi-dimensional political orientation that recognizes that women as a group are oppressed and discriminated against (Martin, 1990). In contrast, hooks (2000) contends that feminism is about social justice and ending sexist oppression. Ending oppression cannot be accomplished merely by ending sexism and discrimination against women.

Much like transformational leadership models challenge pre-industrial leadership behaviors, feminism challenges traditional practices based on hierarchy and

patriarchy (Hanrahan, 2005). Consistent with the theme that post-industrial leadership is relationship-based and serves the purpose of the greater good, feminist values also embrace the notion of service as a social relationship (Martin, 1990). Furthermore, feminism is transformational because it envisions a society that does not exist and realizes that social change is necessary for that vision to become reality (Martin, 1990). In this way, feminist leadership is a form of transformational leadership that is based on feminist ideology, values, and goals. These may include cooperation, empowerment, and self-esteem (Martin, 1990).

Although feminism is partly an anti-authoritarian movement (Hanrahan & Antony, 2005, p. 60), authority is not inherently anti-feminist (Martin, 1990). This is consistent with the research on transformational leadership that indicates leadership is not inherently hierarchical (Bass, 1999; Rost, 1993; Yoder, 2001). Just as transformational leadership can effect positive change, positional power and influence have the capacity to be transformed into social change (Bengiveno, 2001; Eagly, 2005/6). Consider the work of scholars who suggest that authority can be used to achieve social good, distinguishing power *over* from power *with* (Hanrahan & Antony, 2005; Martin, 1990; Rost, 1993).

Scholarship in feminist leadership suggests that women lead in a more interpersonal, relational, and collaborative style (Eagly, 2005/6; Gittel, Ortega-Bustamante & Steffy, 2000; Kezar, 2000). Similarly, in a meta-analysis of gender and leadership style, Eagly and Johnson (1990) concluded that “women’s leadership styles emphasize both interpersonal relations and task accomplishment to a slightly greater

extent than men's style" (p. 247). Therefore, women may find transformational leadership models particularly appealing. On the one hand, transformational leadership accepts particular behaviors that are consistent with traditional female gender roles of care and consideration. On the other hand, transformational leadership models emphasize the leader-follower relationship and follower empowerment, thus aligning more closely with feminist beliefs and values (Yoder, 2001). In another point of view, Bass (1999) proposes that sexism itself may be a plausible explanation for why women tend to be more transformational in their leadership styles. In other words, women may have to be better (i.e. transformational) leaders than their male counterparts to achieve the same levels of success. Bass warns, however, that more research needs to examine what happens when women in leadership positions occupy the majority in their field.

The research on both community organizing and women's leadership indicates that women leaders tend to stay in and prefer middle management positions (Clark, 1999; Eagly, 2005/6; Eagly & Johnson, 1990; Stall & Stoecker, 1998). Some suggest women remain in middle management positions due to discrimination and artificial glass ceilings (Bass, 1999). Others suggest these choices signal a discomfort with a more authoritative leadership style traditionally employed in high level executive positions (Clark, 1999; Eagly, 2005/6; Stall & Stoecker, 1998). Eagly (2005/6) contends that there is an incongruity between traditional masculine leadership roles and the female gender role. In addition, the traditional incongruity between hierarchy and relationship building stands in direct opposition to a transformational leadership

principle of congruence (Astin et al., 1996; Buckingham & Clifton, 2001; Drucker, 1999; Eagly, 2005/6). Ashcraft (2000) proposes that “because women—and the private obligations and labors of love ascribed to them—often contrast [the public, non-emotional] profile, they appear apart from legitimate production, ill-suited for valued positions” (p. 354). In this regard, women leaders struggle to balance their personal lives and professional work (Clark, 1999). This tension is consistent with the research that indicates a need to balance the private and public spheres in both campus-based Women’s Centers and feminist community organizing.

Despite the paradigm shift to a more feminist model of leadership, women leaders continue to face significant challenges in the workplace and in our campus communities (Bengiveno, 2001; Clark, 1999; Martell & Avitabile, 1998). Coupled with negative attitudes about feminism and the reluctance on the part of many women leaders to call themselves feminists (Bengiveno, 2001; Clark, 1999; Gittell, Ortega-Bustamante, & Steffy, 2000), these obstacles may go unchallenged. Clark (1999) argues that “women leaders who have limited gender awareness will present no challenge to the status quo within their organizations” (p. 70). Campus-based Women’s Centers may capitalize on this opportunity to educate and organize women leaders around feminist leadership principles. They may also connect the issue of feminist leadership to broader issues of equity, activism, and feminism.

Feminist Community Organizing

Campus-based Women’s Centers face growing student apathy and the notion that feminism is no longer necessary and relevant in the lives of today’s students

(Kasper, 2004a). Additionally, campus-based Women's Centers must contend with some students' negative attitudes toward feminism (Kasper, 2004b, p. 197). Burke and Black (1997) suggest that this backlash against feminism may be due in part to the idea that men are increasingly disadvantaged by the women's movement. For example, a case study on feminist organizing on college campuses by Martell and Avitabile (1998) revealed a backlash against the rape crisis movement that questioned whether acquaintance rape even existed. These researchers described a backlash in which both feminist and anti-feminist writers attacked feminism and feminist scholarship for creating an illusion of women's victimization (Martell & Avitabile, 1998). According to Martell and Avitabile, these struggles indicated a need to understand the potential role of campus-based Women's Centers in community organizing on college and university campuses. Moreover, campus community organizing served as an opportunity to educate students, staff, and faculty about the breadth and relevance of feminist issues.

“The purpose of community organizing is to create social change by organizing individuals around one or many issues” (Martell & Avitabile, 1998, p. 394). This purpose supports a feminist leadership model's purpose to promote larger social goods, intended real change, and social justice (Hanrahan & Antony, 2005; Marshall & Oliva, 2006; Rost, 1993). However, within social justice movements the community organizing aspect has often been ignored. Perhaps because building relationships and caring for activist needs is often done by women behind the scenes,

like women's work in social movements, community organizing is considered "invisible labor" (Stall & Stoecker, 1998 p. 731).

A widely recognized community organizing model is the *Alinsky model* (Martell & Avitabile, 1998; Stall & Stoecker, 1998). According to this model, the purpose of community organizing is to gain power for disenfranchised groups (Martell & Avitabile, 1998; Stall & Stoecker, 1998). The Alinsky model makes use of professional organizers and cultivates indigenous leaders within the community. In terms of leadership development, the Alinsky model makes distinctions between public sphere leaders—the organizers who are often paid professionals from outside the community—and the private sphere community leaders. In addition, this model employs a hierarchical and confrontational organizing style (Martell & Avitabile, 1998; Stall & Stoecker, 1998).

Stall and Stoecker (1998) describe the Alinsky model as ones that "begin with 'community organizing'—the public sphere battles between the haves and have-nots" (p. 733). In contrast, these scholars describe the women-centered model as one that "begins with 'organizing community'—building expanded private sphere relationships and empowering individuals through these relationships" (Stall & Stoecker, 1998 p. 733). This tension between public and private spheres is a familiar one, discussed later with both Women's Center work and struggles of women leaders. Similarly, within community organizing circles, more importance is placed on what is considered public sphere work.

Feminist, or women-centered, organizing has emerged in recent works on community organizing as both an alternative and complement to the more traditional and patriarchal Alinsky model. The feminist model is based on the principles of “organizing relationships to build community” (Stall & Stoecker, 1998, p. 729), and “supporting and encouraging the group process” (Martell & Avitabile, 1998, p. 402). As with a feminist leadership model, feminist organizing emphasizes group support, unity, and interpersonal relationships. In addition, rather than an individual leader acting as spokesperson for the community group, all members’ leadership capabilities are cultivated. The feminist model often employs women of the community as organizers, creating less separation between organizers and community leaders. In women-centered organizing, everyone has the capacity to be mentored into leadership roles (Stall & Stoecker, 1998).

In a cross-sectional, observational study of 150 women leaders of community development organizations, Gittel, Ortega-Bustamante, and Steffy (2000) found that “in terms of leadership...women are deeply committed, community-based leaders who foster community participation and use a collaborative approach to create social change” (p. 125). Most of these women did not identify as feminist although they strongly advocated for the rights of women and girls. These women-led organizations create new models of community activism, as feminist leaders are creating new models of leadership.

Within more patriarchal organizing models, the role of the private sphere is to support the organizers in the public sphere work. This is not surprising given that early organizing models were created in the 1930's before the height of the Women's Liberation Movement in the late 1960's and early 1970's. In contrast, the feminist model of community organizing, while not as well-known or documented, boasts a long history of success in bringing private sphere issues into public view—including women's health, violence against women, dating practices, and work and family issues (Gittell, et al., 2000; Martell & Avitabile, 1998). These successes may not be as well-known because work in what is considered the private sphere is not well-defined nor as valued (Daniels, 1987; Marshall & Anderson, 1994).

As a final consideration, in a women-centered model of community organizing, the organizing process “begins by creating a safe and nurturing space where women can identify and discuss issues affecting the private sphere” (Stall & Stoecker, 1998, p. 746). Coincidentally, many campus-based Women's Centers were established with this objective in mind as well. Given these common roots, campus-based Women's Centers may find it advantageous to utilize feminist community organizing strategies to bridge the public and private spheres.

The Possibility of a Third Space: The Community Sphere

Stall and Stoecker (1998) extend their discussion of the private sphere to include the neighborhood or small, local community. These researchers discuss a historical separation in American society between public work done mostly by men in the “formal economy and government” (p. 732) and private work performed in the

home and local community primarily by women. Similarly, Sperling, Ferree, and Risman (2001) contend that, just as housework is often not recognized as work, community organizing is rarely seen as politics “because it occurs outside of formal, male-dominated economic and political institutions” (p. 1180).

Stewart, Settles, and Winter (1998), on the other hand, argue that through the involvement of women in social movements, scholars came to recognize that the public and private spheres are neither fully separate nor distinguished by the concept of the political. In their focus on improving family, neighborhoods and community, women made the connections between public and private, making the personal political, bridging seemingly separate spheres and bringing to the world stage issues affecting women collectively. In addition, Milroy and Wismer (1994) identify community work outside of *both* the public and private sphere, proposing a new conceptual framework of a third sphere beyond the binary theory.

This negotiated hyphen space may be a useful framework for understanding community work. Although Stall and Stoecker (1998) extend their notions of private sphere into the neighborhood and community, in contrast, Martin (2002) describes community events as part of a neighborhood public sphere. By focusing on community, the dichotomy between the spheres is blurred whereby the public is private and vice versa. In Martin’s research, community organizing represents a mix of “Alinsky-style demands to city officials and ‘women-centered’ programs to build interpersonal support networks” (p. 347), thereby creating a blended space.

“As many scholars have pointed out...[the] division of public and private falsely separates gender, home, work, and community into individualized units rather than seeing them as integrated webs of social relations” (Martin, 2002, p. 333). Given this debate about the nature of public and private sphere work, *third space* theory can be used to challenge the idea of a rigid division between spheres. Women’s Centers can both use and challenge gendered forms of activism within campus-based centers, through feminist leadership and community organizing, to integrate public and private into a third and hybrid space.

Bhabha (1994) uses third space theory within cultural studies to address the notion of identity, describing a space where identity is negotiated, constructed, and reconstructed to make it our own. He argues that the boundary region between two spaces is often a hybrid region. The “in-between” space creates a third space that engages a changing combination of the characteristics found in each border region where new cultural forms emerge. Bhabha argues that by exploring the third space, “we may elude the politics of polarity and emerge as the other of our selves” (p. 39).

The notion of bridging borderlands is a familiar one within feminist literature and research. For example, Robnett (1996) identifies a distinct form of grassroots leadership employed by women who were prevented from holding formal leadership positions within the Black church during the civil rights movement. She calls these women leaders “bridge leaders” who worked behind the scenes with no formal title but who played key roles in their organizations. It was this exclusion from formal leadership positions that led women in the civil rights movement to make use of

leadership primarily at the grassroots and community level, bridging public and private spheres by including family and neighborhood issues within their activism.

Similarly, in *Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center*, hooks (1984) describes a marginal space occupied by Black women which she calls a “special vantage point,” as a space to criticize dominant culture and create a counter hegemony. According to English (2004), “like marginal space, a third space can be central in itself and can be a strategic vantage point for women. Yet, the nomenclature of third space avoids the denotation of marginal as peripheral” (p. 102), thus avoiding the relegation of private sphere work as less valued than public sphere work. This third space would be a place that is neither margin nor center, but a new and negotiated space of resistance.

Anzaldua (1987) discusses the creation of a *cultura mestiza*, a new culture of border consciousness, as a necessary prelude to political change. In *Borderlands*, Anzaldua challenges the binary dualisms of dominant racial discourse, creating a third space border region. In describing the tension of this hybrid space, she writes:

Alienated from her mother culture, “alien” in the dominant culture, the woman of color does not feel safe within the inner life of her Self. Petrified, she can’t respond, her face caught between *los intersticios*, the spaces between the different worlds she inhabits (p. 20).

Belonging nowhere, Anzaldua constructs a borderland “Third Country” stating that she “will have to stand and claim [her] space, making a new culture” (p.22), thus creating the possibility of a new *mestiza consciousness* (p. 99). Literally translated, a *mestiza* is a woman of mixed racial ancestry.

Although third space first gained prominence in the area of cultural studies, it has clearly become highly influential in other areas of research and scholarship.

Within post-colonial theory, for example, Bolatagici (2004) uses third space theory to explore multi-racial identity as a space of cultural hybridity which “undermines unitary, fixed race categories and transgresses racial boundaries” (p. 82). In her research on Drama Education, Greenwood (2001) uses the idea of third space to investigate how drama and theater are used to explore the emerging intercultural space within the interactions of Moari and Pakeha cultures in New Zealand. She writes:

When two cultures meet, and the interface between them grows, a new ‘space’ emerges. It could be one that is a ‘melting pot’ that homogenizes the cultures, or it could be a ‘third space’ that co-exists with both cultures that themselves, to a lesser or greater extent, remain intact. (p. 193).

English (2005) utilizes the concept in international adult education to describe third space practitioners who challenge “the existing boundaries of international adult education work and, in so doing, resist polarization, binaries, and labels” (p. 87).

These practitioners negotiate their fluid and shifting identities within a hybrid location between being local and global workers, colonizers and co-workers, and religious and iconoclastic.

The concept of third space represents a space of hybridity, extended opportunities and expanded learning (Bhabha, 1994; Gutierrez, Baquedano-Lopez, and Tejada, 1999). It is a negotiated site of fluidity and resistance where new categories are created and reconstructed from the space that is betwixt and between (Bolatagici, 2004). Sakamoto (1996) elaborates on Bhabha’s notion of third space stating, “A borderline culture of hybridity is a powerful and creative third space through which newness enters the world, subverting the authority of the dominant discourse” (p.

116). Additionally, English (2004) utilizes third space theory to understand the ways in which women's identities constantly negotiate hybrid spaces.

Todd (1997) describes third space as “a mucous space, a shared space, where each is involved in an exchange with the other” (p. 251, in English 2004). Todd suggests the third space is not just an in-between space but one where there is continuous intermingling and flowing back and forth between two spaces. Rather than separate spheres, a third space is created that embraces both sides. This conceptualization supports Sakamoto's understanding of the hybrid space as one in which there is difference and tension without assuming hierarchy of either sphere (Sakamoto, 1996 p. 115). Her feminist analysis of third space as a bridging space may be especially useful as an aid to understanding Women's Center work. It may be in this third space where Women's Center work belongs. Within Center work, third space constitutes the space where the public and private sphere come together to create a new and blended sphere, essentially integrating these spheres in the modern work of campus-based Women's Centers.

Conclusion: Women's Centers as Third Space

In their transformation a more service oriented focus to one grounded in feminism and social justice, Women's Centers organize campus women and men in ways that transform traditional hierarchical notions of leadership. They do so in ways that are so embedded in the culture of Women's Centers they may often go unnoticed. For example, Women's Centers' emphasis on building bridges and collaborations between often disparate groups fosters the idea that leadership is about the capacity to

be in community with others, rather than being in “front of the crowd” (Davie, 2002, p. 449). Feminist leadership models based on the principles of shared values, collaboration, and community support this Women’s Center culture of bridge building and transformational feminism. In these ways, Women’s Centers are instrumental in producing opportunities to organize campus communities around issues of social justice, creating new ways of activism grounded in feminist principles.

Similarly, feminist organizing principles are compatible with Women’s Centers’ emphasis on community-building and collaboration. The women-centered organizing model places great importance on relationship-building, cultivating leadership within the community and working in informal structures. Like Women’s Centers work, feminist community organizing develops new approaches to activism that supports transformational models of leadership. In addition, as with Women’s Center work and the challenges to women as leaders, feminist community organizing struggles against the importance placed on public sphere work (organizing for political power and visibility) and the invisibility of private sphere work (building community and relationships).

Marshall and Anderson (1994) indicate that issues of difference in status based on the division of public and private sphere work have been heavily theorized within disciplines such as economics and politics. However, the issues of public and private sphere gender dynamics have not been explored within the areas of educational policy. In addition, research exploring the *tension space* between public and private sphere as a possible third space has not been examined within Women’s Center work. Most

research on campus-based Women's Centers is descriptive case studies of funding models, administrations, and programmatic elements. It may be important to engage in a more in-depth exploration of the types of work that is accomplished at Women's Centers on college and university campuses. Furthermore, careful investigation of the specific ways Women's Centers extend private sphere issues into public view may reveal strategies for combining service, activism, and feminist leadership in advancing issues of gender and equity as primary concerns of the entire campus community.

As new leadership models have grown and transformed in the post-industrial age, Women's Centers, too, will grow and transform:

They will continue to lead, to connect, to find new language and vision. Transformation of the individual and the institution, education that combines the academic and the activist, leadership that is rooted in collaboration—these core aspects of Women's Centers will remain important as we move forward in the twenty-first century. (Davie, 2002, p. 457).

Chapter III

Research Methods

The review of the literature revealed a lack of empirical studies about campus-based Women's Centers. Of the studies conducted to date, most have been descriptive case studies about administrative structure, funding, and programmatic elements. Although many authors have discussed the tension between the caring labor and political activity within Women's Centers' work, no empirical studies have been conducted which address this central phenomenon. This study adds to the general body of knowledge about campus-based Women's Centers through an exploratory case study of one Women's Center at a public, Tier I Research University. In particular, this study explored the public and private sphere phenomenon as it relates to Women's Center work and the possibility of a third and blended sphere, heretofore unexamined within campus-based Women's Centers.

This study attempted to understand the fundamental work of the Women's Center at the University of California, San Diego and explore the tension between the previously mentioned "binding wounds" and "changing the world" (Davie, 2002, p. 7). The research questions addressed were:

1. What are the major dimensions through which users of the Women's Center participate? What are the unique cultural features of the Women's Center?
2. How do users participate at the Women's Center? In what activities are they engaged?

3. In what ways does the work of providing support services and assistance to women (private sphere work) intersect with and/or compete with the work of influencing policies, and campus-decisions (public sphere work)? In what ways does the work represent a third and blended sphere?

This chapter describes the methods that were employed to address the above research questions. Beginning with a description of the researcher's epistemological perspective, this section then goes on to discuss issues of power and privilege as they pertain to both method and unit of analysis. This is followed by a description of the research design, data collection methods, and data analysis techniques.

Epistemology

Given the historical roots of campus-based Women's Centers in feminist leadership and community organizing, it was important to me that I follow a feminist approach in designing the research methodology. Harding (1987) suggests three main feminist epistemologies in social science research: empiricism, standpoint theory, and postmodernism. This study incorporated all three epistemological viewpoints, although the research design stems from a postmodern lens. First, this research study tested propositions against empirical data through an exploratory case study. Secondly, the standpoints of both the insider within the Women's Center and the researcher were considered in the construction of knowledge. Lastly, the research design took into consideration the connection between knowledge and power by involving research participants in the construction of knowledge.

Power is ascribed to those who dictate what counts as truth (Foucault, 1980). The purpose of postmodern research is to resist dominant conceptualizations of knowledge that privilege some and oppress others (Fine, 1992), engaging both the researcher and the collaborative participants in "an insurrection of subjugated knowledges" (Foucault, 1980, p. 81). The research design in this study employed a postmodern perspective of knowledge primarily in its use of a cooperative inquiry and collaborative approach with the participants (Reason, 1999).

In addition to feminist epistemology, feminist scholars generally agree that social science research is embedded in a sociocultural context (Gergen, 1988). As such, feminist theory and cultural studies provide theoretical perspectives from which to understand the role of research in resisting the covert ways power is exercised (Marshall & Anderson, 1994). Cultural studies provide an interdisciplinary approach integrating many tenets of feminism and postmodernism. In addition, incorporating these two theories expands traditional notions of public and private sphere—the main phenomenon of interest to this study.

Research Design

Research questions were investigated through a qualitative research design utilizing a single exploratory case study, with the UC San Diego Women's Center as the unit of analysis. A case study is an in-depth, empirical investigation of a contemporary phenomenon within a bounded case (Creswell, 2005; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Yin, 2003). Yin identified specific types of case studies, including Exploratory, Explanatory, and Descriptive and described three conditions for the

design of case studies: 1) the type of research question posed, 2) the extent of control an investigator has over actual behavioral events, and 3) the degree of focus on contemporary events.

For this particular study, there were several *what* and *how* questions I proposed. In addition, I had no control over the behavioral events which happen at the Women's Center. Furthermore, events studied were contemporary, although historic information was used to help inform the study. All these reasons justified an exploratory case study design. In this case, the investigation of the public and private sphere domains constituted a contemporary phenomenon described by researchers and scholars in the areas of campus-based Women's Centers, feminist leadership and feminist organizing.

Stake (1995) also presented additional types of case studies including Intrinsic (when the researcher has an interest in the case) and Instrumental (when the case is used to understand more than what is obvious to the observer). As Director of the UCSD Women's Center, I certainly had both a personal and professional interest in the case. Utilizing a case study approach allowed for a holistic, in-depth investigation of a phenomenon and environment not well understood by most people outside the Women's Center community. Furthermore, single case studies may be used to confirm or challenge a theory or to represent a unique or extreme case (Yin, 2003). Specifically, the proposition that Women's Center work may belong to a third sphere that is neither strictly personal nor political in nature was explored and tested through an empirical investigation.

Research Context: UCSD Women's Center as a Bounded Case

The UC San Diego Women's Center is one of three Campus Community Centers, which include the Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender (LGBT) Resource Center and the Cross-Cultural Center. All three Centers share a common goal of building community on the UC San Diego campus, yet each Center has a unique mission, a separate physical site, separate staff of varying size, and different budgets.

The Women's Center, established in 1996, was the second of the Campus Community Centers to be established, a year after the Cross-Cultural Center and three years prior to the LGBT Resource Center. I am the second Director of the Women's Center, initially hired in March, 2000 as the first Assistant Director. In addition, the Women's Center is the second largest of the three Centers both in size of staff, amount of budget, and square footage of space. The Cross-Cultural Center is the largest and the LGBT Center is the smallest.

According to a sociocultural method, knowledge and practices are socially transmitted and negotiated. This approach questions the ability to study individuals and their social contexts separately, arguing that the objects of sociocultural study are events, activities, and practice (Rogoff, 1995, 1998; Gallego, Rueda & Moll, 2005). These assertions lead to a rejection of individual participants as units of analysis, favoring instead the "activity setting" as the unit of analysis (O'Donnell & Tharp, 1990).

One cannot understand what the individual is doing without understanding how it fits with ongoing events. It is not as if the individual could be taken outside of the activity to have their development analysed. They are involved—part of the activity. (Rogoff, 1998, p. 688).

In addition, within this activity setting exist three planes of analysis—personal, interpersonal, and community/institutional. All three planes are simultaneously present and inseparable, although in research, one or more planes may be foregrounded or backgrounded depending on the research questions.

Socioculturalists contend that knowledge of the activity setting is integral to understanding a community. The characteristics of the setting, including the behavior of participants, are interdependent. Human behavior exists contextually within the activity setting; the phenomenon of interest (in this case public and private sphere) is that which is shared by the participants (O'Donnell & Tharp, 1990).

Given the research questions proposed, Rogoff's (1995) framework was appropriate because it "[oriented] research to answer questions such as , What are the activities in which people participate....and, How do different activities relate to each other currently, historically and prospectively" (Gallego, Rueda & Moll, 2005, p. 2313). Furthermore, the unit of analysis was inherently tied to the problem statement and propositions I wished to test (Brewer & Hunter, 1989). In this case, one of the theories proposed was that the public and private sphere phenomenon happens within the organization of the Women's Center. The tension exists in the work, not necessarily in the participants. Therefore, the participants can be viewed as variables that vary from year to year or from one Women's Center setting to another.

Study Participants

Case studies are designed to bring out the details from the viewpoint of the participants (Yin, 2003). In this case, the participants were the entities *from* which the

researcher collected data—the observational units. Brewer and Hunter (1989) define the unit of analysis as the entity *about* which the researcher collects data and makes inferences—the UC San Diego Women’s Center.

There are many ideas and conceptions about the purpose of the Women’s Center on campus, yet many of these were conceived by people who are either no longer involved in the Center or who are not users of the Center. Since generalization is not the goal of this study, a non-probability purposeful sample (Creswell, 2005; Merriam, 1998) of actual users of the Women’s Center was assembled with 12 participants representing a diverse group of people, based on their level of use of the Center. I solicited participants by making an announcement at the Center staff meeting, posting a notice in the electronic newsletter, posting a flyer inside the Women’s Center, and announcing at the weekly Gender Buffet program (weekly gender and sexuality discussion group).

In theoretical research, the sample chosen should represent how well each participant addresses the theory being tested and on the basis of their knowledge and experience in the areas the research explores (Marshall & Rossman, 1998; Brewer & Hunter, 1989). In addition, the selection criteria should be derived from the theoretical framework (Merriam, 1998). Since the literature identified the public and private sphere balance within the areas of feminist leadership, community organizing, and campus-based Women’s Centers, each participant came from an area or group within the Women’s Center that was likely to contribute to the researcher’s

understanding of the phenomenon of interest. Participants were purposefully chosen to test the propositions within each of the three areas identified in the literature.

Participant journals, collected via email, were a source of data for this study. Participants chosen for the computer journals included two student interns employed by the Women's Center (feminist leadership), a user who was involved in the Gender Buffet discussion group (community organizing), and frequent users of the Center with no particular group affiliation and who used the Center for a variety of reasons (general Women's Center user). In addition two focus groups were conducted with eight participants representing student interns and Gender Buffet participants. Table 1 represents the types of users and definitions of each type of user.

Table 1

Case study participants, purposeful non-probability sample

Type of User	Link to Literature & Theoretical Framework	Frequency of Use of Center
Student Intern	Feminist Leadership	Student employee of the Center, working 10-15 hours per week. May also utilize the Center during non-working hours.
Participant involved in Gender Buffet discussion group	Community Organizing	Varies from once a month to once a week. User comes to the Center specifically to participate in an organized group facilitated by Center staff. Group meetings vary in frequency from once a week to once a month.
Frequent user	Campus-based Women's Centers	At least 3 times per week. User may or may not be involved in an organized group. Uses the Center for at least one hour each visit and visits at least 3 times per week.

Interviewing users of the Center who participate in the Women's Center activities at varying degrees and levels of commitment allowed me to understand the complex layers and diverse work domains of the Center. Participants from each area were chosen in order to compare and contrast their experiences across multiple levels of involvement.

Selection criteria were provided to the Assistant Director of the Women's Center. A pool of qualified participants was identified from which four participants for the computer assisted journals were randomly selected by the Assistant Director. Additionally, four participants were identified for the student intern focus groups and four participants were chosen for the Gender Buffet focus group. The identities of the individual participants were not known to me as the researcher. Participation was voluntary. In addition, participant confidentiality was maintained through the use of computer-assisted interviewing (Creswell, 2005) and focus group facilitators.

Each journal participant was assigned an anonymous email address (such as a user@hotmail.com address) for use throughout the study. Journal prompts and follow up questions were asked only through the anonymous email address. Journal participants were compensated with a gift-quality journal and a \$25 bookstore gift card. Prior to data collection, participants met with the Assistant Director to discuss study purpose and design and to review the consent process.

Data Collection

Data came from three sources—the researcher, participants in the Center, and archives. Data was collected through participant observation, participants' journaling as action researchers, focus groups, and document review. In addition, the Women's Center staff conducted an assessment survey as part of its annual program review. Data from the survey was also used to inform the study. Drawing upon three main data sources was used to triangulate the evidence (Brewer & Hunter, 1989; Merriam,

1998). Table 2 provides an overview of the data collection methods used for each research question.

Table 2

Research questions and corresponding research method and analysis used for each research question

Research Questions	Data Collection Method	Participants	Analysis
What are the major dimensions through which users of the Women's Center participate? What are the unique cultural features of the Women's Center?	Participant Journaling	4 students (2 student interns, 1 Gender Buffet user, 1 Frequent user)	Coding schema
	Focus groups	8 students (4 student interns, 4 Gender Buffet users)	Coding schema
	Participant observation	Researcher	Field Notes Memos
	Review of artifacts	39 respondents	Coding schema
How do users participate at the Women's Center? What activities are they engaged in?	Participant journaling	4 students	Coding schema
	Focus groups	8 students	Coding schema
	Assessment survey	59 respondents	Coding schema Statistics
In what ways does the work of providing support services and assistance to women intersect with and/or compete with the work of influencing policies, and campus-decisions? In what ways does the work represent a third and blended sphere?	Participant journaling	4 students	Coding schema,
	Focus groups	8 students	Coding schema
	Participant observation	Researcher	Field notes Memos
	Document review Review of artifacts	Researcher	Document analysis, Coding, Memos
	Assessment survey	59 respondents	Coding schema Statistics

Participant Observation

“Participant observation is to some degree an essential element of all qualitative research” (Marshall & Rossman, 1995, p. 78). Observations are primary sources of data and serve as first hand accounts of the phenomenon of interest (Merriam, 1998). Participant observation is a specific type of research method in which the researcher may actually participate in the events being studied. Furthermore, observations allow the researcher to observe what users actually do rather than rely on third person accounts (Marshall & Rossman, 1995).

As the participant observer, I saw events first hand, as they happened, and used my own knowledge and expertise to interpret what was observed (Merriam, 1998). Observations showed how other users of the Centers (aside from the four identified participants in the sample) interacted during specific events and programs at the Center (Creswell, 2005). I observed the types of conversations that occurred, levels of participation by different users, and type of participation by different users. In addition, observations provided some knowledge of the context and provided specific behaviors and examples as reference points for participant journal prompts.

As Director of the Women’s Center, I already participated in several events and groups at the Center. Because of this, my presence did not become an anomaly when the events were observed for purposes of the study. During April and May 2008, I observed the monthly Yarn Factory (crochet and knitting group) and the weekly Gender Buffet (weekly gender and sexuality discussion group). In addition, I observed the Gender Buffet programs during October and November, 2009. These

two groups are very popular programs at the Women's Center which have 10-30 participants each event. Lastly, I conducted a visual audit of the Center in January 2009, noting the physical layout and characteristics of the Center, the furniture, artwork, and physical artifacts in the space. I also noted the users and associated activities within the space.

Participant Journaling

Participant journaling was conducted from October 2008 to January 2009. Each participant was asked to act as an action researcher in the study in a pseudo cooperative inquiry process. Action research:

Seeks to bring together action and reflection, theory and practice, in participation with others, in the pursuit of practical solutions to issues of pressing concern to people, and more generally the flourishing of individual person and their communities" (Reason & Bradbury, 2001, p.1).

Action research is an ideal methodology for understanding not only past events, but present phenomenon. It is particularly appropriate when the researcher is also a participant.

Cooperative inquiry is a type of participative action research strategy in which all involved are both co-researchers and co-subjects engaged in cycles of action and reflection (Reason, 1999). While these study participants were not co-researchers in the entire study, they were asked to be co-researchers for a small portion of the study. In this way, I honored the feminist spirit of the Women's Center by engaging in a collaborative research endeavor and working with the study participants to construct shared meaning.

As participants visited the Women's Center and engaged in activities within the space, they were asked to reflect on the following questions:

1. What brought you to the Women's Center today/this week/this month?
2. What did you do while you were here? What activities did you engage in?
3. How did the staff interact with you?
4. How did you use the space?
5. What were your thoughts and feelings during your visit?
6. Did your visit impact/change/shift your relationship with the University?
7. What would you improve about the Women's Center? (last journal entry)

As follow-up questions, students were also asked if there were any physical aspects of the Center that meant the most to them and to complete the sentence *The Women's Center is...for their last journal entry.*

Each participant was asked to keep a journal during three different periods of the academic quarter, noting the above questions. In order to protect the confidentiality of participants, each participant was asked to type their journal entries and e-mail responses back to me through their anonymous email addresses. I hoped that a fairly unstructured process and confidentiality of the participants allowed them to share their stories freely without undue pressure because of my role as the Director of the Center (Merriam, 1998). In addition, the use of self-reflective journals guarded against reflexivity (interviewees giving answers they feel the interviewer wants to hear). The journal prompts followed a semi-structured approach (Merriam, 1998). Each subsequent journal included follow up questions based on previous data

collected. Interview questions were based on the information in the journals, documents, and participant observation.

Document Review

Researchers may supplement participant observations and interviews with document analysis (Marshall & Rossman, 1995). This method is an unobtrusive practice which can be conducted without disrupting the activity setting in the same ways that researcher presence does (Merriam, 1998). In addition, documents chosen for analysis may likely contain insights that are relevant to the research questions. For this study, I analyzed the founding documents of the Center and physical artifacts.

Founding documents.

I joined the staff of the Women's Center four years after its establishment. Therefore, an examination of the founding documents of the Center was warranted in order to review the original plans, scope, and vision for the Center. Examples of such documents included the original proposal to establish a university-funded Women's Center, follow-up correspondence to the Chancellor, and letters of support from students, staff, and faculty. Information in the founding documents were compared and contrasted to the results of the participant journals and other data. I examined the founding documents to compare and contrast the Center's original espoused theory and its current theory-in-use (Argyris & Schon, 1974; Argyris, 1993). These documents were coded to reveal areas of public and private sphere conceptions of Women's Center work by the originators of the Center and to inform subsequent code lists.

Artifacts from a public art project.

In September 2007, the Women's Center began a program that collected thoughts of users of the Center. Slips of paper with only the words *The Women's Center is...* were placed by the window in the living room. Markers and pens were placed next to the papers with a note instructing visitors to complete the sentences and tape the responses on the windows. Users of the Center completed the project in both pictorial and narrative format. While originally conceived to be a public art project, information from this project provided insight into the ways users conceive of the Women's Center. In April 2008, these responses were collected and analyzed for purposes of this study. In particular, responses were coded to reveal relationships to public and private sphere work and themes were considered in order to determine organizational dimensions of the Center.

Focus Groups

Two focus groups were held after the participant journaling period in January and March, 2009. Focus groups were used to probe deeper into the meaning of the participant journals and uncover perceptions of the Women's Center through participant interaction with other people (Krueger, 1994). The focus groups consisted of students from three areas identified for participant journaling: 1) student interns of the Women's Center, 2) frequent users of the Women's Center, and 3) participants involved in weekly groups. The first group had four student interns employed by the Center. Four Gender Buffet participants, one of whom was also a frequent user of the space, participated in the second focus group.

An announcement was made at the weekly Women's Center staff meeting asking for focus group participants. Four out of the five student interns agreed to participate in the student intern focus group. Their responses were emailed directly to the Assistant Director of the Center in order to protect their confidentiality.

Announcements were also made during the weekly Gender Buffet program and on the Gender Buffet electronic listserv. Those who were interested in participating contacted the Assistant Director of the Center. Four participants indicated their interest.

Focus group interviews were conducted by the Directors of the LGBT Resource Center and the Cross-Cultural Center at UC San Diego so that participants remained anonymous to the researcher. As fellow classmates in the Doctor of Education program who have both completed their data collection, these Directors were familiar with the data collection and interview process. In addition, they were both trained and briefed on the focus group protocol and informed consent process prior to conducting focus groups. Based on responses from the participant journals, questions were added to the focus groups which were not originally included in the computer-assisted interviews. In addition, possible follow-up and probing questions were included for the moderators to consider. Focus group questions included:

1. Tell me about your first time at the Women's Center. What brought you to the space?

Follow-up/probing questions (optional):

- i. What did you notice about the space? (Descriptive)

- ii. What did you notice about the people's interactions in the space? (Descriptive and exploratory around feelings in the space).
 - iii. How did the staff interact with you?
 - iv. What were your thoughts and feelings during your visit?
 - v. Did your visit impact/change/shift your relationships with the University?
2. What do you think is the primary purpose of the Women's Center?
 3. If you were to describe the Women's Center to someone who did not know about it, how would you describe it?
 4. What is the most important thing about the Women's Center?
 5. What are three wishes you would have for the Women's Center?

Focus group participants were compensated with a meal during the focus group interview and each person was entered into a prize drawing for a \$25 bookstore gift card.

Assessment Survey

The Women's Center conducted a program assessment survey in February, 2009. The purpose of the survey was to assess the Center's programmatic offerings, gather demographic information about the users of the Center, and evaluate how well the Center achieves its mission and objectives. The survey was distributed through the Women's Center electronic newsletter and yielded 59 responses. Participants included undergraduate and graduate students, post-doctoral participants, staff, faculty, alumni, and members of the San Diego community at large.

Questions related to the study purpose were included in the survey in order to gather information about user participation and elements of public and private sphere. These questions included open-ended questions such as, “What do you think the primary purpose of the Women’s Center is?” and “What is the most important thing about the Women’s Center?” In addition, Likert-scale questions were included in the assessment survey such as, “To what extent do you agree with the statement: The Women’s Center is a *home away from home*?”

Data Analysis

Data analysis involves examining, organizing, tabulating, and coding the evidence to bring meaning to the collected data (Marshall & Rossman, 1998; Yin, 2003; Miles & Huberman, 1994). Coding is the process of segmenting and labeling text in order to make sense of the data (Creswell, 2005). Code lists identified through the conceptual framework were developed to identify events of either public or private sphere nature prior to any data collection. This first code list was tested on the founding documents of the Center.

Information from the conceptual frameworks and founding documents was used to create a provisional code list for the remaining data collection. As data was collected, it was analyzed concurrently in order to strengthen the data collection, manage the volume of data collected, and promote the emergence of substantive theory (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Marshall & Rossman, 1998). I examined all data across different sources of evidence, making note of similarities and differences.

Pattern coding and tabulating frequency of events was then utilized to identify common themes in the data (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

In addition, Yin (2003) suggests the use of theoretical propositions as an analytic strategy to guide and prioritize analysis. Although I remained open to all patterns and themes that may have emerged from the data, based on the literature review, this study used the following propositions as a guiding tool:

1. Women's Center work will be identified in the areas of leadership development, service, and community organizing (Davie, 20012; Bengiveno, 2001).
2. The research may reveal that Women's Center work belongs in a third and blended domain that is neither strictly public sphere nor strictly private sphere in nature (Cameron & Gibson-Graham 2003; Milroy & Wismer, 1994).

Validity and Reliability

As in any research endeavor, I considered questions of validity—construct, internal, and external—as well as reliability. The data collection procedures, such as use of multiple methods, along with the specific data analysis techniques were designed to enhance the validity and reliability of the study (Brewer & Hunter, 1989). The development of a formal case study protocol ensured the reliability of the study.

Triangulation.

Using multiple sources of evidence is a way to ensure construct validity (Brewer & Hunter, 1989; Merriam, 1998). Specifically, Yin (2003) lists six sources of evidence for data collection in the case study protocol: documentation, archival

records, interviews, direct observation, participant observation, and physical artifacts. This study utilized participant journals, document review and participant observation as well as information from the Women's Center assessment survey. Stake (1995) states the protocols used to ensure accuracy and alternative explanations are called triangulation.

The reason for using multiple sources of data was to triangulate the evidence. Triangulation was a means to substantiate the data gathered from other sources, thus increasing confidence in the interpretation of results (Greene & McClintock, 1985). The use of multiple sources of evidence and multiple research methods were complementary to each other. Each research question was investigated through all of the sources of evidence described above. Table 3 outlines the methods utilized and the strengths and weaknesses of each method.

Table 3

Sources of evidence and associated strengths and weaknesses

Source of Evidence	Strengths	Weakness
Journals and Interviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Targeted and focused on case study topic • Insightful and provides perceived causal inferences • Depth and suitable for obtaining deep and detailed data 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bias due to poor questions • Response bias • Incomplete recollection • Reflexivity (interviewee expresses what interviewer wants to hear)
Documentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stable, repeated review • Unobtrusive, exists prior to case study • Broad coverage, extended time span 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retrievability may be difficult • Biased selectivity • Reporting bias (reflects authors bias) • Access may be blocked
Participant Observation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reality, covers events in real time • Contextual, covers event context • Insightful into interpersonal behavior 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time-consuming • Selectivity, might miss facts • Reflexivity (observer's presence might cause change) • Cost • Bias due to investigator's actions

Note. From *Case study research: Design and methods*, (p. 86), by R.K. Yin, 2003, Beverly Hills: Sage Publications.

Organizing the Data.

Maintenance of the chain of evidence and the creation of a case study database was addressed through the organization of the data. Once data was collected, it was important that it be organized in a way that increased reliability and validity and aided in the analysis. Participant journals, field notes, and interviews were transcribed

within 10 days of collection with concurrent analytic notes in margins. A case study database was created to organize all data. All relevant documents were added to the database, as well as scans of archival documents, journals, and notes. The database was created in a way that would allow an outside observer to follow the evidence from initial research question to final conclusion. This is also known as the chain of evidence.

Limitations and Ethical Considerations

Like many exploratory investigations, the results of this study are preliminary (Yin, 2003). In addition, although the sample size for this study was appropriate for an exploratory case study, it does not lend itself to generalizations about all users of this Women's Center or other university Women's Centers. Furthermore, this is an examination of one Women's Center at a publicly-funded university. Findings may not be applicable to other Women's Centers at different types of institutions.

The purpose of this study, however, was not to generalize to a broader population, but to develop a greater understanding of a particular phenomenon within one setting. Stake (1995) describes a naturalistic generalization, arguing that a broad cross section of readers would experientially relate to the data generated by a case study. In this way, the results of a case study would facilitate a greater understanding of a studied phenomenon.

Lastly, because the study was conducted at the researcher's workplace, special attention was placed on the possible effect to the environment, staff, and users of the Center. It was my responsibility to assure the confidentiality of participants

(particularly student employees of the Center), and to make sure participation did not negatively impact the work or social environment of the study participants given my positionality as the Director of the Center. Additionally, I recognized that my personal and professional stake in the case study environment may produce bias in both the data collection and analysis.

For example, my position as the primary administrator of the Center caused me to value the *product* of Women's Center work more so than the *affective elements* of Women's Center work. This is partly a function of the ways in which the Women's Center's accomplishments are reported in the Center's annual reports and ways in which our activities are recorded in other campus-wide reports. Consequently, I became aware of the ways in which this proclivity might bias the findings around public and private sphere work. Therefore, as data revealed the private sphere nature of the Women's Center's work, I was conscious about the ways in which I should truthfully report the cultural dimensions and work of the Center. I recognized these potential biases and made appropriate notations in the data collection notes, observations, and analysis. I also kept a research journal in order to track and address feelings that arose as a result of the data collection.

Chapter IV

Data Analysis

The purpose of this study was to identify the main areas of involvement at the UC San Diego Women's Center through the eyes of the people who use the Center. Additionally, because scholars and authors highlighted the tension between public and private sphere issues in the research on feminist leadership, feminist community organizing, and campus-based Women's Centers, I explored the tension and balance between public and private sphere work within the UC San Diego Women's Center. Traditionally, the private sphere encompasses the domain of the family and home--what has traditionally been considered women's work--while the public sphere is considered the domain of government and politics—work that has historically been dominated by men (Daniels, 1987; Yuval-Davis, 1997; Wyatt, Katz & Kim, 2000). A secondary purpose of the study was to identifying ways in which the Women's Center's work may belong to one, both, or neither of these two spheres.

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What are the major dimensions through which users of the Women's Center participate? What are the unique cultural features of the Women's Center?
2. How do users participate at the Women's Center? In what activities are they engaged?

3. In what ways does the work of providing support services and assistance to women (private sphere) intersect with and/or compete with the work of influencing policies, and campus-decisions (public sphere)?

Chapter Four provides a descriptive and comparative discussion of the data collected across multiple sources. The goal of this chapter is to report the results from the data collection and answer the above research questions through a careful examination of the results. I begin with a demographic review of study participants. An overview of the data analysis process follows, beginning with a description of the methods for coding and pattern-making. This is followed by a description of the findings by research method. Lastly the chapter outlines the major themes uncovered through the data, including surprise findings.

Research questions were investigated through a qualitative research design utilizing a single exploratory case study, with the UC San Diego Women's Center as the unit of analysis (Creswell, 2005; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Yin, 2003). Drawing upon three main data sources, I triangulated the evidence collected to show how themes and patterns emerged across multiple sources of evidence (Brewer & Hunter, 1989; Merriam, 1998). These three sources were the researcher, users of the Center, and documents. Data sources and corresponding collection methods are outlined in Table 4.

Table 4

Main sources of data and corresponding data collection methods

Data Source	Data Collection Method
Researcher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participant observation • Visual audit of Women's Center
Center users	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participant journaling through computer-assisted interviews • Focus groups with different types of users of the Center • Assessment survey of how the Women's Center is used by respondents
Document review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Founding proposal for the establishment of a Women's Center • Correspondence • Annual reports • Artifacts from public art project

Except for the respondents to the Women's Center assessment survey, participants in the study were limited to undergraduate students. Those who completed computer journals were chosen from a purposeful sample based on the literature review and conceptual frameworks. They included two student interns of the Center, a frequent student user, and a Gender Buffet participant. Information from the computer journals informed the questions used for the focus groups. Participants in focus groups included student interns employed at the Women's Center and participants of the weekly Gender Buffet program. A general announcement was made at a Women's Center staff meeting and at a Gender Buffet program to solicit participation in the study. Announcements were also posted in the Women's Center

general listserv and in the Gender Buffet listserv. Those who responded to the solicitation were included in the focus groups as a convenience sample. Each focus group had four participants. The goal of the focus groups was to provide additional data to supplement the participant journals.

Participants' majors range from humanities to social science to hard sciences. Ten participants were female and two were male. Of the 59 respondents to the Women's Center assessment survey, 92% identified as female and 6% identified as male. Two percent declined to state. Gender demographics by data collection method are summarized below in Table 5.

Table 5

Participant gender profile by data collection method

	Female	Male	Declined to State
Journaling participants	4		
Focus groups	6	2	
Assessment survey	46	3	1

Coding and Pattern-making

Data analysis was conducted as an ongoing process through the data collection to explore themes as they emerged. This process also helped inform subsequent data collection efforts. Codes were used to label and make meaning out of descriptive information collected during the study, thus allowing me to organize chunks of data into more manageable sets of categories (Creswell, 2005; Miles & Huberman). The first step of data analysis was to develop provisional codes based on information from the literature review, conceptual frameworks and research questions (Miles & Huberman, 1994). This involved categorizing acts and concepts within public and private sphere domains prior to fieldwork. First, I used the Women's Center founding documents and original proposal to test the provisional codes of public and private sphere work and to develop additional coding schema. I then analyzed results from *The Women's Center Is...* public art project, which ran at the Women's Center from October 2007 to April 2008. Comments from participants in the art project were examined for themes relating to public and private sphere. Responses were then used to develop sub-codes within those two categories.

Strict definitions of the private sphere describe it as the realm of the household, and strict definitions of the public sphere describe it as the realm of government and politics (Daniels, 1987; Yuval-Davis, 1997; Wyatt, Katz & Kim, 2000). Arendt (1958), however, argued that politics is not synonymous with governmental affairs. Instead, politics involves “action in a community of peers” (Arendt, 1958, in Pitkin, 1981, p. 327). I used this expanded definition of politics to code activism and community organizing elements of Women’s Center work within the public sphere domain. Activities and work that were related to the domestic space and caring labor--work that involves care, comforting, and nurturing (Daniels, 1987; Folbre, 1995)—were coded within the private sphere domain. Acts that represented an intersection of both public and private sphere activities and concepts were coded within third space. These themes were eventually labeled as the meta-theme of *Hybridity*.

Secondary coding followed a more inductive process of reviewing documents and transcripts line by line. The field notes and documents were examined for regularly occurring words, phrases and descriptions allowing for comparison first with the public art project, then between different sources of data. Labels and categories were then generated and noted in the margins of the documents (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). This second pass generated a list of 16 sub-codes within the public and private sphere main codes, which are presented in Table 6. Additionally, a third level of coding developed pattern codes to explain emergent themes and configurations of the 16 sub-codes (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

Table 6

Sub-codes within public and private sphere main codes

Private Sphere Codes	Public Sphere Codes
Home away from home/homey environment	Dialogue
Safe space	Empowerment
Comfortable/comfort zone	Activism/Action
Community	Challenging patriarchy
Ability to be yourself/express yourself	Change
A feeling of being welcomed	Social Justice
Belonging	
Providing support/service/resources	
Napping	
Couches	
Artwork	

Although there were differences in the emergence of sub-themes in the different data collection methods, all of the meta-themes were present across all the sources of evidence. The next section elaborates on the findings from each data source.

The Women's Center Is: Findings by Research Method

Document Analysis: From Description to Meaning Making

From 1974 to 1995 a women's collective of student volunteers at the University of California, San Diego maintained a student-run Women's Resource Center on an annual budget of approximately \$1,500. A 1991 annual report of the Chancellor's Advisory Committee on the Status of Women recommended the establishment of an institutionally-funded and professionally-staffed Women's Center.

In 1995, after the UC San Diego Cross-Cultural Center opened, a *Women's Center Planning Committee* was convened to create a proposal for the development of a UC San Diego Women's Center. The original mission statement drafted by this committee stated:

The Women's Center is to provide a supportive and learning environment for students, faculty, staff and community women. The Center is committed to advancing the intellectual, professional, and personal goals of women. It is dedicated to increasing campus awareness of and sensitivity to the needs of women of all backgrounds, ideologies and experiences. Programs and services for women and men at the Center will focus on promoting opportunity, education, equity, justice and advocacy for women at UCSD and in surrounding communities (Mukerji, Wahlig & Kelso, 1995, p. 2).

It is evident from the original mission statement the founders of the Women's Center recognized the importance of both private sphere work (supportive environment, needs of women) and public sphere activity (advocacy, equity, justice). Information from these founding documents was used to categorize instances of public and private sphere work. These two categories of *public sphere* and *private sphere* were then used to examine results of a public art project in order to generate additional codes and themes.

In October, 2007 the Women's Center staff put out slips of paper in the living room area with the words *The Women's Center is...* at the top of the page. Members of the community were asked to complete the sentence in either narrative or picture format and post it on the windows of the Center. Most participants in the project used a combination of both art and words. The project concluded in April 2008, at which time I collected the slips of paper to test provisional codes developed through initial document analysis of founding documents. There were a total of 39 responses from a

convenience sample of those choosing to participate in *The Women's Center is* project. While the exercise was meant to be a public art project, responses from the community provided rich data about how community members viewed the Women's Center. Responses from project participants were examined and compared against the provisional codes of public and private sphere.

According to the analysis of the project, those who participated valued a place to be themselves, a safe and welcoming space, the sense of being at home, and feelings of love within the Center. These initial themes were categorized within private sphere, described earlier as the caring labor of the Women's Center. There were also six responses that referenced a hybrid description intersecting public and private sphere. For example, "The Women's Center is a space for everyone to come and feel comfortable having a dialogue about our current status on gender politics & what we wish to achieve." These hybrid descriptions exemplified third space and provided a baseline from which to operationalize third space activities within subsequent data collection methods.

Another participant wrote several sentences describing both the public and private nature of Women's Center work, commenting:

The Women's Center is a place that builds community, a place that is creative, where people are willing to try new ideas. The Women's Center fosters open communication. The Women's Center sees leadership as a process and encourages individuals to explore their own leadership potential. The WC is a unique space at UCSD. The Women's Center is here for students, staff, faculty, and community. The Women's Center is a space where people with different experiences and different visions come together in an attempt to make this space something special. The WC is committed to social change and sees this as being different than social service. The WC is awesome!

A third participant decided to write a list of descriptive words,” The Women’s Center is...Radical, Revolutionary, Anti-oppressive, Beautiful, Strong, Creative, Sex Positive, Learning, Supporting, Fostering, Nurturing, Building, Growing, Foaming.” Along with the information from the Center’s founding documents, responses from this project were used to inform the provisional codes used for the other data collection methods. The document analysis of the project informed the initial list of sub-codes outlined earlier.

Participant Journaling

Four participants submitted journals over three different weeks from October to December 2009. A total of 18 journals from the four participants were submitted over this period. Two students were interns employed by the Women’s Center. One was a frequent user of the Center and the fourth was a regular participant in the weekly Gender Buffet program. All journal participants were female undergraduates. Participants had varying degrees of participation at the Center. The frequent user visited the Women’s Center at least three times per week during the journaling period. The Gender Buffet participant visited at least once a week for the weekly discussion. The interns visited the Center both for their regularly scheduled shifts as well as on their personal time.

Journals were examined line by line to uncover themes and patterns found earlier in *The Women’s Center Is...* project. Descriptions of participants’ thoughts about the space and use of the Center and were first categorized within public and private sphere. They were then compared against the 16 sub-codes in order to

organize the data thematically. For all users, visits to the space involved using the resources provided by the Center.

The frequent user commented about the best features of the Women's Center stating, "[the] best things [are]: comfortable space to study, free food during programs, having all the resources available (eg. pamphlets, lactation room, shower, kitchen)." One student intern wrote, "My first impression was of a welcoming place that made its resources accessible to everyone." The second intern described all the pillows and blankets available for her to use and the Gender Buffet participant described other resources such as the library, information available at the Center, and the computers. The couches in the Center seemed to be the most popular resource available.

Appreciation of the Center's couches was a feeling shared by all journal participants. The frequent user shared her thoughts about what physical features best represent the Women's Center stating, "I think the living room feel to the area represents what the space tries to represent. The colorful couches and table just create a really comfortable and homey environment." Specifically, one intern participant and the Gender Buffet user referenced napping on the couches. The Gender Buffet participant referred to her studying at the Center as "aka napping." When asked what she does most often when she comes to the Women's Center, one intern replied, "I engage in work, dialogue with people in that space at the moment, and napping or studying." The second intern commented, "I always feel at ease there and often take off my shoes and, if there is room, lie down on the couches."

The frequent user echoed the above comment about feeling at ease by writing, “The Women’s Center is the most relaxing and comfortable space on campus.” This feeling of comfort in the space is closely tied to feelings of being at home in the space. As one intern put it, “In addition to being the place where I work I see the Women’s Center as being as much my home as my apartment is, so if I had time in between classes I’d often go to the WC to relax, eat lunch, and do homework.” A related concept to feeling at home is the idea of *safe space*. For example, when asked to describe the Women’s Center to someone who might not be familiar with the space, the Gender Buffet participant wrote, “The Women’s Center is a safe space, a place where we can convene to talk about important issues concerning gender...and a place to have fun! A place of community because I recognize lots of people who come to the Women’s Center.”

As evident from the above statement, users from the journaling group also recognized the work of the Women’s Center in the area of social justice and awareness regarding gender issues. The Gender Buffet participant discussed it in terms of the ability to be engaged in dialogue with others about social justice. The frequent user described the safety from patriarchy, writing, “I feel that the primary purpose of the Women’s Center is to provide a safe and comfortable space on campus for those who feel targeted by patriarchal practices and customs.” One intern saw the Women’s Center as a “space to challenge” and the other intern commented about the social justice artwork on the walls.

This intern also described the hybrid nature of the Center between the social justice aspect and the safe space:

I wrote two different ideas of what the Women's Center's primary purpose has been to me throughout the week: "a safe space to use resources, to learn about, educate, and discuss gender issues" and "to provide resources, comfort, food for thought, and inspiration in a safe space."

The hybridity of the space became evident to me during two participant observations I conducted of Center programs and a visual observation of the physical environment. In addition, during an intern focus group, students revealed the intersections between the themes of safe space and social justice.

Focus Groups

Two focus groups were conducted with student interns employed by the Center and students from the weekly Gender Buffet program. The first focus group was conducted in December, 2008 with four undergraduate female interns. The second focus group was in January, 2009 with four Gender Buffet program participants, two men and two women. The focus groups were moderated by the Directors of the UC San Diego LGBT Resource Center and Cross-Cultural Center respectively in order to protect the confidentiality of participants.

Analysis of the focus groups revealed five prominent themes within the data: safe space, physical setting, resources, community, and social justice. Similarly to the journal participants, the theme of safe space/home was a significant one with the focus group participants. When asked what they thought the primary purpose of the Women's Center was, six of eight participants--all four interns and two Gender Buffet participants--talked about safe space. One male participant felt the primary purpose of

the Women's Center is to be a "safe space for women," while one female participant in the same group commented, "I think it's a safe space for all kinds of people. It's not just for one particular group or gender...this [is] a space that can be used by everyone." One intern spoke of safe space as "shelter in a very bureaucratic system" and another described "providing safe space" as the primary purpose of the Center. Likewise, a third intern felt the primary purpose of the Center was "providing a safe space to learn about and educate about social justice and issues of gender and to have a space where everyone is welcomed." The fourth intern described the act of sleeping on the couch as a metaphor for safe space:

My primary purpose here was to have a couch to sleep on and not feel awkward that I'm sleeping on the couch...I'm going to take a little license and use that as a metaphor of ...[being] able to have safe space. I don't have to feel judged that I'm sleeping.

The couches again emerged as an important physical element of the Center. When asked how they might describe the Women's Center to someone who does not know anything about it, two interns answered they would talk about the couches. In reference to this same question, a third intern answered, "I'd describe all the resources that are available and all the events that go on at the Women's Center, take a nap, do homework." The use of other Center resources represented an important element of Center work. Five of eight focus group participants referenced the use of Center resources.

In the second focus group, one of the women said she first came to the Women's Center because she had a lot of resources at her community college and she was seeking out similar resources at UC San Diego. One of the men noticed how

people who come into the space, “use the resources of the front desk.” The second man in the group described the primary purpose of the Women’s Center as “providing various resources.” In the first focus group, one intern connected the provision of resources with the idea of social justice and community-building stating, “I see [the Women’s Center] as a sort of outlet for building communities, not only a community of our own, but also letting others build communities by offering resources and spaces surrounding social justice.” In this way, offering resources builds community and facilitates social justice. This supports the definition of social justice advanced by Adams, Bell, and Griffin (1997) which advocates an equitable distribution of resources (p. 3).

The ability to use Center resources contributed to feelings of ownership and belonging in the space. In a related theme, belonging and community were closely tied to the feeling of safe space in the Center, particularly the cultivation of a social justice community. One of the women in the second focus group recalled how quickly she felt welcomed when she first visited the Women’s Center. Additionally, when asked about what feelings she remembered when she first came to the Women’s Center, one intern replied:

I got this sense of “oh, there’s community here” and so I was little bit unsure of whether I would fit in and how I would fit in. And I really liked what the dynamic was of this Center...even though I had learned about social justice in high school, it had been in the context of Catholic education.

A second intern stated the primary purpose of the Women’s Center was to “build community affirming social justice.”

In some ways, providing resources to the community and creating a safe and comfortable community were both connected to social justice. When asked about the how they felt when they first visited the Women's Center, one intern replied:

I liked the feeling of comfort. Wow this place is amazing, community centers where people are actually nice enough in an environment that for me has been quite hostile at UCSD. It was very comforting to be "wow there's a space that is centered around social justice."

In the second focus group, one of the women described the Women's Center as "a place to go and study and hold groups and have events and go to events and be part of the community, and work on social justice issues."

Assessment Survey

In February and March, 2009, the Women's Center staff conducted an assessment survey of its programs and services and how people utilize the space. Some of the questions in the assessment informed this study by asking specifically about themes uncovered through the participant journals and focus groups, such as safe space, community, and social justice. There were a total of 59 respondents to the survey. Forty percent of respondents were undergraduate students; eight percent were graduate students and post-docs; thirty-eight percent were staff; two percent were members of the greater San Diego community; six percent were alumni; and four percent were faculty. Two percent declined to state their classification. Additionally, 32% of respondents identified as White, 22% as Asian, 18% as Chicano(a)/Latino(a), six percent as Multiracial, four percent as Black/African American, and four percent as Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander. Two respondents self-identified as Afro-Latina and Italian and Irish. Two percent declined to state their ethnicity.

As with the journaling and focus group participants, the themes of safe space, community, resources, and social justice emerged in the survey data. Respondents were asked what they felt the primary purpose of the Women's Center was. Table 7 highlights examples of the responses within the meta-themes of community, safe space, resources, and social justice.

Table 7

Survey responses to question, “What do you feel is the primary purpose of the Women’s Center?”

Meta-theme	Sample assessment survey responses
Community	<p>“A place where a community of women unite for the same causes”</p> <p>“To be a home/community of activism”</p> <p>“To provide a safe space for people so they can feel a sense of community, a space where all types of people are respected.”</p>
Safe Space	<p>“To have a safe place for women to hang out, study, inform themselves and organize.”</p> <p>“To provide a secure and comfortable environment for women.”</p> <p>“To serve as a safe space for women.”</p>
Resources	<p>“A resource center that is open minded and welcome to all students, not just women. With resources that are specifically for women.”</p> <p>“A community space that provides resources and education around gender justice and equity.”</p> <p>“To educate and make available resources and information for the UCSD and public community on women’s and women identified issues.”</p>
Social Justice	<p>“To provide social justice consciousness and educational resources and training to the community.”</p> <p>“To develop awareness and understanding of women’s experience. To create solidarity among other mujeres and to create awareness of the sexism and exploitation that affects women’s daily lives.”</p> <p>“Empower women. Create a safe space for women. Challenge gender norms.”</p>

In addition, based on the data from the journal participants and the focus groups, questions regarding safe space, home, community and social justice were included in the assessment survey. Utilizing a five-point Liker scale, respondents were asked to answer to what degree they agreed with the statements about the above themes. Response rates are represented in Table 8.

Table 8

Survey responses to theme-related questions. Answered positively=Strongly agree or Moderately agree.

Private Sphere Questions

I believe the Women's Center is...	Percentage who answered positively	Mean	Standard Deviation
a safe and welcoming space for students, staff, faculty and community	86.27%	4.39	1.11
a home away from home	63.83%	3.91	1.08
a place to find community at UCSD	87.76%	4.35	1.07

Public Sphere Questions

I believe the Women's Center provides...	Percentage who answered positively	Mean	Standard Deviation
campus awareness of social justice issues	81.63%	4.22	1.12
awareness of the negative impact of sexism and sexist oppression	81.25%	4.19	0.98
advocacy for gender inclusive programs and policies campus-wide	88.46%	4.31	0.96
a forum to discuss gender and social justice issues	90.00%	4.48	1.01

Note. 1= Strongly Disagree, 2= Moderately Disagree, 3= Neither agree nor disagree, 4= Moderately Agree, 5= Strongly Agree.

Respondents were also asked how often they utilize the Women's Center for specific activities. The percentage of undergraduate students who use the Center at least once a month for programs and events, library, studying, kitchen use, and hanging out are highlighted in Table 9.

Table 9

Additional uses and percentage of undergraduate students who utilize the Women's Center at least once a month

Uses for the UC San Diego Women's Center	Percentage of undergraduate students who indicated they used this feature more than once a month
Attend programs and events	55%
Use the library	25%
Study	45%
Use the community kitchen	30%
Hang out	45%

Researcher's Observations: A Visual Journey

A visual audit of the Women's Center revealed similar themes which emerged through other data collection methods. Upon entering the space, one is greeted with bright colors and artwork on the walls. The main reception area of the Center is called a living room rather than a lobby, even on the original architectural drawings. The couches have many pillows and blankets for community use. A community kitchen is available for users to prepare meals, keep their food refrigerated, and borrow plates and glassware. There is also a community shower for the public to use.

On any particular day, one will find students sleeping on the couches. During a visual observation on January 10, 2009, I noticed two students napping in the living room while one other student was using her laptop and two additional students were reading textbooks. In the library area, one student was napping on the couch while two students were using the community computers. Next to the library is a lactation

room, which provides a safe and comfortable place for breastfeeding mothers to pump breast milk and have a place to store their milk until after work hours. The Center provides a rocking chair and ottoman so that mothers can pump comfortably. Inside the lactation room is a children's table with four small chairs. Beside the table are toys and stuffed animals. All these things convey a sense of home and belonging in the space.

The Center is also clearly an institutional space with both a business function and a public sphere function. Past the kitchen is the administrative area with the offices, copier, and supply cabinets. However, while this is the administrative area of the Center, it is also open to the public during normal business hours, blurring the line between business and community use. Community members are welcome to use the copiers. Student activists and organizations use the Center's poster paper and markers.

In the same space as the couches and pillows hangs artwork with social justice messages. One painting next to the water cooler reads, "This is not an invitation to rape me." On this day, January 10, 2009, there were posters on the glass conference room doors with information about human trafficking. On the windows, an intern had taped messages about racism and white privilege. Outside the lactation room is a wall full of pamphlets and information about campus and community resources and services.

Visually, the Center exemplifies a blend of the themes previously mentioned by interns, frequent users, and focus group participants. The physical elements of the

space reveal signs of home, comfort, belonging, and critical consciousness. Resources are available for community members to use and take, such as the community computers and the copier, and there are visual representations of the social justice work of the Center. A comparative analysis of the data reveals the ways in which these elements are represented across several data collection methods. The next section explores the meta-themes generated from the 16 sub-codes using a constant comparative analysis.

Meta-Themes: The Work of the Women's Center

A comparison of results across sources of evidence was performed to triangulate the data and develop theory that is grounded in the data. According to Creswell (2005):

Triangulation is the process of corroborating evidence from different individuals, types of data, or methods of data collection. . . This ensures that the study will be accurate because the information is not drawn from a single source, individual, or process of data collection. In this way, it encourages the researcher to develop a report that is both accurate and credible (p. 252).

Participants in the focus groups and journal participants were chosen through a purposeful sampling based on the theoretical frameworks. The constant comparative method along with theoretical sampling is the basis for the following qualitative analysis in a grounded theory approach (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Comparisons were conducted between participants in a single group as well as across groups.

After the development of the 16-subcodes, I engaged in a close re-reading of the transcripts and color-coded tables. A third level of coding developed pattern codes to explain emergent themes and configurations of the 16 sub-codes previously

identified (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Groupings of these sub-codes were informed by the literature as well as the descriptions provided by the study participants, yielding seven meta-themes: safe space/home, physical setting, community, resources, social justice, dialogue, and hybridity.

The phenomenological concept of *being at home* involves being free to be yourself, feeling safe and comfortable, and having a sense of escape (Case, 1996; Jones, Castellano & Cole, 1996; Patton, 2006). Therefore, references to safe space, feelings of being at home in the Center, comfort, and escape were grouped together into one meta-theme of *Safe Space/Home*. In addition, multiple terms are used in the literature on campus community, including *belonging*, *relatedness*, and *engagement* (Osterman, 2000). “Students’ feelings of being cared about, treated in a caring way, valued as an individual, and accepted as a part of community contribute directly to their sense of belonging” (Cheng, 2004, p. 227). Thus, references to belonging, involvement, being cared about and feelings of being welcomed or invited were grouped together into a meta-theme of *Community*.

Sub-codes related to the physical environment of the Center--couches, artwork, color scheme and openness of the space--were also grouped together into the meta theme *Physical Setting*. Because acts of challenging and social change both involve taking action, these sub-codes were combined. Additionally, because acts of activism and social change often elicit feelings of empowerment, empowerment was incorporated into the larger theme of activism (Cole, Zucker & Ostrove, 1998). Lastly, a review of the data and first pass at data analysis revealed the ways in which

all these themes were so closely related, therefore, a meta-theme of *Social Justice* was used to encompass social change, activism, and empowerment. Pattern codes that emerged from all data sources and the number of times they were referenced in each data source are represented in Table 10.

Table 10

Meta-themes derived from 16 sub-codes and frequency across data sources

	Participant Journals N=4	Focus Groups N=8	Women's Center Survey N=59	"Women's Center is..." N=39
Safe Space/Home	4	6	16	19
Community	4	4	8	5
Resources	4	4	16	2
Physical Setting	4	5	1	1
Dialogue	3	3	6	2
Social Justice	4	5	14	4
Hybrid Descriptions	3	3	2	6

As evident in the themes generated from all data sources, users of the Women's Center recognize both the public sphere and private sphere work that the Center performs.

Hybrid descriptions were those instances in which participants described both a private sphere and public sphere phenomenon simultaneously.

Public and Private Sphere in Historical Context

The first mission of the UC San Diego Women's Center, written in 1995, highlighted the significance of both public and private sphere work within the Center. The original proposal to establish a campus Women's Center described the importance of providing services to women and creating a welcoming and comfortable

environment, stating for example, “it must be a space in which **all** women at UCSD feel welcome, and in which the men on campus interested in attending programs or contributing to discussions of issues of gender are comfortable” [emphasis in original document]. The development plan also emphasized the need to promote equity for women:

[The] emphasis on inclusiveness does not mean that the Center should avoid feminist thinking and programming... There is no reason to exclude reading groups and workshops on feminist issues and feminist theory any more than there is reason to exclude workshops on, for example, the career strategies of women in business. Both need to be a part of the work of the Center for those who are interested (Mukerji, et al., 1995, p. 3-4).

In stating that “both need to be a part of the work of the Center for those who are interested,” the original Women’s Center planners recognized the importance of service to the community and activism for social change. Although they did not use this terminology, the committee conceived of the Women’s Center as a hybrid space. Based on responses from the study participants in this research project, both public and private sphere work have been incorporated into the Center’s current work and in the ways that today’s users utilize the Center. Data indicated that safe space and community were the most important private sphere elements of the Women’s Center’s work. Social justice and dialogue were significant themes within the public sphere activities.

Safe Space/Home

The creation of a safe *home away from home* environment for students was a prominent theme in the data. The most commonly referenced term throughout the study was *safe space*. Further, several sub-themes were directly related to this feeling

of safe space, such as the ability to be oneself, the physical environment and napping. Even with the recognition that the Women's Center works both in the public and private sphere domains, this idea of safe space seemed to be most salient. When asked what the most important thing about the Women's Center is, an intern focus group participant responded, "providing a safe space and creating awareness because they're both very important, but I feel like safe space is more personal. I was really battling between the two, but I would say providing a safe space."

Additionally, this idea of safe space was expressed in terms of both the feeling that the Women's Center invoked and the work that the Women's Center does. In other words, the Women's Center's purpose is both to *be* a safe place and to *create* safety. Even if the Women's Center did no other work, providing a safe space would mean the Center was still fulfilling its most critical purpose. According to one student intern focus group participant, "we provide a safe space... We don't always have programs but that doesn't mean we're stopping our work, because we're still providing a safe space."

Participants often contrasted the feelings of safety and comfort at the Center with their overall experience at the university. This sentiment that the Women's Center is a "shelter in a very bureaucratic system that often makes people feel alienated and marginalized" supports the definition of *home as escape* described above (Case, 1996; Jones, Castellano & Cole, 1996; Patton, 2006). As one intern focus group participant commented "after discovering [the Women's Center], I found out that people were actually friendly, as opposed to other places at UCSD." Similarly, in

describing what she felt the most important part of the Women's Center is, a frequent user of the Center wrote in her journal:

The most important part of the Women's Center would definitely have to be the safe atmosphere. Whereas on most of the campus I am afraid to be myself, express that I am a feminist, or even lean over and kiss my partner, at the Women's Center I feel completely safe and respected.

The freedom to be myself.

The safe space sentiment is evident across all sources of data and was described by all participants in the computer-assisted journaling and the focus groups, including the men. As demonstrated in the frequent user's comments, a related theme to this feeling of safety and home is the freedom to express oneself freely or to feel safe to be oneself. One survey respondent described the Women's Center as "a safe haven to BE YOURSELF and at ease with other women." This phenomenon was also described by three of the four journal participants and six of the participants in the *Women's Center is...* activity. As one intern shared in her journal:

[The Women's Center] gives a space for women to be women. Let me explain. There are many places where one could feel silenced for being a woman. Even in class, men dominate discussion and the people teaching us are many times men. It is awesome to go someplace where being a woman is celebrated. Where body image, sex, sexual orientation, maternity, family's expectations, society's expectations can be discussed and where a new way of thinking can be formed.

Physical setting.

The physical environment at the Women's Center also positively impacted the users of the space. Describing her first visit to the Center, one intern commented, "this is so bright and blissful looking." Several participants noted the color scheme at

the Center created a sense of comfort and coziness. Recalling in her journal what she first noticed during her initial visit to the Center, the Gender Buffet participant noted:

I noticed the couches—they were huge, red, and very comfortable-looking, and the black table in the middle cluttered with newspapers. I also noticed the painting up on the walls, very bright, red, purple, orange, and lines of black. I didn't know what it was supposed to stand for. I just thought it looked really cool. (Only this year someone told me that they are supposed to be vaginas).

There are several characteristics of the physical setting of the Women's Center that contribute to the feeling of safe space and home for users of the Center. Upon entering the space, one gets a sense of a "living room feel." There is also a refrigerator that is available for the community to use, a community kitchen and a shower. A frequent user described her first visit to the Center in her journal, stating:

When I walked into the Women's Center, the first thing I noticed was all the cool furniture and the red/orange canvases on the walls...The colorful couches and table just create a really comfortable and homey environment. I also really like that there is stuff all over the windows. Makes it seem as though the space is kind of hidden.

The couches were mentioned by all the journal participants and six of the eight focus group participants. When asked what physical characteristic best represents the Women's Center, the Gender Buffet journal participant responded:

I would say the couches in the main room for various reasons. Firstly, when I think of the women's center, the very first thing that pops into my mind are those glorious comfortable couches. I think subconsciously this has to do with my comfort level in the women's center: my physical comfort is paralleled to my emotional/mental comfort. Secondly, on account of their red color, they always remind me of a surrealist couch that is in the shape of red lips, which upon first glance one may associate only with facial lips, but especially set up against the paintings of vaginas draping the walls, could also represent labia, the lips of the vagina. Lips represent voice, sexuality, empowerment...these are, to me, important aspects of the female experience.

Napping.

Results of this study revealed the importance of napping on the couches to users of the Center. The importance of the couches for napping and a source of safety for students was something I had not previously realized and the founders on the *Women's Center Planning Committee* did not anticipate in their initial planning. Results from the journals and focus groups prompted a casual observation of the physical space during lunch. I found two students sleeping in the library and one student sleeping in the living room. Blankets and throws can be found in the Women's Center living room and library area. These items were brought in by users of the space (none were purchased by the staff or with Women's Center funds), but they are now left in the space for anyone to use. Four of the eight focus group participants talked about napping at the Center, as did two of the four journal participants. One intern focus group participant noted:

My primary purpose here is to have a couch to sleep on and not feel awkward that I'm sleeping on the couch. I don't think I'd feel comfortable taking a nap at Geisel [library]. I wouldn't feel comfortable taking a nap at Perks [coffee shop] in the bookstore. I don't even think I'd feel comfortable taking a nap at the commuter lounges in the colleges. But at the Women's Center I don't even have to think about it...I just like to be able to have safe space. I don't have to feel judged that I'm sleeping, and tired, and exhausted, and the university is really draining me. I don't have to feel like somebody might take my stuff if I fall asleep, that God forbid, somebody is going to do something to my body while I'm sleeping. I just sleep and feel comfortable. I feel like that's what we're here for...to be that space for people...so they can take naps and not worry about other things...just relax and think about the important things, rather than stress out about everything that's out there.

Another focus group participant agreed, "I think the couches definitely communicate safe space."

Community

One survey respondent described the Women's Center as "a safe space for people so they can feel a sense of community, a space where all types of people are respected." Feelings of safety, the freedom to be oneself, and the ability to feel comfortable in the physical setting all contribute to a sense of being welcomed and belonging at the Women's Center. The Gender Buffet journal participant described the sense of community as the most important aspect of the Women's Center to her:

For me the most important thing is the sense of community. Most people who come to the women's center are women, and not only that, but women who are very much interested in women's issues and feminism. The few people who are not women are still incredibly interested in women's rights and feminism. In this community, we all know we have that interest in furthering women's status, so in one way at least, we all know we're on the same page. With that knowledge, we share information, and improve our own knowledge/challenge the structures of patriarchy in our thought patterns we didn't even know were there. So, the special community and the level of connection, I would say, are the things that are most important to me about the Women's Center.

The concept of belonging is closely connected to this idea of community (Cheng, 2004). This in turn was revealed as another form of escape from the university. Results indicated that participants experience a sense of isolation on the university campus as a whole and that the "bureaucracy" is a source of stress. A frequent user described how her belonging to the Women's Center community has impacted her relationship with the university, stating "If it had not been for the [Women's Center], I would not feel connected to any place on campus." Similarly, a female Gender Buffet focus group participant shared:

[The Women's Center] makes me see how much more needs to be done on campus because there is this one space that I feel safe, but the rest of the

campus is not very friendly. It highlights that in a way, how the rest of the campus isn't friendly.

The feeling of belonging was something that participants wished for more people on the UC San Diego campus. When the four student intern focus group participants were asked what wishes they would have for the Women's Center three of them responded "that everyone would feel welcomed here." They all lamented that not everyone feels welcomed in the Women's Center and that others, specifically men, think they are excluded from the space. One intern shared her frustration:

I think it's really ironic that people think a campus community center is a place of exclusivity, but it's a campus *community* center [emphasis by student]. It's in the name. It's not about being exclusive, it's about embracing and building community on campus or being an outlet for community on campus. It's kind of frustrating, especially when people say, "don't we have a Men's Center?" and I'll say, "you mean the world?"

The importance of community and belonging spanned across all data sources and was revealed not only in sense of belonging felt in the physical space, but in the use of Center resources and services. According to the Women's Center assessment survey, 68% of respondents use the Center to get "information and resources." 28.81% of respondents get information and resources at least once a quarter and 20.33% at least once a month. One focus group participant described the primary purpose of the Women's Center as "[an] outlet for building communities, not only a community of our own, but also letting others build communities by offering resources and spaces surrounding social justice."

Resources.

Many users of the Women’s Center found their entry point into the space through the use of its formal resources and services—those openly advertised on websites and brochures—for a specific need. A survey respondent commented on the primary purpose of the Women’s Center in this way:

To serve as a resource for women associated with UCSD; the resource takes many different forms since there are so many different women here with different needs, interests, and desires. One of the things I value most...about the Women’s Center is that I feel like I can turn to the people there (both those who work there and those who attend the programs there) for advice and know that my needs will be recognized as important.

This statement also signifies the importance of the Women’s Center’s informal resources and sources of support.

During a participant observation of a Women’s Center Yarn Factory (knitting and crocheting) program, I witnessed a conversation in which participants gave each other advice about other resources and services on campus and in the community. This phenomenon is also present at other Center programs such as the Gender Buffet, Mother’s Support Group, and Financial Literacy workshops. Frequent users of the Center act as an informal resource network for each other as well as for those new to the space. I have often observed a person sitting on the couch answer the questions of someone who is asking the front desk staff for information, demonstrating their familiarity and comfort in the space. As one Gender Buffet focus group participant noted, “If you’re here enough, you notice people asking a lot of the same questions. There are some questions I know the answers to, and new interns may not, so sometimes I answer the questions for them.”

The use of resources signifies ownership and belonging in the space. For some users, the ability to use the Women's Center resources at no cost helps to foster a sense of community and home. Describing her first visit to the Center for a finals week study session, one intern recalled:

People were watching movies, there was a girl there, and there were healthy and unhealthy snacks. As I looked for coffee, I was directed to the kitchen. I felt like I was home, I could help myself to anything and people were friendly.

Likewise, a respondent to the Women's Center survey commented, "I really enjoyed the resources (printing, pens, paper, and so on) that are available. The Women's Center does a great job at [diminishing] the alienation I find over and over at UCSD." A group of students from the student-run bookstore even utilize the Center's resources as an act of defiance against the university. They would rather donate funds to the Women's Center than patronize the institutional copy center. For them, utilizing the Center's resources is an exercise in activism and social justice.

Social Justice

While not as prominent as the theme on safe space and community, the theme of social justice also crossed all the data sources. While participants and survey respondents all appreciated the safe and welcoming aspects of the Women's Center's work, they also recognized that the Center's work involves social justice and social change. As one student intern wrote, "If I were describing the Women's Center to someone who knew nothing about it I would describe it as 'Awesome-like home except it also educates about social justice, focusing on gender issues, and provides outreach for programs that work social justice.'" This same intern goes on to write in a

subsequent journal, “the social justice art represents diverse programming that appeals to many different interests...The Women’s Center is empowering, a place that helps me be an advocate for change.” This sentiment that the Center both *performs* social justice work and *facilitates* social justice is echoed through other data sources.

For example, a survey respondent felt the Women’s Center’s primary purpose is to “to create a space to foster social justice for women here on campus and a place to be that is not male-dominated.” The Women’s Center also facilitates social justice work by helping its community be aware of different issues. A survey respondent commented, “The WC does a great job of informing and helping people realize how deeply patriarchal values are ingrained into our brains.”

Dialogue.

A key element of social justice work is the ability to be involved in dialogue and become aware of the issues through discussion groups and programs. This was evident in the Women’s Center assessment survey. Seven respondents described the Gender Buffet as their favorite program in the Center because, as one respondent stated, “it provides a safe space for us to discuss interesting and relevant topics in a group of people that are open minded and respectful.” Similarly, a male focus group participant appreciated having “mediated discussions” during Gender Buffet because of the safety he felt when topics were controversial. Dialogue and involvement in discussion helped students to find a community of activists with similar interests and passions. As the Gender Buffet journal participant described, she found her activism by talking about issues at the Center:

Through talking about issues, I learned that there were things I had thought were only things I thought about, but when I heard other people raise the same issues, it was rather cool—I wasn't alone in those thoughts. I started being more aware of aspects of life in a patriarchal society that I had previously never questioned—in talking about issues though, I did start questioning them.

Additionally, data indicated students value the opportunity to talk about social justice issues in a safe and comfortable environment. One survey respondent felt that the Women's Center provided "a comfort zone to freely speak their minds." In the same vein, describing how she felt when she first visited the Women's Center, an intern focus group participant recalled, "It was very comforting to be 'Wow there's a space that is centered around social justice' [and] discussions of things that are very personal to me in my life and that I connect with on a very deep level." This student's comment demonstrates the intersection of the personal and political within feminist work (Hanisch, 1969).

Hybridity

The Women's Center also fosters a sense of social justice by recognizing the intersections of people's identities. As one survey respondent put it, "The women's center is a space that operates from a social justice framework to address gender issues on campus and explore how they intersect with other parts of our identities (race, sexuality, etc.)." This concept of intersections is a key component of the mission of the Campus Community Centers and is echoed in the comments of a student intern focus group participant:

I think the primary purpose of the Women's Center is to build community affirming social justice and also recognizing intersectionality and how that plays a role in people's oppressions. Especially in the university setting where all come from different places, different backgrounds, different experiences

and levels of awareness. [The primary purpose is] fostering an environment where people can address those issues of intersectionality and see how they play into their own lives, in their own oppressions and privileges.

This commitment to intersectionality, by definition, makes the Women's Center a hybrid space. Within activity theory--in this case, the UCSD Women's Center as an activity setting—hybridity manifests as tension and contradiction within that activity system. An analysis of the hybridity of each dimension within the activity setting increases our understanding of the underlying tensions within the work (Engeström, Y. & Engeström, 2001).

The data revealed several instances of the intersection of public and private spheres supporting this hybrid theory. During a participant observation of a Gender Buffet program, for example, I noted the blended nature of the program. The Gender Buffet is a weekly discussion of gender and sexuality issues. Often the discussions are of a social justice nature, such as race, privilege, and violence, but they are conducted not in a classroom, nor in the conference room of the Center. Discussions take place in the living room with participants sitting in a circle on the couches, on the floor, and in chairs. Additionally, participants have these discussions while sharing a meal together—a community-building activity. During this particular observation, the discussion was sexual empowerment. This discussion was itself a hybrid activity as a discussion of sexuality (often a very private matter) in a public and open space.

A Women's Center intern described the unique nature of the Women's Center as place of both public and private sphere:

[The Women's Center] is a place where dialogue of sexism and gender issues is welcomed. A place that has a lot of programs for women empowerment.

Also, a place that is warm and homey. A place to study without feeling like you are in competition with the person in front of you...who flips the most pages in ten minutes. A place that does not feel like an ordinary place at UCSD.

Survey respondents affirmed this idea, stating that the primary purpose of the Women's Center is "to provide a safe space as well as provide a dynamic space for change" and "to provide a space for women at UCSD, to link women's communities at UCSD with the greater San Diego community, and to provide a space for forums about social activism." This public and private sphere interplay is evident in an exchange about napping between two intern focus group participants:

Participant 1: I want to go back to the nap factor because I was thinking about the whole idea of third space in terms of...a public sphere and private sphere...and private sphere would be like home, right? ... I'm kind of interpreting, like home where we take naps. And public sphere is like Geisel [library], where we don't take naps. And the thing about the Women's Center for me is that when I take naps here, they're warm naps... the couch is warm and when I wake up from my nap there's somebody there. I'll wake up and there will be someone on the other couch doing their homework... It's kind of like social space but also private space because I'm taking a nap.

Participant 2: It's not like at home where you can close the door. Here, people will be talking [to each other], or talking on their cell phone, or doing their homework, or on the computer and you're passed out on the couch.

Participant 1: It's like social napping.

Within third space theory, this hybrid space is a negotiated site of fluidity and resistance where new categories are created and reconstructed from the space of interstices (Boltagici, 2004). As one intern focus group participant recognized:

I think it's hard when building a community center in a higher education institution, there's often challenges of being in a hierarchical very very bureaucratic institution and at the same time be a community center that's there for the people, so that's one of the challenges that I feel the Women's Center seems to try and negotiate.

This same intern acknowledged the importance of the fluidity and constant change (construction and reconstruction) described by Bolatagici, commenting:

I think the most important thing after the activism and struggle...about the [Women's Center] is the need for constant change, for it to evolve, like struggle. There are different contexts, different kinds. My feminist struggle is very different from feminist struggles of 30 years ago, because times change, institutions change, levels of oppression change and therefore, it is very important for spaces like these to change in order to address the marginalization of people.

Data revealed that the intersections between safe space and social justice helped to accomplish the work of the Women's Center as well as foster the activism of students. The interaction between safe space and social justice manifested itself in three ways. First, the Women's Center provides a safe space to address social justice issues. As one focus group participant noted, the primary purpose of the Women's Center is to "[provide] a safe space to learn about and educate about social justice and issues of gender." Secondly, providing a safe space is in itself an act of social justice.

A second intern focus group participant stated:

Especially in a setting of a university which is often associated with corporate, hierarchical, very institutionalized, [the Women's Center tries] to foster an environment that provides some sort of shelter in a very bureaucratic system that often makes people feel alienated and marginalized, and in doing so, this is a way to address social justice.

Lastly, the Center's interest in social justice work makes it a safe space for marginalized students. A third student intern commented during the focus group:

In a way our interest in social justice means that we're a safe space for those marginalized, and so in that sense, there's this implicit exclusivity, but that's ignoring allyship and maybe that's something that we can address in terms of communicating that this is a community space...although we're working for social justice, it's not just about social justice for those who are marginalized.

It's about awareness and social justice as a whole for all of society, because in terms of intersectionality, [ending] one oppression [means ending] all oppressions.

Key Findings

Data revealed the importance of having a safe space and home environment for the users of the UC San Diego Women's Center. This theme emerged across all data sources. A related sentiment was the sense of community and feelings of belonging in the space, which were also revealed through all the data collection methods.

Additionally, other elements of the Center that were important to its users supported the themes of safe space and belonging. For example, access to the Centers' resources helped participants have a sense of belonging and ownership of the space. Use of the couches represented safety and comfort.

Safe space was also integrally tied to the social justice work of the Center. Data revealed three ways in which safe space and social justice intersected. The Women's Center provides a safe space to address social justice issues; the presence of the Center as a safe space is in itself an act of social justice; and the Center's social justice mission makes it a safe space for marginalized groups. The Women's Center both performs social justice work and creates an environment where others can be involved in activist work. For example, resources are made available for student organizations to do programs and projects, such as the copier, pens, and art supplies. Additionally, participants commented how the Women's Center helps to keep them more active and involved. The social justice work of the Center is manifested in the type of physical environment that is created, in the artwork on the walls, and in the

programs and events provided by the Center. In particular, users of the Center valued having a space to engage in critical dialogue and controversial conversations in an environment that both challenges and provides the safety to be involved in these types of discussions. The men who participated in the Gender Buffet focus group were particularly appreciative of the “moderated discussions” because, as one man put it, “sometimes we discuss issues that can cause people’s tempers to flare up.”

Unexpected Findings

While male participation in the study was limited, their responses revealed the transactional nature in which they utilize the Center. The two male participants in the focus group come to the Center to attend the programs and discussions. In contrast, the women participants come to programs as well as utilize the space just to *hang out*, do homework, or nap. While men in both the focus group and the survey respondents recognized the Women’s Center as a safe space, one focus group participant commented that the Women’s Center is a “safe space for women.”

Even though community and belonging were dominant themes in the data, some comments revealed ways in which the Women’s Center may not be providing the same level of safe space and community building for women of color. One respondent in the assessment survey described the Women’s Center as a “space for white women.” Additionally, one intern journal participant shared her experience during her first visit to the Center:

[T]he space did not feel like a women of color space. As I looked around, I saw a lot of flyers on birth control, abortion, health care, child care, issues that are “neutral.” These are issues that do not consider the women of color experience. For example, these issues can be issues (and are issues) that

women of color face, but it is not specific to women of color. I would have liked to see flyers on workshops about transnational motherhood, family reunification, immigration, division of labor. I saw these issues on books at the library, but not on flyers, workshops and such. I still wanted to become an intern.

Additionally, two other survey respondents commented regarding the a-political nature of the Center. The first respondent's comments also mentioned a lack of connection to issues facing women of color:

I hate the lack of connection I feel with the general lot of people that come in. I don't feel that the programs offered at the Women's Center offer me any real way to challenge the oppressions we face in society or in my life. I had no serious conversation about social change and there was no inspiring dialogue on gender, class, race, ability, religion and so on. The programs are so dull and void of direct political intent that I can't [bear] to come to them. I hate the computers that don't work, it's really disappointing since I need that as a struggling student. Generally the library is focused on privileged white feminism, and there aren't too many books that connect with my struggle.

The second respondent described the Women's Center as merely a symbol of social justice:

To serve as a symbol of "social justice" for the chancellor at UCSD and for the UC's in general. That is what I think the "primary purpose" is of the Women's Center, especially since the functions and programs put on by the Women's Center are often only for the UCSD community and are often a-political.

The feeling of not belonging is a familiar theme within women of color literature. For example, as a mestiza (mixed racial heritage) lesbian, Anzaldúa (1987) laments the feeling of belonging nowhere, and thus constructs a borderland "Third Country"

Alienated from her mother culture, "alien" in the dominant culture, the woman of color does not feel safe within the inner life of her Self.

Petrified, she can't respond, her face caught between los intersticios, the spaces between the different worlds she inhabits (p. 20).

Given the potential of hybrid spaces to create belonging for those in the interstices, the use of third space theory may provide ways in which the Center can more effectively serve the needs of women of color.

Summary

I set out to find the ways in which users of the UC San Diego Women's Center utilize the space and explore the work of the Center within a public and private sphere framework. Findings indicate a variety of ways in which students at UC San Diego utilize the Women's Center which belong in both the public and private spheres, and at times within a third space at the intersection of public and private. Analysis of the data uncovered seven meta-themes, with four meta-themes belonging in the private sphere and two meta-themes in the public sphere. Themes which emerged within the private sphere domain included safe space, community, resources and physical setting. Specifically, data indicate that the Center's physical environment and availability of resources contributed to the feeling of safe space and community-building. Within the public sphere domain, themes of social justice and dialogue emerged.

Participants in the study described instances in which both public and private sphere activities happened within the same time and space, which developed in the last meta-theme of *Hybridity*. This phenomenon was supported by my participant observation of two Center programs and a visual observation of the physical setting. The Women's Center's work has been shown to occupy both spheres and at times reside in a hybrid and negotiated space. Specifically, the intersections of the safe

space theme with the theme of social justice demonstrate the complex ways in which this hybridity has facilitated the Center's work. Chapter Five discusses the significance and meaning of these findings, including practical applications, implications for theory, and suggestions for further research.

Chapter V

So What: The Meaning Behind the Meta-Themes

The purpose of this study was to identify the main areas of involvement at the UC San Diego Women's Center through the eyes of the people (primarily students) who use the Center. Additionally, I explored the tension and balance between public and private sphere within the Center. A secondary purpose of the study was to identify ways in which the Women's Center's work may belong to a third and hybrid sphere.

Chapter Five discusses the significance and meaning of the major findings of this study, including implications for theory and practice and suggestions for further research. I begin with a summary of the study, with an overview of the problem, purpose of the exploration and research questions that guided the study. This is followed by a review of the key findings, conclusions and interpretations. Additionally, findings are connected back to the theoretical frameworks and literature.

Summary of the Study

Nearly 500 college and university Women's Centers in the United States offer support, information and referral resources, programs, and education around gender and equity issues (Kasper, 2004b). Although the first campus-based Women's Center was established at the University of Minnesota in 1948, the majority were established in the 1970's as a response to issues of gender equity raised by students, staff, and faculty in institutions of higher education (Koikari & Hippensteele, 2000). The UC

San Diego Women's Center was one of the last Women's Centers established in the University of California system. It opened in October, 1996.

Early in the research process, my observations of differential treatment among the three Campus Community Centers motivated an examination of the public and private sphere tensions within the work of the Women's Center. This curiosity was based on initial perceptions of Cross-Cultural Center work within the public sphere and Women's Center and LGBT Center work within the private sphere, coupled with the literature about the devaluing of private sphere work (Cameron & Gibson-Graham, 2003; Daniels, 1987; Marshall & Anderson, 1994; Badgett & Folbre, 1999). The UC San Diego Women's Center is one of three Campus Community Centers. It was established one year after the UC San Diego Cross-Cultural Center and three years before the Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender (LGBT) Resource Center. In addition, the Women's Center is the second largest of the three Centers both in size of staff, amount of budget, and square footage of space. The Cross-Cultural Center is the largest and the LGBT Resource Center is the smallest. This study explored the cultural dimensions of the UC San Diego Women's Center in an effort to understand its organizational features within a public/private sphere lens.

The review of the literature revealed a lack of empirical research about campus-based Women's Centers. Of the studies conducted to date, most have been descriptive case studies about programs and events, administrative structure, and funding models (Byrne, 2000; Davie 2002; Kasper, 2004b). Although many authors have discussed the tension between the caring labor and political activity within

Women's Centers' work (Bengiveno, 2001; Byrne, 2000; Davie, 2002; Sanders-Lawson, Smith-Campbell, & Benham, 2006), no research studies have been conducted which address this central phenomenon. This study empirically investigated the public and private sphere phenomenon as it relates to Women's Center work and the possibility of a third and blended sphere, heretofore unexamined within campus-based Women's Centers.

Overview of the Problem

Kasper's (2004a) study of campus-based Women's Centers revealed concerns about the climate of budget cuts, scarce resources and the growing sentiments that Women's Centers are no longer needed or relevant to students' lives. Such concerns have prompted many Women's Centers to document the need for their resources and broaden the scope of their work beyond providing student services. For example, the National Women's Centers Training Project report *Increasing the Effectiveness of Women's Programs on College Campuses* identified "affecting policy and decision-making on campuses" (Bengiveno, 2001, p.44) as an area of concern for college and university Women's Centers.

Experience, on one hand, suggests that users of the Women's Center value the affective work of the organization, such as providing a comfortable home environment and creating a sense of community for the students, staff and faculty on campus. University demands, on the other hand, dictate the need to produce quantifiable measures of success. The potential differences between stakeholders and university policy demands in this time of scarce resources made an examination of Women's

Center's work timely and critical. It was especially important to examine the UC San Diego Women's Center using theoretical lenses that consider how key stakeholders utilize the space, participate in the activities and value larger public sphere action.

Theoretical frameworks of public sphere, private sphere and third space informed this research project. The relationships between larger university stakeholder participation and actual user services indicates a tension between what is referred to as the spheres of *public* and *private* work as mediated by such Centers. The private sphere encompasses the domain of the family and home while the public sphere includes the domain of government and politics (Daniels, 1987; Yuval-Davis, 1997; Wyatt, Katz & Kim, 2000). These strict definitions of public and private sphere were difficult to operationalize given the Women's Center's position as neither a private home nor a governmental agency. Therefore, because community-building work is part of the caring labor of the Center, this study expanded the notion of private sphere to include community-building work. Additionally, Arendt (1958) argued that politics involves "action in a community of peers" (in Pitkin, 1981, p. 327). Therefore, social activism was included within the public realm.

Based on the relative dearth of research concerning such Centers and as the Director of the UC San Diego Women's Center, I wondered to what extent this tension between public and private sphere is perceived at UC San Diego. How does the Women's Center negotiate its place in the private domain within the public context of the university? In particular, how does the Women's Center manage the fine line

between public and private sphere to provide its constituents a space that both heals and builds on feminist activism?

A negotiated third space framework was used to understand this interplay between public and private sphere work within campus-based Women's Centers. The concept of third space represents hybridity, extended opportunities and expanded learning (Bhabha, 1994; Gutierrez, Baquedano-Lopez, and Tejada, 1999). The third space is a negotiated site of fluidity and resistance where new categories are created and reconstructed from the in-between space (Bolatagici, 2004). In this way, third space theory provides a useful tool to understand the negotiated space between "binding wounds" and "changing the world" occupied by campus-based Women's Centers (Davie, 2002, p. 7).

Purpose and research questions.

This case study explored the organizational characteristics of the UC San Diego Women's Center and the ways in which its users participate at the Center. I used five data collection methods to gain an in-depth understanding of how different groups of students utilize the Center. The process included participant journaling, focus groups, participant observation, an assessment survey, and document review. Public sphere, private sphere and third space theoretical frameworks informed the findings.. The following research questions guided the study:

1. What are the major dimensions through which users of the Women's Center participate? What are the unique cultural features of the Women's Center?

2. How do users participate at the Women's Center? In what activities are they engaged?
3. In what ways does the work of providing support services and assistance to women (private sphere) intersect with and/or compete with the work of influencing policies, and campus-decisions (public sphere)?

A single exploratory case study design was used to address the above research questions.

Review of the methodology.

I gathered data from three sources—the researcher (participant observation and visual audit), users of the Center (participant journaling, focus groups, and assessment survey), and archives (documents, correspondence, and annual reports). Drawing upon three main data sources allowed me to triangulate the results of the evidence collected, increasing the validity and reliability of the study results (Brewer & Hunter, 1989; Merriam, 1998; Yin, 2003). Provisional code lists identified through the conceptual framework were developed to identify events of either public or private sphere nature prior to any data collection. Founding documents, proposal reports for the establishment of a campus Women's Center, and artifacts from a public art project were analyzed to test the provisional codes and to generate a more refined code list. From these early sources of data, themes were generated for comparison with subsequent data sources. Codes were expanded beyond labeling of public and private sphere to include specific categories in which users of the Women's Center participate.

Additional data were collected from participants by conducting two focus groups and four sets of computer-assisted interviews and journals. Participants included a purposeful sample of undergraduate students, chosen based on the theoretical frameworks (Marshall & Rossman, 1998; Brewer & Hunter, 1989). Four students completed participant journals over the course of three months. One focus group interview was conducted with student interns employed by the Women's Center. Another focus group included students involved in the weekly Gender Buffet program. In addition, first-hand accounts were gathered through participant observation and a visual audit of the Center. Finally, additional data was collected from a Women's Center assessment survey with a convenience sample of those able and willing to participate. This assessment survey of the Center's programs and services included questions about how users participate in the Center's activities and utilize the space. Results of these data collection methods were then examined for major themes and patterns.

Major Findings

Based on responses from the study participants, elements of both public and private sphere activities have been incorporated in the UC San Diego Women's Center's current work and in the ways that participants utilize the Center's resources, programs and physical space. Analysis of the data uncovered seven meta-themes. Four meta-themes relate to the private sphere work of the Center and two meta-themes relate to the public sphere elements. Additionally, participants in the study described instances in which both public and private sphere activities happened simultaneously.

These examples developed into the last meta-theme of *Hybridity*. Table 11 outlines the meta-themes and the conceptual frameworks related to each theme.

Table 11

Conceptual frameworks and associated meta-themes

Conceptual Framework	Meta-Theme
Private sphere	Safe space Physical setting Community Resources
Public sphere	Social Justice Dialogue
Third space	Hybridity

Themes which emerged within the private sphere domain included safe space, community, resources and physical setting. Specifically, data indicated that the Center's physical environment and availability of resources contributed to the feeling of safe space and community-building. Within the public sphere domain, themes of social justice and dialogue were revealed, while the hybrid nature of the Center revealed the intersection between the public and the private as experienced by the users.

Safe Space and Feeling at Home in the Physical Setting

Several feminist scholars have proposed that work involving care, comforting, and nurturing is undervalued (Daniels, 1987; Folbre, 1995). This type of work, however, is most valued by users of the UC San Diego Women's Center who

participated in this study. The creation of a safe *home away from home* environment for students was a dominant theme in the data and seemed to be the most salient aspect of the Women's Center. Participants described the Women's Center as not only a space where they felt safe but as a place that offered safety for other, marginalized students. For example, some participants contrasted their feeling of safety with their overall experience at the university. As one Gender Buffet focus group participant noted, being at the Women's Center highlights how the rest of the campus is not friendly. She commented, "There are a lot of places that I don't quite fit. [The Women's Center is] like Cheers. Everybody knows your name." Some students described the Center as a place to escape the university bureaucracy, thus making the Women's Centers not only safe space but also a necessary place for promoting student retention and positive well-being

Further, several sub-themes directly related to this feeling of safe space, such as the ability to be oneself, the physical setting and napping. The environment at the Women's Center positively impacted the users of the space. Several characteristics of the physical setting contributed to the feeling of safe space and home for users of the Center, for example the "living room feel" of the main lobby area. Several participants described the bright colors of the space and furniture fondly. Specifically, the couches were a highly appreciated resource of the Center, as much for their comfort as for their symbolic link between the safe home they left behind and the bigger, more intimidating world represented by the university.

Several participants across multiple data collection methods described the act of napping on the couches as important to them. The ability to nap in the space represented both an element of safety and the ability to feel ownership of the space. For example, blankets and throws brought in by users of the Center can be found in the Women's Center living room and library area, left in the space for anyone within the community to use.

Community and Access to Resources

Feelings of safety, the freedom to be oneself, and the ability to feel comfortable in the physical setting all contributed to a sense of community and belonging at the Women's Center. Results indicated that participants experience a sense of isolation on the university campus as a whole and the "bureaucracy" is a source of stress. The Women's Center is a place where they can find a community of like-minded individuals and escape the feelings of unfriendliness experienced on the campus. The feeling of belonging was something that participants wished for more people on the UC San Diego campus.

The importance of community spanned across all data sources and was revealed not only through a sense of belonging felt in the physical space, but in the use of Center resources and services. Many users of the Women's Center found their entry point into the space through the use of its formal resources and services such as the library, copier, or information regarding gender or family issues. For example, a student-run collective of the university uses the Women's Center's resources as an act of social justice, refusing to pay money at the university-run copy center and instead

preferring to donate funds to the Women's Center. Additionally, participants valued the provision of informal resources, such as receiving information and referral sources from other users. Participant observations revealed that frequent users of the Center act as an informal resource network for each other as well as for those new to the space. This sharing of resources is in the spirit of a social justice paradigm which includes community responsibility and distribution of resources.

Adams, Bell, and Griffin (1997) believed:

Social justice includes a vision of society in which the distribution of resources is equitable and all members are physically and psychologically safe and secure. [They] envision a society in which individuals are both self-determining (able to develop their full capacities), and interdependent (capable of interacting democratically with others). Social justice involves social actors who have a sense of their own agency as well as a sense of social responsibility toward and with others and the society as a whole (p. 3).

By utilizing this definition, Adams, Bell, and Griffin acknowledge the importance of feeling safe in one's physical and psychological environment. They underscored the integral part that community plays in enacting social justice.

Social Justice and Dialogue

The theme of social justice also crossed all the data sources. While participants and survey respondents all appreciated the safe and welcoming aspects of the Women's Center, they also recognized that the Center's work involves social justice and social change. Results indicated that the Center both *performs* social justice work and *facilitates* the social justice work of others.

A key element of social justice was the ability to be involved in dialogue and become aware of issues through discussion groups and programs. Dialogue and

involvement in discussion helped students to find a community of activists with similar interests and passions. Additionally, data indicated that students value the opportunity to talk about social justice issues in a safe and comfortable environment, demonstrating the intersections of the private and public sphere. This intersection is an example of the hybrid nature of the Women's Center's work.

Hybridity

The Women's Center also fosters a sense of social justice by recognizing the intersections of people's identities. As one survey respondent put it, "The women's center is a space that operates from a social justice framework to address gender issues on campus and explore how they intersect with other parts of our identities (race, sexuality, etc.)." This concept of intersections is a key component of the mission of the Campus Community Centers as a collective, which states "ending one oppression requires ending all oppressions" (Campus Community Centers, 2008).

This commitment to intersectionality demonstrates the hybrid space which the Women's Center occupies on a physical, emotional, and organizational level. The data revealed several instances of the intersection of public and private spheres, supporting this hybridity. For example, during one observation of a Gender Buffet program, I noted the private nature of the discussion around sexuality in a public setting of the Women's Center living room. Participants described the activity of sleeping in public, with one participant noting, "It's kind of like social space but also private space because I'm taking a nap." Data also revealed the intersections between safe space and social justice.

Sanders-Lawson, Smith-Campbell, and Benham (2006) argued that the traditional view of feminism as a movement of caring and concern marginalizes women economically, socially, and politically. For students at the UC San Diego Women's Center, however, the caring and concern exhibited by the Center helped to ground them in the social justice work of the Center. This caring contributed to students' sense of belonging, diminishing their feelings of being marginalized on the campus. The interaction between safe space and social justice manifested itself in three ways. First, the Women's Center provides a safe space to address social justice issues. Secondly, providing a safe space is in itself an act of social justice. Lastly, the Center's interest in social justice work makes it a safe space for marginalized students. This intersection of safe space and social justice addresses an earlier question of how a Women's Center manages the fine line between public and private sphere and provides its users a space that both heals and builds on feminist activism.

Surprises

Results showed the transactional nature in which men participate at the Center. While women may utilize the Center to find community, take a nap, or simply hang out, men in the study shared that they come to the Women's Center primarily to attend specific programs and events. In particular, they come to engage in moderated discussions during the weekly Gender Buffet program. While one male participant in the focus groups felt welcome to attend these events, he still conceived of the Women's Center as a "safe space for women."

Study findings revealed, however, that not all women feel safe at the UC San Diego Women's Center. One intern remarked that the Center did not feel like a "woman of color space." Additionally, one assessment survey respondent observed that the Women's Center is a "space for white women." Two other survey participants commented on the apolitical nature of the Center, with one stating, "The programs are so dull and void of direct political intent that I can't [bear] to come to them." While dissatisfied with the space, however, these students continued to utilize the Women's Center. For example, the student intern commented that, although the Center did not feel like a women of color space, she still wanted to become an intern. These students occupy a place in-between—a hyphen space that is contradictory and ambivalent. Given the potential of hybrid spaces to create belonging for those in the hyphens, the use of third space theory may provide ways the Women's Center can more successfully serve the needs of women of color

Conclusions and Interpretations: The Research Questions Revisited

The goal of this study was to understand the ways users of the UC San Diego Women's Center utilize the space and to explore the work of the Center within a public and private sphere framework. Findings indicated a variety of ways students at UC San Diego interact with and participate at the Center which belong in both the public and private spheres, as well as a negotiated third and blended space. Several themes emerged which describe the ways that participants make use of the Center and reveal its organizational culture. Table 12 provides a brief overview of the research

questions and the meta-themes which emerged to answer each question. This is followed by a narrative elaboration by research question.

Table 12

Research questions and meta-themes which emerged to address each question

Research Question	Meta-Theme
<p>Research Question One: What are the major dimensions through which users of the Women's Center participate? What are the unique cultural features of the Women's Center?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safe Space • Physical setting (comfortable physical setting that promotes safe space) • Community • Social Justice
<p>Research Question Two: How do users participate at the Women's Center? In what activities are they engaged?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resources (formal, informal, physical) • Community • Dialogue
<p>Research Question Three: In what ways does the work of providing support services and assistance to women (private sphere) intersect with and/or compete with the work of influencing policies, and campus-decisions (public sphere)?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hybridity

Research Question One: Cultural features of the UC San Diego Women's Center

The UC San Diego Women's Center creates a safe space for its users through the make-up of the physical environment, the feelings it invokes, and the services it provides. Establishing a safe space facilitates the social justice endeavors of others as well as those of the Center. Safe space is also revealed through several dimensions of the Center including the ability to let one's guard down enough to nap on the couches

and the feeling of escape from the perceived hostility of the larger university setting. In providing this safety, the Women's Center creates community and facilitates a sense of belonging within the space. As one survey respondent described, the Women's Center is "a safe space for people so they can feel a sense of community."

The Women's Center is a place that creates a sense of community and belonging at UC San Diego. Belonging is an important cultural feature of the Center, often manifested in the use of the Center's resources and the offering of informal resources and information by frequent users of the space. The welcoming feeling the Center fosters contributes to this community and belonging by creating an atmosphere that is friendly and inviting. This is accomplished both through the physical environment and the ways in which staff interact with visitors in the space. For example, a Gender Buffet focus group participant commented, "The first time I came here it was at the other building...[A former intern] worked at the front desk. She was very nice and made me feel welcomed very quickly." The Women's Center also helps students to find others who are interested in feminism and social justice, supporting the community of activists who frequent the space.

The Women's Center is a social justice space. Social justice is expressed through the activities of the Center, the artwork chosen for display, the opportunities to engage in meaningful dialogue, and the safe space to accomplish this work. For marginalized students on campus, the creation of safe space is an act of social justice. Conversely, the Center is a safe space because of its work around social justice. In bringing together the elements of safety, belonging, and social justice, the UC San

Diego Women's Center creates an environment that promotes the wellness and of its community of activists as well as the positive well-being of all its users.

Research Question Two: How Users Participate at the Women's Center

First time visitors often find the Women's Center because they are looking for specific resources and services. Some need information about on-campus resources and off-campus service agencies. Others come to use the lactation room, computers, or copiers. Frequent users of the space often become informal resources themselves for first time visitors, giving information and answering questions that are frequently asked of the front desk staff. The ability to be informal sources of information for other Center users indicates a sense of ownership and belonging in the space for these frequent users.

Students also utilize the physical resources of the Center, such as the furniture and conference rooms. They use the couches to study and to take naps in between classes. Students use the community computers to write papers and browse the internet. Conference rooms are used for formal organization meetings as well as used informally as a place to study or have lunch. Some students who visit the Center have no particular need to fill, but come to hang out in the space and be in community with others.

Students also find community at the Center by participating in informal discussions and facilitated dialogues around social justice and gender issues. Informal discussions sometimes happen during programs such as the Yarn Factory (monthly knitting and crochet group) as well over lunch in the living room. Formal discussions

are facilitated through the weekly Gender Buffet program as well as other programs such as film screenings and guest speakers. Lastly, student activists utilize the resources and expertise of the Center to take action around various social justice issues. By fulfilling a dual purpose around providing resources and enacting social justice, the Women's Center can honor its historical roots as a social service agency as well as expand its role beyond student services to affect larger social issues.

Research Question Three: The Public and Private Sphere Tension

The literature on campus-based Women's Center underscored the problematic tension between the perceptions of Women's Centers as social change agent--public sphere work--and campus service resource—private sphere work (Bengiveno, 2001). Davie (2002), for example, described the delicate balance of Women's Center work between “binding wounds” and “changing the world” (p. 7). This study revealed that the work of the UC San Diego Women's Center is indeed manifested through both the public and private spheres. The building of community and creation of safe space can be viewed as the private sphere work of the Center—the caring labor. Additionally, the social justice and activism endeavors of the Center are situated in the public sphere.

Rather than experiencing these two seemingly opposing sides as tension, however, users of the Women's Center readily accept both as integral to its mission. At times it seems that both public and private sphere lenses are employed in the same time and space, such as at the intersection of social justice and safe space described above. The UC San Diego Women's Center expands Davie's (2002) concept of a

delicate balance, creating a space in which the act of healing wounds facilitates the work of changing the world. In this way, the caring work of the Center is not relegated to the margins of the activist work. For this Women's Center, there is neither a tug-of-war nor a balancing act. Instead a new hybrid space is created which rejects the dualism and enacts innovative forms of feminism and activism.

Traditionally, the public sphere of production has been the realm of men, while the private sphere of social relationships and caring has been the domain of women (Folbre & Nelson, 2000; Daniels, 1987). Some scholars, however, resist the binary oppositions of public and private, masculine and feminine, center and margin (Anzaldúa, 1987; Ashcraft, 2000; Pile, 1994). They argue that these divisions are unnatural boundaries and instead conceive of a third space that embraces *and/both* rather than *either/or*. Pile (1994) contends, "the third space is a politics; a space which avoids the politics of polarity and enables the construction of new radical allegiances to oppose structures of authority" (p. 271). The UC San Diego Women's Center works the hyphen between public and private sphere, thus engaging third space.

Enacting Third Space

Students saw the primary purpose of the Women's Center as one of building a safe space community and recognizing intersectionality. It is this negotiation of intersecting and multiple levels of identity which allows the Center to enact third space as it pertains to students' ways of existing as whole persons. This was noted as especially true in the university setting, where students come from different backgrounds, experiences and levels of awareness. Saldivar-Hull (2000) described the

intersections of identities within the individual as the “warring ideologies within the border dweller” (p. 61). Students experience the mission of the Women’s Center as fostering an environment where people can address those issues of intersectionality and see how they play into their own lives and experiences on the campus.

The physical make-up of the Center reveals its ambiguous state between public and private, institutional and home-like. On the outside, it looks like many other buildings on the campus. It is bland and square, yet there are a spots of color that mark it, such as the bright purple sign outside the front doors. Hidden by the trees is a large outdoor picture of Wonder Woman with the words “I want my revolution” painted at the bottom. Inside, the Center is like no other space on campus. Visitors are greeted by bright colors and comfortable couches. These couches were not purchased through an institutional catalogue or storehouse, but were personally selected by the staff from a home furnishings store. The community-use computers are tucked away in the corner and the administrative area is separate from the community area. There is a shower in the restroom. Pillows and blankets are available for napping. A rocking chair and ottoman welcome mothers who breastfeed and pump milk. The community area has been purposefully set up to feel like a domestic space rather than an institutional office. In blending the functions of business and home, the Women’s Center has set up a third space physical setting.

The Gender Buffet program is an example of third space practice. Often the discussions are of a political or social justice nature, yet they are carried out in a comfortable setting, moderated by one of the Women’s Center’s interns in order to

provide a sense of safety for all participants. For frequent participants in the program, it has become a lunch-time gathering and place to find community. It is an opportunity to engage in critical dialogue and share many viewpoints and opinions. As one study participant shared, she has sometimes come to Gender Buffet with one particular viewpoint and changed her mind after engaging in discussion. “Third spaces, therefore, is a concept that describes an openness and exploration of perspectives which can result in the emergence of new points of view” (Keenan & Miehl, 2008).

Students at the Women’s Center embody the third space nature of the Center through their practice. The Center is a place where social justice is enacted through both public sphere action and private sphere caring relationships. The students’ activism does not come so much from a place of oppression but from engagement in community. In practicing a form of social justice that comes from a place of love and healing, they understand that they are neither margin nor center, but create a new space of resistance and find creative ways to achieve justice. It is through the use of third space practice that we can address those who feel that the Center is void of any political action. This new perspective “positions their radical third-space position as a standpoint for action for social justice and shows how it is understood and practiced within the postcolonial perspective that is too often denounced as apolitical, noncommittal, or lost in linguistics” (English, 2005, p. 86).

In describing the liminal space of mestiza consciousness, Saldivar-Hull (2000) argued that the domestic space is a legitimate site of struggle. The Women’s Center

creates a safe space where students can activate social justice. The space fosters new ways of acting and thinking about feminist issues. It is a home environment where political discussions occur over a meal and on comfortable couches. Participants in the monthly knitting and crochet group discuss ways in which the Women's Center provides an escape from the university bureaucracy while engaged in their yarn art. By helping to facilitate these hybrid activities, the Center allows a place that is considered home to be a site of resistance. Perhaps it is in this hybrid space where a new community sphere may be imagined, one that makes meaning from the intersections of the public and the private, the personal and the political.

Implications for Theory and Practice

Stall and Stoecker (1998) included the neighborhood or small, local community within the private sphere. In contrast, Martin (2002) described community events as part of a neighborhood public sphere. Possibly because of the perceived strict separation of the public and the private, the community location cannot be easily categorized. Perhaps it is more appropriate to locate the community within its own sphere—a third category which embraces aspects of both the public and the private.

Much like third space, this study revealed that *community* is a concept that is fluid and dynamic. There are multiple meanings of the term itself. For some, it means the *sense of* community, felt at an individual level. At times the term refers to a group of people who have come together for a common cause or issue, on an organizational level. And on a broader scale, it could mean the physical site of belonging on a societal level. Community is constantly changing as the different people involved in

the group enter and exit, and as the context in which the terminology is employed changes. In this way, the notion of community is continuously constructed and reconstructed.

This study revealed that the community of intersections created at the UC San Diego Women's Center is one that values both public and private sphere domains. In addition, students in this community negotiate the enactment of public, private, or both at once, depending on time and circumstance. As English (2005) described:

Third refers to the constructing and reconstructing of identity, to the fluidity of space. In cultural studies literature, *third* is used to denote the place where negotiation takes place, where identity is constructed and reconstructed, where life in all its ambiguity is played out (p. 87).

It is in this new community sphere, this third space that enjoys a "tolerance for ambiguity" (Anzaldúa, 1987, p. 79), where the work of the UC San Diego Women's Center fits best. The Center facilitates the engagement in community by attending to both the need to feel safe and the call to take action. The third space created within the Women's Center community is one that mediates the tension between identity and understanding, allowing voice to be asserted in a place where marginalized students feel safe and secure. Conceivably it is also the location where caring labor can be re-negotiated into a place that is no longer less appreciated than the work of production.

Traditional scholarship places production within the public sphere, while social relationships and caring have been situated within the private sphere (Folbre & Nelson, 2000; Daniels, 1987). As such, caring labor has usually been less valued than public sphere work (Cameron & Gibson-Graham, 2003; Marshall & Anderson, 1994; Badgett & Folbre, 1999). Given the research findings that the caring work of the

Women's Center is the most important to its users, this contradiction begs the question, "What is *value* and who defines it?"

As noted earlier, this study expanded Davie's (2002) description of Women's Center's work between "binding wounds" and "changing the world" (p.7). Results indicated that the UC San Diego Women's Center creates a space in which the act of healing wounds facilitates the production of changing the world. For example, the public action of the Center can arguably be seen as the product of the private needs of its community. In this way, the caring work of the Center is not second to the activist work. Instead, a new third space is created which rejects the polarity of separating the two types of labor within the Women's Center's work.

Returning to the three areas highlighted in the literature review—feminist leadership, feminist community organizing, and campus-based Women's Centers—this study reveals ways in which third space theory may be employed to affect practice. Third space illuminates ways in which building caring and connected relationships may enhance feminist leadership practice. Additionally, feminist community organizing can be enhanced by recognizing the personal is political. Lastly, campus-based Women's Centers can demonstrate their relevance on college campuses by aligning themselves with the retention efforts of the university.

Leadership Practice

At the time of this writing, the UC San Diego Women's Center received notification of impending budget cuts. In this time of scarce resources, an examination of how resources are expended becomes especially important. This study

revealed that the most salient aspects of the Women's Center are the creation of safe space and community. It is through the work of providing safety and belonging that social justice work is facilitated. Therefore, when determining how and where funds are allocated, it is imperative to consider what matters most to those who frequent the space. As the Director of the Center, I must consider the needs of those closest to the Center in determining the programmatic offerings. Does the Center, for example, spend \$6000 to contract a high-level social justice and diversity speaker? Or does it use those funds to enhance the physical comfort of the space? Should funds be allocated towards producing a list of programs for the annual report, or should resources be set aside to foster the creative energies of the students?

Reflecting upon this research study, I realized that I began this exploration because I myself undervalued the caring work of the Center. I felt it was secondary to the social justice work and the efforts of affecting campus policies and decision-making. I had not previously realized the importance of attending to the affective dimensions of students' identities in order to provide a space in which their activism could flourish. The difficulty, however, lies in the ways the importance of the Women's Center is reported to the larger university administration.

Ashcraft (2000) explained how traditional notions of public and private sphere define the public arena as the legitimate site of production. When asked for reports of work, activities, and budget expenditures, it is often the quantifiable measures which are included—the products of the work. For example, every year the UC San Diego Women's Center is asked for a *list* of programs and events related to diversity which

the Center has planned and implemented. The Chancellor's Office has asked the staff of the Campus Community Centers for a report of *initiatives* that enhance campus diversity. Often, the work of creating community, belonging, trust and safety are not included in these reports as it cannot be easily quantified and are not visible products of labor. The leadership of these types of Centers must, therefore, find ways of reporting the caring labor of their Centers since it has been demonstrated to be the most important to the actual users. Additionally, this study demonstrated how the attention to the affective domain directly facilitated the social justice work of those engaged in the Center. Administrators and staff of these Centers should demonstrate how the work of caring and concern affects their campus' diversity efforts by including these types of data in their annual reports. Further, administrators should create strategies to quantitatively measure the affective work in which they are engaged.

Community Organizing

Stall and Stoecker (1998) described the *Alinsky* model of organizing as ones that “begin with ‘community organizing’—the public sphere battles between the haves and have-nots” (p. 733). In contrast, the women-centered model is one that “begins with ‘organizing community’—building expanded private sphere relationships and empowering individuals through these relationships” (Stall & Stoecker, 1998 p. 733). Using a third space perspective incorporates both of these strategies. Within a feminist space such as the Women's Center, students are able to build relationships and find community in order to engage in the public sphere battles described above.

Incorporating this paradigm moves third space practitioners away from essentializing what is political and what is not. Instead, third space practitioners understand that fostering relationships promotes social justice work. This understanding helps us to see why a program like Yarn Factory is supported by a feminist Women's Center and why providing a comfortable physical space is integral to its work. As Adams, Bell and Griffin (1997) argued, social justice attends to psychological safety of all participants and promotes an environment where community is cultivated.

The 2006 Council for the Advancement of Standards *Women Student Programs and Services* (WSPS) Standards and Guidelines suggested, "WSPS should provide social activism opportunities that allow for the integration of theory with practice." A third space framework allows Women's Centers to introduce new theoretical lenses into the discussion of social activism. In addition, previous knowledge and experience around the work of caring labor can be incorporated into the examination of social justice activities.

One way that the UC San Diego Women's Center might accomplish this is to revise the way it promotes its programs. For example, a flyer about Gender Buffet might emphasize both the social justice elements of the discussion topic as well as the community-building nature of the entire program. Additionally an article about the feminist resurgence of knitting might be included in the Women's Center quarterly newsletter, next to the advertisement for the Yarn Factory program.

Women's Centers Support Retention Efforts

Feminist scholars have proposed that work involving care, comforting, and nurturing is undervalued (Daniels, 1987; Folbre, 1995). Higher education research, however, has demonstrated the importance of belonging and community to student persistence and retention (Astin, 1993; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991; Tinto, 1993). “As many colleges have learned, talking about community is a great deal easier than constructing real communities of learning, belonging, and identity on college and university campuses” (Wiley, 2002, in Cheng, 2004, p. 227).

This study demonstrated the means by which one campus-based Women's Center has been able to construct a community of belonging, learning, and intersecting identities. While some administrators of campus-based Women's Centers worried that they are no longer relevant to students' lives (Kasper, 2004a), the literature about student retention gives practitioners a lens from which to underscore the value of Women's Center work. By aligning their efforts with the retention work of the university, campus-based Women's Centers may demonstrate their importance to the overall academic mission of the university. The UC San Diego Women's Center might achieve this by sharing its best practices with other departments within Student Affairs. In this way the Center will promote the value of its programs and services at the same time that it shares valuable knowledge with others in the campus community.

This implication is related to the above recommendation about finding ways to report the caring labor of campus-based Women's Centers. Centers may not be able to make direct claims of retaining students. But reporting the ways they create belonging

and community, coupled with the research about retention and persistence, demonstrate ways in which Women's Centers contribute to a positive undergraduate experience.

Limitations of the Study

This study examined one Women's Center at one university setting. Findings may not be transferable to other Women's Centers at different types of institutions. The purpose of this study, however, was not to generalize to a broader population, but to develop a greater understanding of a particular phenomenon within one setting. The research project underscores successful ways of enacting third space practice.

In addition, only undergraduate students were included in the participant journaling and focus groups. The study neither considered the perspectives of graduate students, staff, nor faculty, except through limited participation in the assessment survey. Further, focus group participants were included because of their willingness to participate in the study. They self-selected into the study, which may have produced different results from a random selection of participants.

The use of computer-assisted journaling was a challenge. I could not build a rapport with the participants and it was difficult to follow up in a timely manner. Probing questions could not be easily included in the journal prompts without anticipating the answers of the participants. I could not make note of the intonations in voice, facial expressions, or body language. It was also difficult to elicit rich descriptions from the participants toward the end of the project. Earlier journals were more descriptive and longer compared to the last journals.

Lastly, as I stated earlier, I began this exploration because I perceived differential treatment of the Women's Center and LGBT Resource Center compared to the Cross-Cultural Center. I initially felt that this difference might be due to the private sphere nature of the Women's Center's and LGBT Resource Center's work. I undervalued the caring work and had a bias toward valuing the social justice and public sphere activity of the Center. I noted these feelings in a research journal and consciously checked my prejudice during the data collection and analysis process in order to ensure I objectively reported the findings. This was especially important when predominantly private sphere themes emerged. By triangulating three sources of evidence and engaging in member checking, however, limitations were addressed within the data collection process, analysis, and the final conclusions.

Recommendations for Further Research

This study explored the organizational features of the UC San Diego Women's Center through a third space lens. The study revealed a few surprising results which warrant additional empirical examination. In particular, examining ways in which to include women of color within Women's Center work is important to the mission of all the Campus Community Centers, which recognizes the intersections of all identities. Additionally, theoretical frameworks related to third space may be useful in exploring the work of campus-based Women's Centers. Incorporating other educational philosophies may provide information about the relevance of such Centers within an educational context.

Third Space and Women of Color

As discussed earlier, social norms, traditions, and economic models that associate being female with care of others contributes to women's economic disadvantage and oppression because caring labor (often unpaid labor in the home) has traditionally been less valued than public sphere work of production (Badgett & Folbre, 1999; Cameron & Gibson-Graham, 2003; Daniels, 1987; Marshall & Anderson, 1994). It is important to point out, however, that women of color and poor women have often been excluded from the protected private domain of the home (Glenn, 1985; Naples, 1991). Rather, women of color and low-income women have been considered laborers within the public economy, often permeating the boundaries of public and private spheres through extended networks of family and community. In these ways, women of color and poor women have provided examples of ways to bridge these two "warring ideologies" (Saldivar-Hull, 2000, p. 61).

Perhaps in adopting a primarily private sphere framework of safe space and community, the UC San Diego Women's Center has alienated those women who have traditionally been excluded from the protected private sphere—women of color. I wonder, then, if there are better ways for the Center to create a borderland "Third Country" for women of color, as Anzaldúa (1987) described. Anzaldúa states:

Borders are set up to define the places that are safe and unsafe, to distinguish *us* from *them*... A borderland is a vague and undetermined place created by the emotional residue of an unnatural boundary. It is a constant state of transition (p. 3).

Anzaldúa's conception of the borderland—the in-between space-- situates it as a place of safety. In adopting a third space framework, campus-based Women's

Center might find ways in which to engage women of color in safer and more meaningful ways. This study highlighted a few examples of ways women of color feel alienated at the UC San Diego Women's Center. As a space that values the intersections of all identities, it is important to examine further how to best serve the needs of all women, including women of color. Incorporating a Chicana feminist lens of a third space borderland may provide a powerful framework for research regarding women of color within Women's Center spaces.

Confluent Education

The affective areas of belonging, community, and safety were seen in comments of the physical structures of the sites (art, furnishings, and resource use), feelings of safety within the space, and the ability to enact social justice with like-minded individuals. Students described ways in which the affective qualities connected with the social justice work of the Center. Similarly, confluent education describes a philosophy and a process of learning in which the affective and the cognitive domains intersect, much like the intersection of public and private sphere described in this research project (Brown, 1971).

Confluent education implies the affective and cognitive elements of learning cannot be separated. In bridging the affective and cognitive spheres, confluent education creates a third space in which marginalized students can be nurtured and supported as whole persons. The use of confluent education as a framework from which to view Women's Centers' work espouses Bhabha's (1994) notion of hybridity and the third space. Confluent education, therefore, may provide a useful theoretical

framework from which to study and examine the work of campus-based Women's Centers. Additionally, third space theory may provide an additional lens from which to examine confluent education.

Concluding Remarks

Early in my career, as the Assistant Director at the UC San Diego Women's Center, I experienced tension from users of the Center who did not agree about the ways the Director was leading the Center. One group of students felt that the Center was not radical enough. Another group of staff and faculty thought the Center was too radical. It was at that time that I learned a valuable lesson from Edwina Welch, Director of the Cross-Cultural Center—the concept of *two opposing truths*. Today I understand this concept as a third space practice. It is a strategy of understanding “two contradictory things at one time without either transcending or repressing that contradiction” (Bhabha, 1995b, p. 82, in English 2005).

Working at the UC San Diego Women's Center has taught me valuable lessons in leading a small, yet complex, organization and developing my leadership style as a feminist. I have observed the need to bridge different communities to address the cross connections between our issues and to work collaboratively with the other Campus Community Centers to build this common community. At times it has been a challenge to work in an environment with very clear hierarchical structures while trying to build an organization based on collaboration, equality and feminism. As a third space practitioner, I can ride the hyphen between realistic and unrealistic expectations, taking what is useful and rejecting what is not. I can accept that the

Women's Center is a space that is part of the institution at the same time it is an escape from that institution. It is a community that is for women and yet is open to everyone. It is at once a place to take a nap as it is a space to be awakened.

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Appendix 1: Computer-Assisted Interview Protocol

A. Prior to the first computer-assisted interview, Assistant Director or Program Coordinator of the UCSD Women's Center will meet with each participant to explain the study's purpose, research design, and gather signatures for consent forms.

Participants will be assigned their anonymous email addresses and instructed:

1. Check the email and change the password on the first day
2. Check email again on _____ for interview questions and journal prompts
3. Submit responses within 7 days

B. Prior to sending first email, verify receipt of all consent forms.

C. First Interview Email:

Thank you for agreeing to participate in my research project *Beyond Public and Private Sphere: Campus-based Women's Center in the Third Space*. This project is designed to help me gain a better understanding of the ways in which you and others participate at the Women's Center and to examine how the Women's Center work belongs in public, private, or a third and blended sphere. During this first computer interview please allow me to get to know you better. Please answer the following:

- a. Please share with me your school year, college and major
- b. Tell me the story of your first time at the Women's Center
- c. What did you notice about the space?
- d. What did you notice about the people interactions in the space

In addition, over the next week, please keep a journal of your visits to the Women's Center, noting the following questions:

1. What brought you to the Women's Center today/this week/this month?
2. What did you do while you were here? What activities did you engage in?
3. How did the staff interact with you?
4. How did you use the space?
5. What were your thoughts and feelings during your visit?
6. Did your visit impact/change/shift your relationship with the University?

Please type your responses and email to: emdelapena@ucsd.edu using your assigned anonymous email address.

Please check back every Monday for any follow-up questions and due dates for future journal prompts.

D. Remind participants that participation in the research project is voluntary and that they may withdraw from the study at any time.

E. Second Interview:
Repeat Journal Prompts and instructions.

Appendix 2: Participant Observation Protocol

Location: UC San Diego Women's Center

Dates of Observations: June 2008 through December 2008

Programs/Events to be observed:

- a) Gender Buffet
 - Gender-related lunch-time discussions at the Women's Center
 - They happen weekly. The researcher will choose one which has an attendance of at least 15.
- b) Yarn Factory
 - Monthly knitting and crochet group
 - Participation is consistently 4-6 people

Frequencies of Observations: 2 sessions per event, 1.5 hours each session for total of 4 sessions

Timing of Observations: 12:00-1:30 p.m. each event

Observational Coding Schema (Lofland & Lofland, 1995, Miles & Huberman, 1994)

- Acts (i.e. general activity occurring during session like eating, talking, etc.)
- Activities (i.e. notation of specific activities by people in the space)
- Meanings (researcher memo notes of interpretation of observations)
- Participation (i.e. who is participating at what levels)
- Relationships (i.e. people to people, people to objects)
- Setting (i.e. furniture arrangements, lighting, art displays, etc)

Recording of Observations:

- Descriptive field notes (events, activities, people)
- Reflective field notes (personal thoughts, reflections)

Access to site: Open (researcher is a Director of the Women's Center and a frequent participant in these events.)

Appendix 3: Focus Group Protocol

- A. Number of Focus Groups: 2
- B. Timeline of focus groups: January 2009 and March 2009
- C. Prior to the focus group interview, The Directors of the UCSD Cross Cultural Center and/or LGBT Resource Center will explain the study's purpose, research design, and gather signatures for consent forms.

D. Introduction Script:

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this research project *Beyond Public and Private Sphere: Campus-based Women's Center in the Third Space*. This project is designed to help the researcher gain a better understanding of the ways in which you and others participate at the Women's Center and to examine how the Women's Center work belongs in public sphere, private sphere, or a third and blended sphere.

You will be asked a series of questions over the next hour and a half to ascertain your experiences, perceptions and feelings about the Women's Center. Although the session will not cover anything sensitive or invasive, all participants should keep what is said during the focus group between participants only. However, complete confidentiality cannot be guaranteed, so please keep this in mind as you answer the questions.

So that I can correctly gather information from this session, I will be taking notes and audio-taping the session. If anytime you wish to have the tape recording stopped, simply say so. The recording will be stopped for the time that you need to complete your comment. You may always pass if you do not wish to speak. There is no need to raise your hands to make a comment, but please be respectful and attentive as others are speaking. Please feel free to ask any questions or make comments at any time during the interview. From time to time, I may call on someone individually to ask clarifying questions.

- E. Hand out Consent Forms. Remind participants that participation in the research project is voluntary and that they may withdraw from the study at any time.

F. Continue Script:

Please allow me to get to know you better. Please answer the following:

- a. Please share with me your school year, college and major

Interview Proper:

b. Tell me about your first time at the Women's Center. What brought you to the space?

Follow-up/probing questions (optional):

- i. What did you notice about the space? (Descriptive)
- ii. What did you notice about the people's interactions in the space? (Descriptive and exploratory around feelings in the space).
- iii. How did the staff interact with you?
- iv. What were your thoughts and feelings during your visit?
- v. Did your visit impact/change/shift your relationships with the University?

c. What do you think is the primary purpose of the Women's Center?

d. If you were to describe the Women's Center to someone who did not know about it, how would you describe it?

e. What is the most important thing about the Women's Center?

f. What are three wishes you would have for the Women's Center?

G. Wrap Up

Hand back copies of signed consent forms.

Thank you for your participation! Each of you will be entered for a chance to win a \$25 Bookstore Gift Card. The drawing will be held after all focus groups have been completed. If you have any questions after you leave here today, please feel free to contact me at (moderator fill in information or hand out business card).