White Privilege, Color Blindness, and Services to Battered Women

DENISE A. DONNELLY
Georgia State University
KIMBERLY J. COOK
University of Southern Maine
DEBRA VAN AUSDALE
Syracuse University
LARA FOLEY
University of Tulsa

White privilege is a system of benefits, advantages, and opportunities experienced by White persons in our society simply because of their skin color. In this article, the authors present the results of a descriptive, exploratory study of White privilege in battered women's shelters in the Deep South. Based on a qualitative analysis, the authors show how White privilege is intricately connected to executive directors' claims of color blindness, the othering of women of color, and viewing White as the norm. The authors conclude the article with implications for service provision to battered women and directions for future research.

Keywords: *battered women; battered women's shelters; color blindness; White privilege*

White privilege refers to a system of benefits, advantages, and opportunities experienced by White persons in our society simply because of their skin color. McIntosh (1989) likens White privilege to an "invisible weightless knapsack [full] of special provisions,

AUTHORS' NOTE: Earlier versions of this article were presented at the International Conference on Domestic Violence, Durham, New Hampshire, July 1995, and at the Society for the Study of Social Problems annual meeting, August 1999. This research was sponsored in part by a summer research grant from the Women's Studies Institute and the Department of Sociology at Georgia State University. We appreciate comments and support from the Women's Studies Council at the University of Southern Maine. Feedback from Elisabeth Burgess, Charles Gallagher, Ralph LaRossa, Chris Powell, Oliver Williams, and two anonymous reviewers were instrumental in the development of this article.

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN, Vol. 11 No. 1, January 2005 6-37
DOI: 10.1177/1077801204271431

maps, passports, code books, visas, clothes, tools, and blank checks" (p. 10). This collection of unearned and largely unacknowledged assets results from and reinforces the dominant status of Whites, while subtly oppressing people of color. White privilege is illustrated by the fact that White persons (unlike people of color) are rarely aware of their skin color (Feagin & Vera, 1995). For example, when White persons walk into stores, they can easily find cosmetics and toiletries designed for their skin tone and type. They see faces similar to their own in advertisements and can readily purchase greeting cards depicting other White persons. When they interact with social services, Whites do not think about how asking for help reflects on their people. White persons can safely assume that there will be other persons similar to them at work and school, and they can depend on persons in authority being the same skin color (McIntosh, 1989). In our society, color is noticed by Whites only when it pertains to non-White persons. White is seen as neutral and normal—the standard to which all other groups are compared.

White privilege is so common and advantageous that most White persons are unaware of its existence. Unlike discrimination, which is a conscious act against another person, White privilege requires that no decisions be made, no premeditated actions taken. Within an ethnically diverse society such as our own, White privilege is a pervasive, but often unrecognized, social problem. In this article, we examine the ways in which White privilege shapes services to women experiencing intimate violence. First, we review the literature and theory on White privilege and on services to battered women. Next, using qualitative interview data, we examine how White privilege influences service provision to battered women. Finally, we conclude by discussing the implications of White privilege for the battered women's movement, making recommendations for programming and suggesting areas for future research.

WHITE PRIVILEGE

White privilege occurs on many levels and in many different arenas. It privileges White persons educationally, occupationally, and economically; in terms of housing, health care, and child rearing; and in their interactions with a variety of social service

systems (Feagin & Vera, 1995). According to Frankenberg (1993), Whiteness has three dimensions: a structural advantage (racial privilege), a standpoint for viewing ourselves and others, and cultural practices that are unmarked or unnamed and thereby presumed to be normative. We use Frankenberg's typology to guide the discussion of White privilege that follows.

The first element of Whiteness is a rarely noticed structural advantage. Whites benefit from the fact that most of the institutions in this country were founded by and for White people. The upper echelons of business, government, social service, and the media are dominated by Whites, and many of our laws, business practices, and rules for social interaction were designed to privilege Whites over people of color. Although expressions of privilege resulting in outright discrimination are now illegal, subtle differences remain that make it difficult for persons of color to be truly equal in our society.

Although most White persons are taught about racism (which is disadvantageous to others), they are not taught about White privilege, which puts Whites at an advantage (McIntosh, 1989). Prejudice and discrimination are easily identifiable, whereas White privilege remains hidden in our society. Similar to breathing, White privilege is an unconscious and unthinking process. Thus, most Whites are reluctant to acknowledge the privileges attached to Whiteness and the discrimination that results from it. Blatant prejudice and racism are seen as individual maliciousness and can be easily condemned, but acknowledging White privilege means admitting complicity and taking action against a whole social system that privileges Whites over people of color (Hill Collins, 1999). Moreover, beneficiaries of White privilege have little impetus to change, because White privilege, if it is recognized at all, is comfortable and familiar. The status quo is preserved because this tradition feels natural and normal to those who benefit.

Along with this structural advantage come fictions of equality, based on the assumption that if everyone is treated the same, then outcomes will be similar for all groups. These fictions ignore diverse backgrounds, life experiences, cultural understandings, and opportunities. Feagin and Vera (1995) point out that a popular belief is that people of color have made such progress that racism is no longer a significant barrier in most of their lives. This

allows White persons to assume that racism does not affect their beliefs about or actions toward persons of color and to pretend that inequalities no longer exist. Recent attacks on affirmative action are based, at least in part, on the rationale that because people of color are legally equal, they (arguably) no longer face discrimination, and thus, race and ethnicity should not be a consideration in educational admissions, housing, employment, or provision of services (Patterson, 1997). What this position fails to consider is the impact of historical inequities, the cumulative effects of differential life experiences, and how racism is built into the very structure of our society.

The next element of Whiteness is that it provides a standpoint for viewing ourselves and others. White privilege is often masked behind the rhetoric of color blindness (Frankenberg, 1993; West, 1999). Color blindness is based on the assumption that if we do not notice color, then everyone will be treated equally and held to the same standards. This is certainly a worthy goal, yet it fails to acknowledge that persons in our society do see color and do react differently to people based on their skin tone. In fact, the first thing most Americans notice about someone is their skin color, making assumptions about the person's attitudes, behaviors, and their way of life. Nonetheless, most White persons maintain the fiction of color blindness, many times expending great effort to ignore color. But in the very process of being color blind, they do notice and spend a great deal of energy in determining how to proceed in a color-blind fashion (Frankenberg, 1993; Lipsitz, 1998).

Moreover, color blindness has become politically correct in today's racially charged social environment. The media, the legal system, and the polity instruct Whites that noticing race is wrong and discriminatory. They internalize the message that everyone should be viewed in the same way and treated similarly. When Whites do notice race, they risk being labeled racist. But by not noticing race, they ignore cultural diversity and the differential life experiences of people of color in our society. As the interviews we present later show, this creates a dilemma for social service providers. When they fail to acknowledge race and treat everyone exactly the same way, they may be seen as using a one-size-fits-all approach and not meeting the needs of diverse groups. On the other hand, when they notice race and ethnicity and create

programs designed to meet the needs of diverse groups of people, they may be labeled racist or separatist.

Color blindness, in and of itself, is not always detrimental. But because Whiteness is used as the standard for behavior, appearance, and interaction in our society, color-blind norms are really White norms. Thus, White privilege provides a standpoint for viewing others and a standpoint for viewing Whites. White privilege allows Whites to assume that their practices are normative and that anything else is deviant. As the interviews presented later show, this is especially problematic in social service agencies when policy makers, supervisors, and others in positions of power tend to be White and of the middle class (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2001). Unless compelled to see the unique situations and needs of women of color, White gatekeepers may define these women as deviant, stereotyping them in ways that block them from receiving needed assistance. Worse yet, they may turn an unconsciously blind eye toward the very persons who most need their services (Frankenberg, 1993; Ptacek, 1999).

By rendering color meaningless, challenges faced by women of color are also rendered meaningless. If we are all the same and color doesn't matter, then no actions are needed to address the situation. Thus, this color-blind perspective, combined with fictions of equality, preserves structural inequities that limit and impinge on the life chances of people of color.

White privilege is similar to male privilege and class privilege and interacts with these in complex ways (Hurtado, 1996; Lipsitz, 1998; McIntosh, 1989). White women are disadvantaged in our society because of gender; however, Whiteness confers other privileges. Rather than identifying with women of color and coming together as social activists, some White women buy into White privilege and identify and align themselves with White men (who often control access to the needed resources). Middle-class women of all colors may hide behind class privilege and see poor women as somehow different or deficient and not worthy of aid. Although this hurts all women, those especially vulnerable are poor women and women of color. This is not to say that poor men and men of color are not also disadvantaged, but they are able to draw on some aspects of male privilege, and many times, this is played out in their relationships with women (Marsh, 1993).

White privilege has not been adequately examined within the context of service provision to battered women. Though Williams (1993) and Richie (1996) have demonstrated the need for culturally competent services for battered women of color, the dynamics of White privilege and color blindness that exclude these victims of violence remain largely unexamined and unarticulated. Hence, in this article, we explore how White privilege and color blindness shape services to battered women, accommodating White women, while denying (however subtly) needed services to battered women of color.

Before proceeding further, we would like to make it clear that we (the authors of this article) are all White women. This project is a direct result of our recognition of White privilege in the battered women's movement. Although we cannot know what it is like to be a battered woman of color, we see this research as an important step in identifying and eliminating White privilege and moving toward more responsive service provision for all women. It is our way of recognizing, owning, and confronting the White privilege that exists within the battered women's movement.

SERVICES TO BATTERED WOMEN OF COLOR

Observations by social scientists indicate that shelters for battered women are geared toward the needs of White, nonimmigrant, English-speaking women, often ignoring and overlooking the needs of women of color, immigrant women, indigenous women, and non-English-speaking women (Cole, 2001; Donnelly, Cook, & Wilson, 1999; Hamby, 2000; West, 1999). In a previous study of shelters in the U.S. South, Donnelly et al. (1999) found that publicly funded shelters tended to be located in predominately White neighborhoods and employ predominately White staff. Shelter climate (shelter decor, pamphlets, and reading material) and both written and unwritten rules for behavior (such as cooking rules, curfews, and disciplining children) were likely to reflect White middle-class norms.

Although official rates of intimate violence victimization are similar for White women and women of color (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 1995), previous research indicates that women of color are less likely to use shelter services than their White counterparts (Chen, 1998; Coley & Beckett, 1988a, 1988b; Lockhart & White,

1989; West, 1999). Several explanations consistent with the White privilege framework have been offered for this disparity. West (1999) suggests that because shelters located outside urban areas are likely to be staffed by White women, women of color perceive these shelters as White and are hesitant to use their services. Others (Chen, 1998; Coley & Beckett, 1988b; Donnelly et al., 1999) argue that women of color may be unaware that services are available, because most advertising and outreach takes place in White communities.

Another explanation is that women of color are hesitant to use battered women's shelters because of conflicting race and gender loyalties (Ptacek, 1999; Richie, 1996). They may view violence as a result of White oppression of men of color, not as gender oppression operating in their own lives. According to Marsh (1993), men of color may take their anger out on female partners and family members because there is no other outlet in a society where they can enjoy such power and privilege. Furthermore, if the battered woman turns her mate over to the authorities, she knows that he may be treated more harshly because of the color of his skin (Hill Collins, 1999; Richie, 1996). Thus, to use services provided by the White power structure is seen as race treason. It is ironic that White people may interpret this reluctance to involve the authorities as evidence that minority group women are stronger and able to withstand abuse, not as a sign of the oppression of men of color in our society (Hill Collins, 1999).

Others argue that women of color fail to use shelters because they have strong support networks within their own communities (Brown, 1986; Lockhart & White, 1989). Rather than asking for help from established battered women's shelters, they may prefer to use informal networks of family, friends, and religious organizations. In some ethnic minority communities, widely held norms also discourage the use of traditional, White-run services (Lee & Law, 2001). It is yet another symptom of White privilege, however, to assume that because of this, women of color do not need services. In fact, informal services in ethnic or immigrant communities often arise as a result of exclusion by predominately White organizations (Chen, 1998).

Shelter workers may view women of color with more suspicion than they view White women and, thus, assume that they are in less danger from male violence. West (1999) notes that Black

women are more likely to be classified by domestic violence hotline workers as homeless or drug addicted (as opposed to true victims of intimate violence) than are White women. These stereotypes of Black women mean that fewer will ask for help and that when they do, they will be less likely to receive shelter and other services. This absence of concern about race and racism also leaves shelter workers ill prepared for dealing with the realities of battered Black women's lives. Of course, damaging stereotypes affect not just Black women but also all women of color.

Another reason for the lack of attention to women of color may lie in the history of battered women's shelters. Most were begun as grassroots movements by White, middle-class women (Schecter, 1982). Because women of color were seldom involved in the development and operation of shelters, their needs were not always adequately represented. The founding mothers did not consciously exclude women of color from planning and running these organizations, but the effect is the same as if they had. With time, services developed that were geared more toward the needs of White women than women of color (Donnelly et al., 1999; West, 1999), and this has been slow to change. Because administrators feel that their shelters are equally available to all women, they are spared from acknowledging their own White privilege or addressing the complex problems of women of color. Similarly, state funding for shelters may, in fact, reflect and reproduce White privilege, because grassroots organizations gained access to funds from state governments because the original organizers were likely affiliated with White male privilege.

In summary, scholars addressing White privilege have rarely examined its role in services to women, whereas researchers studying battered women have failed to acknowledge White privilege. Our research brings the two areas together, drawing on the conceptual framework of White privilege and empirically investigating services to battered women. Thus, we focus on the following questions:

1. How is White privilege reflected in accounts about battered women offered by shelter administrators?
2. How does White privilege affect services to battered women of color?
3. How can the lessons we learn about White privilege help us to improve services to battered women of color?

METHODOLOGY

SAMPLE

For this exploratory, descriptive study, all battered women's shelters receiving state funding in Alabama ($N = 17$), Georgia ($N = 32$), and Mississippi ($N = 11$) were identified through listings obtained from each state's department of human resources. We were especially interested in these Southern states for two reasons. First, because of the relatively large segment of the population who are people of color (primarily African Americans) and because of the divisive racial and ethnic history of that region, we reasoned that problems surrounding services for battered women of color would be especially acute. In addition, funding for social services has historically been much lower in the Southern states, thus competition for resources is even greater than in other locations. In 1995, the year our research was conducted, Georgia shelters received $21,000 per shelter per year, Alabama shelters received $80,769 per shelter per year, and Mississippi shelters received $27,000 per shelter per year.

We chose to focus only on shelters receiving state funding because nonfunded shelters were difficult to locate and tended to be less permanent than those funded by the state. Moreover, many private shelters were run by religious or charitable groups using special criteria for admission (such as race and ethnicity, religious preference, or political ideology). We recognize, however, that nonfunded shelters may be more likely to be located in minority communities and to serve more women of color and recent immigrant women than state-funded shelters (Mederos, 1997). This limitation of our sample should be kept in mind when interpreting our findings.

Focusing on agencies for battered women as the site for a study of White privilege proved beneficial in an unexpected way. Because White privilege overlaps with gender and class privilege, using organizations dealing with a social problem that has been largely defined as a women's issue meant that we were able to control for gender by holding it constant. Because there were so few men involved as either shelter staff or clients, we could examine White privilege separately from the usual overlay of male privilege. We recognize, however, that shelters for battered

women were established by White middle-class women and have remained dependent on male privilege insofar as their access to male-controlled resources are concerned.

After much debate, we decided to focus our interviews on executive directors of battered women's agencies because these women serve as claims makers for their agencies and are responsible for explaining agency decisions, keeping community groups and funding agencies satisfied, and making personnel decisions that affect the shelters. Furthermore, as executive officers of these organizations, our respondents are in positions to determine who will and will not be provided services by their organizations. Because of their unique location in the organization and in the community, executive directors bring perspectives that differ from battered women, frontline workers, or community interest groups. Although turnover in battered women's agencies is frequent, executive directors are more likely to stay in their positions than other staff members are. Moreover, they are familiar with the history of the organization and tend to know about all facets of organizational operation.

There are limitations, however, to focusing solely on the accounts of executive directors. For example, we have no data from frontline workers in the organizations included in the study. Because the duties of executive directors often require them to do fundraising, grant writing, and community relations and education, frontline workers are more likely to interact routinely with battered women. Moreover, they are the ones who translate the policies of the organization into practice. These workers probably have a better knowledge of the daily operations of shelters and other services, and by not interviewing them, we may have missed an important viewpoint. We also recognize that one job of the executive director is to present the organization in the best light possible, and their answers may have glossed over certain problems. Finally, by focusing on employees of battered women's agencies rather than interviewing battered women, we have no way of knowing how employee policies and decisions actually affect women of color. Thus, readers are cautioned to keep in mind that our results are based only on the accounts of executive directors and do not reflect the lived experiences of battered women or of other groups that provide services and resources to victims of violence.

For our project, we contacted 60 executive directors and completed 44 phone interviews (a response rate of 73%) during the summer and fall of 1995. Of these, 42 were White women, 1 was a Black woman, and 1 was a White male codirector. There were few differences between White female executive directors, the Black female executive director, and the White male codirector. In fact, the only differences we noticed were that the African American woman appeared to have a more sophisticated understanding of the interactions of race, class, and gender than many of the White women and that the White male respondent's answers reflected a management orientation that was present in only a few of the interviews with women. On the whole, he appeared less concerned with activism and community education and more interested in the financial operations of the shelter.

PROCEDURE

We used a semistructured interview guide that took an average of 45 minutes to complete. We called each agency and asked to speak to the executive director. Once he or she was on the phone and had agreed to talk with us, we either interviewed her or him at that time or set up a convenient time to call back. The interview began with a brief introduction to the study. Potential respondents were told that we were interested in shelter and service usage in the Southern United States. We asked for their assistance in determining the types of women most likely to use their services and in identifying underserved populations. The informed consent statement was then read. Once the respondent agreed to participate, the tape recorder was turned on, and the interview commenced.

DATA COLLECTION

The results presented here are part of a larger project completed by a research team of five White women and one Asian American woman. The three of us who conducted interviews for this project were all well-educated White women. We were concerned about this lack of diversity but found that the overwhelming majority of our respondents were also White. We speculate that sounding White and Southern may have actually increased

rapport with respondents and encouraged them to confide in us, particularly when issues of culture, ethnicity, race, and class were discussed. This, in itself, is an example of White privilege. Had we sounded non-White, we would likely not have gotten the candid responses that sounding White elicited. This dynamic illuminates the collusive power of White privilege.

During the interviews, respondents were asked about the history and organizational philosophy of the agency, services provided, and the demographic characteristics of the women served. They were then asked to identify underserved populations and to share their perceptions of the reasons for underusage by these groups (see the appendix for the interview guide). If they failed to answer these questions, probes around race, class, sexual orientation, mental health, and addiction were used. Questions did not focus specifically on race because pretests of the instrument indicated that direct questions on race tended to cause respondents to answer warily or defensively. Instead, we asked about the racial composition of the clients in the context of shelter service provision and identification of underserved groups. Though we did not ask about Black women in particular, the respondents answered in almost exclusively Black and White terms, probably because African Americans are the largest minority group in the three states included in the study. Of the respondents themselves, we recorded only sex and race. After transcription, tapes were erased, and identifying information (except for a state code) was removed from the computerized transcripts.

DATA ANALYSIS

Data were analyzed using both quantitative and qualitative methods. A coding sheet was developed for quantitative categories, such as state, number of clients served, client demographics, and services offered. Descriptive statistics, such as frequencies and means, were then calculated. For the qualitative data, we began with our three research questions and used continuous coding to identify emergent themes and categories surrounding service provision to battered women. Once a theme or category was identified, all instances of that category were temporarily grouped together. As analysis continued, some categories were combined, some dropped, and others developed into two or more

new categories. Once a fairly stable set of categories was in place, quotes were chosen to illustrate each theme. To ensure reliability, all interviews were coded by at least three of the researchers. Instances of disagreement were resolved by discussion, with two of the three having to agree on the coding.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

DESCRIPTIVE CHARACTERISTICS OF PROGRAMS AND CLIENTS

As Table 1 shows, the agencies in our sample had operated shelters an average of 11 years at the time of the study. Most originated as a result of grassroots efforts on the part of individuals or organizations (such as churches or women's groups) identifying woman battering as a problem not being addressed in their community. Frequently, the agencies began with hotlines and added services such as shelters or safe houses, support groups, and legal clinics. As they grew larger and offered more services, most evolved into agencies separate from the individuals or groups that founded them, with their own boards of directors and unique organizational structures.

Agencies averaged 17 beds per shelter. The mean number of staff was five full-time and three part-time. Most organizations relied quite heavily on volunteers, using an average of 28 per organization. The average number of women and children served in all programs in the year prior to our research (1994) was 2,646. An average of 266 women and children were served in the shelters during that year. Only three administrators reported that their shelters served mostly Black women, and these shelters were all located in urban areas with high concentrations of African American women. Compared to Vinton's (1998) national survey of state-funded shelters, shelters in the Deep South had been operating for an average of 1 year less and had an average of five fewer beds available to residents.

A variety of services were provided by the agencies in our study. Although most maintained 24-hour hotlines and emergency shelters, other common programs included legal advocacy, counseling and support groups, children's programs, economic and educational assistance, and help in locating appropriate

TABLE 1
Characteristics of Battered Women's Programs in the Deep South

Characteristic	*Percentage*	*N*	*Average*
State			
Alabama	32	14	
Georgia	54	24	
Mississippi	14	6	
Shelter operations			
Number of beds			17
Years in operation			11
Number of full-time staff			5
Number of part-time staff			3
Number of volunteers			28
Total women and children served			
All programs—this past year			2,646
Shelter—this past year			266
Agency philosophy			
Feminist	5		
Religious	2		
Family centered	7		
Therapeutic	11		
Other or no philosophy	75		
Agency goals[a]			
End woman battering	11		
Emergency shelter	18		
Safe place	23		
Serve victims and women	30		
Empower women	32		
Educate women	46		
Average age of women served			
Teens	3		
20s	65		
30s	25		
40 or older	7		
Racial distribution of clients			
Proportional	57		
Women of color underserved	25		
White women underserved	10		
No answer	8		
Socioeconomic status of clients			
Poor	53		
Working class	27		
Middle	10		
No answer	10		

a. More than one answer was accepted, thus percentages do not total to 100.

housing. Only a few of the agencies offered transitional programs or long-term follow-up.

As is the case nationwide (Gondolf, 1988), executive directors reported that the women using state-funded services for battered women in the three states tended to be young, heterosexual White women from the poor or working class. Most had at least one child, and many lacked sufficient education and job skills to adequately support themselves and their children.

EMERGENT THEMES

Three basic themes emerged in our analysis. The first theme was color blindness, which centered on the fiction of seeing no differences among women and thus treating them all the same. The second theme (which was rather contradictory to the first) involved the process of othering women of color, drawing on stereotypes to explain why they were different from White women and not in need of (or receptive to) services. The third theme focused on normative practices—viewing White women as the norm—and assuming that the ways in which shelters were currently serving women were in fact the best and most appropriate (maintaining the status quo).

ALL BATTERED WOMEN ARE THE SAME: COLOR BLINDNESS

The first theme to emerge from our analysis was that of color blindness. In the context of service provision to battered women, color blindness had two components: the idea that violence affects all women equally and the idea that because of this, services should be the same for everyone, regardless of their ethnic background, skin color, or immigration status. Color-blind assumptions can be seen in the words of the executive director who said, "We serve all colors in shelter . . . it doesn't matter where they come from, because a woman is a woman, and battered is battered. Domestic violence does not know what color they are. It's blind." This assumption of blindness is also evident in the response of the executive director who stated that "violence does not know any barriers . . . it doesn't matter if they're green, purple, or red . . . violence is still violence."

This perspective encourages service providers to ignore cultural diversity and to use a one-size-fits-all approach to serving

victims of intimate violence (Oliver, 2000; Williams, 1998), as the words of this executive director show:

> We really treat everyone the same . . . and the women bond. Of course, having a staff person of a minority helps them to feel more at ease, but, no, we just don't make a difference [between White women and women of color].

This quote also illustrates the contradictory positions of color-blind directors. By hiring a minority staff person, this director was acknowledging that women of color may respond better to workers they perceive as similar to themselves. But because our culture tells us that we should not notice color, in the same sentence, this director claimed to be treating all women the same.

As another director noted, "When women come to the shelter, the one thing I notice is that color seems to cease to be a problem and they're just battered women." Despite this egalitarian stance, viewing domestic violence as an equalizer of women's experiences can obscure the racism women of color face. Moreover, it can provide executive directors with a moral escape hatch from thinking about or attending to the culturally specific needs of battered women. By assuming that all women are similar and by treating them the same, directors perpetuate fictions of equality—the idea that if you treat women similarly, outcomes will also be similar.

Although many respondents reported they did not make distinctions between White women and women of color, their comments indicated they were well aware of the racial composition of their residents. An executive director noted that "we treat people as people, and its neither Black or White, just people. . . . About one third of the women we served last year were Black." Even though she was cognizant of the number of Black women served, she wanted to emphasize that her shelter did not discriminate against women of color. She illustrates the tightrope that service providers walk, and the dilemma they face over whether to notice race. The rhetoric of color blindness means that service providers expend a great deal of mental energy in reconciling the state's practice of counting the number of women of color served with not noticing race and ethnicity in providing services (Frankenberg, 1993).

Shelters are required by law to keep data on the racial and ethnic makeup of their clients, but the majority of respondents became quite wary when asked to divulge this information. The most common answer to the question of racial distribution of clients was that women of color were served in the same proportions they were represented in the general population. Some women who gave this answer seemed to have no idea what that actual proportion was, as the following comment illustrates. This rather defensive director noted that "we are serving minorities in just about whatever the proportion is in the population." Her answer reflects White privilege in that she did not have to be aware of the true proportions in her community and could simply guesstimate.

When asked about meeting the specific needs of battered women of color, slightly more than two thirds of respondents reported that they had no culturally specific programming. Many gave explanations similar to this executive director:

> No we don't [have specific programs], because their needs are actually the same. Once a woman has been battered, after it's been over a period of time, all the needs are the same there . . . it doesn't matter what nationality she is.

Believing that all battered women's needs are the same may reassure the shelter personnel that whatever culturally specific challenges battered women face need not be a cause for their concern. Thus, battered women of color are treated the same as anyone else (i.e., White women), and their culturally specific needs are not met.

When asked about racial and ethnic tensions with residents, another director said there were none:

> Because they're all victims and they all can relate to each other . . . it's actually set up very nicely, they have their own space and they have groups and things like that together, but as far as any problems, not that we're aware of.

This clearly illustrates that victim status supersedes ethnic differences among residents: "We treat all victims, we give them all the same services and the same opportunities." Although it is obvious that these executive directors are motivated by a desire to

provide practical aid for women getting free of violence, one problem with this view is that it fails to account for some very basic cultural differences in diet, religion, or child rearing (Mederos, 1997). By not making allowances for the fact that not all women eat the same foods, worship the same deities, or discipline their children in the same ways, shelters marginalize women who do not adhere to the norm (i.e., women who do things differently from the White middle-class strategies employed by shelter staff). These women may feel that shelters are an inhospitable and foreign place, even as executive directors are protesting that they treat everyone equally (West, 1999).

Another way of dealing with this issue was to explain that because there were so few women of color, culturally specific services were not really needed. When asked about culturally sensitive or specific programming, one executive director noted that "we don't have very many ethnics down here" and then went on to say that about 30% the population and of the women they serve are African American women. White privilege allowed her to dismiss as insignificant a group of women who made up almost one third of her service population.

In summary, being color blind means that service providers may fail to acknowledge the structural obstacles and cultural differences faced by women of color and thus do little to accommodate their diverse needs. Color blindness often renders women of color invisible, because service providers assume that they are just like White women or they respond to being treated in the same manner as White battered women. On one hand, by invoking color-blind claims, the executive directors meant to avoid racism in their conscious statements. Yet on the other hand, color blindness meant that they were also blind to the culturally specific circumstances faced by battered women of color.

SOME BATTERED WOMEN ARE DIFFERENT: OTHERING WOMEN OF COLOR

At the same time that they were relying on a color-blind rhetoric, the executive directors made it clear that they were anything but color blind. When we questioned them further about services to battered women of color, a disturbing picture emerged. Although they were trying to avoid racism, the respondents

made implicit assumptions about women of color that often disadvantaged these women. They talked at length about how women of color were different from White women, handled things in their own communities, and were not always in need of services from mainstream (i.e., White) agencies.

For example, several of the directors said that even though their service areas were very diverse, they saw few Black women. When asked why, they used an explanation that we came to call the Black community explanation. Representative of this viewpoint was the respondent who said,

> This county's African American community, I think, is pretty close knit. I think they try to pretty much take care of their own. . . . We get a lot of calls from African American women but have just not had a lot of them in the shelter. One reason might be that the shelter is located in a predominately White community.

Another respondent similarly noted that "a lot more Black families take care of their own, whereas we would see a lot more Caucasian women here." When a White executive director asked a Black employee why they saw so few Black women, the executive director reported that "she's saying that her culture seems to just stick it out, just that they're more accustomed to just stick it out together through the hard times. They just kind of stay within their own network of support."

When invoking the Black community explanation, respondents rarely acknowledged that shelter location, ethnic composition of shelter staff and clients, or admissions policies might have discouraged Black women from seeking services. Because their shelters were often located in White neighborhoods, staff and residents were overwhelmingly White, and policies were geared toward White women, Black women may have perceived shelters as White organizations. They may have felt that they were unwelcome or had no place in these agencies. From their experience with other agencies (West, 1999), Black women probably also learned that reliance on White social institutions is fraught with dangers, especially increased levels of control and interference in their everyday lives.

The Black community explanation can be taken to extremes, with respondents assuming that Black women are better able to

withstand violence, as this quote illustrates: "The majority of the people we serve are White. It's almost like the Black take care of their own better. Either that or they're just tougher, more used to it, [or] tolerate it longer." As Hill Collins (1999) notes, our society views White women as frail and in need of protection, whereas Black women are seen as hardy and more resilient. Indeed, throughout most of U.S. history, this view of Black women was used to justify their subjugation as slaves, excuse physical and sexual assaults by White men, and support their exclusion from protections that White women enjoyed.

The othering implicit in assumptions that women of color are different and take care of their own is an important component of White privilege. We suspect that some White executive directors accept explanations of difference because it makes their jobs easier. They do not have to understand women of color and see no reason to offer special programs or outreach to racial and ethnic minority women because these women will deal with violence in their own ways in their own communities.

The Black community explanation is not the only stereotype that is invoked. In service provision to battered women, as in many other areas of our society, there is the danger of seeing Black as synonymous with poor (Cole, 2001). One director noted that "the majority of the ones [referring to Black women] that we get through here are lower socioeconomic, not folks like you and me who can afford a hotel room." In one of the few shelters that served primarily Black clients, the executive director also seemed to conflate being Black with being poor:

> And I think that what it is, if you're middle class and you have happened to be White, you're not used to utilizing social services to the point where you don't even know they're there. This population [Black women] knows they're out there. So, they're more willing to utilize what they know is there. Well, they're more likely to know what's out there, and beyond that, they're more willing to utilize them, I think.

This director seems to assume that African American women are poor and are accustomed to using social services in ways that White women are not. She realizes, however, that something more complex is going on and further elaborates that

> I know for a fact that this [violence] does not happen only in the Black community. I just think that, given the fact that a lot of these [women] were already on [welfare], I'm kind of reluctant to say, but they're not ashamed to use what's out there. Some of the upper class to middle class might feel a taboo kind of thing, even though I just saw an article somewhere that said that there are more White people on welfare than Black people. So, I don't know if my theory still stands.

Even though she recognizes that her comments might be biased, she does not recognize the structural influences that might compel more Black women than White women to go to her shelter.

Blacks are often also stereotyped as being more aggressive and more likely to use drugs and alcohol than Whites. This type of racial stereotyping was evident in the following response to a question on racial and ethnic tensions among shelter residents. The executive director reports that racial tensions exist but

> never between shelter staff and residents because we do not discriminate period. . . . Most of them are just so grateful to be here and be away from the abuser, that race does not come into it. Of course, you do get a hot head every now and then. The hot heads are the ones who have been on crack or something like that.

When further questioned, she admitted that these hot heads were likely to be Black women. As Hill Collins (1999) notes, these stereotypes of Black women are all too common, and when thinking of criminals or drug users and abusers, the mental picture that most Whites envision is a Black person.

These (often contradictory) stereotypes create a double bind situation for Black women. When they use battered women's services, they risk being stereotyped as poor, aggressive, drug-using women and savvy manipulators trying to milk the system. Their needs may be seen as less real or urgent than those of White women. On the other hand, when they avoid the system, their ability to withstand violence is offered as an explanation, and they are assumed to have their own cultural resources for dealing with abuse. Either way, the end result is a lack of comprehensive outreach in their communities and a dearth of culturally competent violence programming suited to their specific needs.

The invocation of difference does not stop with Black women, however. Although many executive directors assumed that we were asking about African American women when we asked about women of color, we found the process of othering at work when they mentioned Latina, Asian, and Native American women. As was the case with Black women, oftentimes, all women of a certain racial and ethnic group were assumed to be similar. Popular stereotypical images of the group were invoked, and within-group variation was ignored (Hamby, 2000).

For example, pervasive stereotypes about Latinas as illegal immigrants were used to explain why these women were underserved. One respondent noted that there was a lot of violence among Chicano farm workers but that few came to the shelter. She explained this by saying that "they're here illegal probably." Another stated that "we have a long way to go with the Hispanic community . . . because of the cultural differences and because . . . domestic violence has been a way of life." Another executive director admitted that despite her knowledge of a "pretty large Hispanic community," she had not established "any real contacts with that particular group" and did not plan to do so. She spoke of having to make "hard choices" about whom to serve and mentioned that she had her hands full trying to serve "the mainstream" in her community. One interpretation of this is that she felt that as long as she treated everyone the same (according to White norms) that she was doing the best she could with the limited resources at hand.

Although Latinas are often stereotyped as avoiding the system because of their (illegal) immigration status or their familiarity with violence, Asian women are frequently viewed as too timid or shy to use services (Chen, 1998). Many Asian cultures also frown on seeking help from outsiders (Lee & Law, 2001). As this director notes, "We have a population of Vietnamese and Korean women. The cultural aspects in which these women were raised [dictate] that they just don't seek services."

Although there is some element of truth to these stereotypes, implicit in these assumptions is the idea that persons born in the United States are somehow more entitled to battered women's services than immigrant women are. Moreover, because they are different from White women, immigrant women may be viewed as either not appropriate for services or as unreceptive to them.

Instead of focusing on ways to make shelters and battered women's organizations more hospitable, the directors we interviewed were just as likely to invoke difference as a way of excusing themselves from creating culturally responsive programs.

We found evidence of othering that went so far as to violate the law. A respondent who noted that hers was "one of the best shelters in the state" went on to say that

> right now, we're about 50-50, thank goodness. If I could keep it at that, I would be so happy, because what happened in [city] was it [the shelter] became totally Black, and the White women would not go . . . we had to close the shelter and move it to another community [so White women would use it].

This respondent saw no problem with closing down their shelter and moving it to a White area so that more White women would use the shelter. Not only does the quote illustrate how White administrators may ignore antidiscrimination laws, it also illustrates a high level of disregard for the needs of women of color.

BUT WE'VE ALWAYS DONE IT THAT WAY: NORMATIVE PRACTICES AND RELUCTANCE TO CHANGE

Much of what we heard was not blatant, intentional racism. Most of our respondents would have been appalled to think of themselves as racists, even though their rhetoric was clearly exclusionary. At least part of the problem may lie in the history of the shelter movement. The shelters in our survey (similar to those nationwide) were begun by White, well-educated, middle-class women. As in many other aspects of the women's movement (Hill Collins, 1999), these women assumed that their experiences were the norm and thought little about how other women's experiences might differ from their own. Even though it was well intentioned, they framed the problem from their own particular perspectives and developed services for women whose experiences were similar to theirs. When they talked of treating everyone the same, they did not realize that implicitly this meant treating everyone the same as White women. As McIntosh (1989) points out, most White women think of their lives and ways of doing

things as normal and ideal and actually seek to assist others in being more like them. These unspoken assumptions privilege White women and are almost always to their benefit, even though this benefit is rarely acknowledged.

This reproduction of White privilege was also apparent when shelters were doing fundraisers or trying to raise community awareness. An executive director discussed speaking to civic groups, such as Kiwanis and Rotary Clubs: "We speak at all those things and they're the majority White." Another director said that "we are available to any group that invites us. As far as directing anything specifically to one particular [ethnic] group, we do not do that. We are available to anyone. If we are asked, we will come." What this meant was that her organization's outreach was directed primarily toward the predominately White groups in the community who were familiar with the agency and took the initiative to extend an invitation.

Others, rather by accident, had established contacts with culturally diverse communities but attached no special importance to these. For example, one director reported that "actually, we had not intended to, but we have recently by need had to increase our services to immigrant women." Another reported that "I had a Black Vista volunteer who did some work in the Black community. Other than that, that's all the kind of special work I can think about."

On the whole, executive directors seemed to spend little time thinking about ways to be more responsive to women of color. One director reported that there was not a specific outreach program for African American women in her community, but "hopefully, they know they can call us if they need us and come to our shelter, [but] predominantly, we are serving Caucasian women." Again and again, we heard that there were "no plans to do outreach or add services" in racial and ethnic communities. As the quotes in the following paragraphs illustrate, most respondents had never given much thought to the needs of the women of color who happened to find their way into shelters. They were puzzled when these women left quickly but did not seem overly concerned. In general, the idea seemed to be that they were providing quality services and doing the best they could with limited resources. If women of color chose not to use them, it was regrettable, but there was not a lot they could do to remedy the problem.

As mentioned earlier, some directors admitted that they saw fewer women of color than expected but showed only mild curiosity as to why this was happening. As one director noted, "We don't see many Black women here, even though they make up 20% of our county's population. They call, but they don't come in to the shelter." Another respondent acknowledged that her shelter did not do a good job, noting that "we don't see many Black women here; we need to do a better job. They just don't use services as much. I'm not sure why—we need to improve in this area." Again, both comments reflect the subtle nature of White privilege. Neither respondent felt compelled to find out why women of color did not use their services. Overall, little outreach was done in the communities of color. In fact, only 25% of the respondents mentioned doing such outreach. More often, they reported conducting outreach with other groups, such as older women, the physically challenged, or (White) immigrant communities.

In addition, few directors mentioned making shelters and services more culturally hospitable. Because of White privilege, sheltered White women do not have to worry about having familiar foods, hair care products or cosmetics designed for their hair and skin types, or there being persons on staff who are like them and understand where they are coming from. In contrast, women of color cannot assume a familiar or hospitable environment. They may find the agency and shelter environments foreign and feel like outsiders when seeking assistance.

When resources are scarce, the problem of culturally competent programming is even more acute. This executive director was quite clear: "We need more money—we can't do special programs for certain groups of women without it." When financial resources are limited, efforts at cultural competence—if they existed in the first place—are scaled back or simply fall by the wayside. Thus, programs revert to their original ways of doing things, which are often implicitly directed toward the needs of White battered women.

To summarize then, White privilege creates a complicated and often contradictory situation when providing services to battered women. Because we live in a society that says that it is politically incorrect to notice race, most executive directors are dedicated to the idea of providing color-blind services to their clients. They

admit that all women are different but feel that if the programs provided to them are the same, then the situation is fair. What they do not realize is that because this one-size-fits-all approach was developed by and for White women, it is more responsive to their needs and discriminatory to women of color. Moreover, when women of color fail to use extant services, directors rarely look to program characteristics or attempt to alter their procedures. Instead, they call on explanations of difference and argue that women of color do not use battered women's services because of cultural norms or alternative resources. This leaves battered women of color continually underserved and their complicated needs unmet (Donnelly et al., 1999). Even if the harm to women of color is unintentional, it exists nonetheless.

IMPLICATIONS FOR PROGRAMMING AND POLICY

One purpose in writing this article was to uncover the subtle ways in which White privilege affects services to battered women of color. Although examining White privilege is difficult for White academics, policy makers, and service providers alike, it is essential. The discrimination resulting from White privilege cannot be overcome until it is first recognized. In this article, we have exposed some of the hidden privileges of Whiteness. The invisible knapsack (McIntosh, 1989) of White privilege informs the decisions made by people who control a vast array of resources, despite their sincere fiction (Feagin & Vera, 1995) of treating everyone the same. Thus, as activists and scholars, we must begin to illuminate and articulate the intersecting structures of White privilege and sexism to truly see beyond obstacles to safety for battered women of color.

Our research indicates that battered women of color are underserved in many communities. Racism—sometimes blatant, sometimes subtle—continues to be a problem. Shelter staff easily buy into stereotypes that women of color are different or that they have their own resources. An othering mentality is common, and these explanations are used to explain why outreach is not done in minority communities. This is another instance of the ways in which White privilege operates to allow White women to remain

oblivious to the needs of women of color. Because executive directors control the finances of battered women's organizations, it is imperative that the needs of women of color in those communities are considered. If the majority of resources are expended on White battered women because of the self-proclaimed color-blind nature of battering, then women of color will remain systematically disenfranchised when negotiating their safety and the safety of their children.

Even when the explanation of color blindness was not invoked, many White executive directors assumed that their lives were different from (and by implication) superior to those of women of color. Minnich (in McIntosh, 1995) notes that "Whites are taught to think of their lives as morally neutral, normative, and average, and also ideal, so that when we work to benefit others, this is seen as work that will allow 'them' to be more like 'us'" (p. 72) As our data indicate, White executive directors often distinguished between us and them and thought they were different and would benefit from becoming more like us, as evidenced by the executive director who proclaimed that battered women of color are "not like you and me."

The Deep South states in which we conducted our research have a high proportion (between one fourth and one third) of women of color, primarily African American women, yet many executive directors do not perceive their needs as urgent. The funding priorities and the provision of services to battered women reflect state priorities that often emphasize a one-size-fits-all approach. Women hired as executive directors are influenced to take a color-blind stance because of their dependence on state funding. More attention must be paid to meeting the needs of battered women of color and to recognizing the subtle ways in which White privilege affects shelter practices and attitudes. Although it is important to recognize White privilege, we must also do something about the situation through culturally sensitive feminist activism.

As Oliver (2000) suggests, one way of doing this is to use elements of popular culture. He notes that batterer education programs that focus on elements of Black popular culture, such as music and religion, tend to have fairly high success rates. Moreover, he suggests culturally specific advertising that uses

traditionally Black TV and radio stations and music styles as a way of getting information across. Cole (2001) suggests that programs for battered women also incorporate elements of history, background, and culture into their offerings if they wish to attract the attention of women of color and meet their needs in a competent manner. Admittedly, it takes time and money to make these changes to extant programs. We suspect, however, that the payoffs for both the women who staff battered women's shelters and the battered women of color who might use them would far outweigh the additional costs.

Another suggestion for programming is to keep in mind that there is just as much variation within groups as between groups (Hamby, 2000). Although this does not negate the need for culturally sensitive programming, it should serve as a reminder to service providers that not all Black women are the same, that Asian and Latina women come from a variety of different countries and cultures, and that Native American women may include diverse tribes, languages, and cultures. In becoming culturally responsive, programs must guard against applying the same one-size-fits-all approach to racial and ethnic minorities.

In addition, more research is needed in understanding how White privilege works to exclude women of color and is essential to the development of culturally competent services for groups of women who have traditionally been underserved. We suggest that one way to begin these investigations would be to question respondents other than executive directors. We need to know more about the experiences of frontline workers (such as social workers, outreach workers, and shelter staff) as well as learning more about the experiences of battered women of color themselves. The latter may be an especially difficult group to reach, because those who can tell us the most about White privilege and the resultant exclusion of women of color are the women who do not turn to battered women's shelters for help. In addition, we suggest that program evaluations are an important component in creating culturally competent programming. These evaluations are needed to determine the effectiveness of long-standing programs, as well as newly introduced programs that emphasize cultural competence.

CONCLUSION

As a social problem, White privilege affects much more than services to battered women. On our jobs and in our neighborhoods, schools and churches, White people benefit immensely from skin color. As with most unearned advantages, for Whites to benefit, someone else must be disadvantaged. In this case, it is people of color, but especially those such as the poor and women who are most likely to pay the price for White privilege. White privilege continues to hide behind the rhetoric of color blindness, to be couched in terms of equity, and to be represented in unquestioned attitudes and practices that view Whiteness as the norm. If we are a society truly committed to human rights and social justice, we must acknowledge, confront, and deal with this privilege based on skin color.

APPENDIX
INTERVIEW GUIDE

First, I'd like to ask some questions about your organization and its history:

- Could you tell me a little bit about how your organization got started, and how it has changed over time? [Probes: When was it founded? What services were offered initially? Who operates the shelter? How has the agency changed over the years?]
- What sort of philosophies are your services based on? [Probe: Some agencies focus on family values, others on a therapeutic approach, others are more educational, and still others are feminist. How would you describe your agency?]
- What services does your agency currently provide? About how many people use these services each month? How many women? How many children? How many bed nights do you have in the shelter in a typical month?

Now, I'd like to ask some questions about the demographics of the women you serve:

- What is the social class distribution of your clients? [Probe: What percentage would you say are upper class? middle class? working class? poor?]
- What is the general educational background of your clients?
- What is the age distribution of your clients? [Probe: Would you say most are young, middle aged, or elderly?]
- How many of your clients have children?
- What is the racial and ethnic distribution of your clients?

This next section of questions deals with identifying groups of women who are reluctant to use services for battered women:

- Are there any groups of women that are hesitant to use your services? Which women? Why do you think this is so?
- Are there any groups of women that you would identify as underserved?
- Do you do any special outreach activities in the community?
- If you had unlimited funding, is there any particular group that you would do more outreach with?
- Based on your knowledge of the women you serve, how satisfied are they with the assistance they receive?
- What are your suggestions for reaching a broader array of women in your community?
- Do you have any other comments?

REFERENCES

Brown, B. (1986). Violence in a sample of Black couples. *Dissertation Abstracts International*, *46*, 4005.

Bureau of Justice Statistics. (1995). *Violence against women: Estimates from the redesigned survey*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice.

Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2001). *Results from the current population survey*. Retrieved July 21, 2002, from http://www.bls.gov.cps

Chen, B. (1998). *"We just got together and enjoyed it:" An analysis of the Georgia Coalition for Battered Refugee and Immigrant Women as a social movement*. Unpublished nonthesis master's paper, Department of Sociology, Georgia State University, Atlanta.

Cole, P. (2001). Impoverished women in violent partnerships: Designing services to fit their reality. *Violence Against Women*, *7*, 223-233.

Coley, S., & Beckett, J. (1988a). Black battered women: A review of the empirical literature. *Journal of Counseling and Development*, *66*, 266-270.

Coley, S., & Beckett, J. (1988b, October). Black battered women: Practice issues. *Social Casework: The Journal of Contemporary Social Work*, *69*, 483-490.

Donnelly, D., Cook, K., & Wilson, L. (1999). Provision and exclusion: The dual face of services to battered women in three Deep South states. *Violence Against Women*, *5*, 710-741.

Feagin, J., & Vera, H. (1995). *White racism: The basics*. New York: Routledge.

Frankenberg, R. (1993). *White women, race matters: The social construction of Whiteness*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Gondolf, E. (1988). *Battered women as survivors*. Lexington, MA: Lexington Books.

Hamby, S. (2000). The importance of community in a feminist analysis of domestic violence among American Indians. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, *28*, 649-669.

Hill Collins, P. (1999). *Black feminist thought* (2nd ed.). New York: Routledge.

Hurtado, A. (1996). *The color of privilege*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

Lee, M., & Law, P. (2001). Perceptions of sexual violence against women in Asian American communities. *Journal of Ethnic and Cultural Diversity*, *10*, 3-25.

Lipsitz, G. (1998). *The possessive investment in Whiteness: How White people profit from identity politics*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Lockhart, L., & White, B. (1989). Understanding marital violence in the Black community. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, *4*, 421-436.

Marsh, C. (1993). Sexual assault and domestic violence in the African American community. *Western Journal of Black Studies*, *17*, 149-155.
McIntosh, P. (1989). White privilege: Unpacking the invisible knapsack. *Peace and Freedom*, *July/August*, 10-12.
McIntosh, P. (1995). White privilege and male privilege: A personal account of coming to see correspondences through work in women's studies. In M. Andersen & P. Hill Collins (Eds.), *Race, class and gender* (pp. 70-81). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.
Mederos, F. (1997, November). *National Symposium on La Violencia Domestica: An emerging dialogue among Latinos*. Paper presented at the National Symposium on La Violencia Domestica, Washington, DC.
Oliver, W. (2000). Preventing domestic violence in the African American community. *Violence Against Women*, *6*, 533-549.
Patterson, O. (1997). *The ordeal of integration: Progress and resentment in America's "racial" crisis*. Washington, DC: Civitas Counterpoint.
Ptacek. J. (1999). *Battered women in the courtroom*. Boston: Northeastern University Press.
Richie, B. (1996). *Compelled to crime: The gender entrapment of battered Black women*. New York: Routledge.
Schecter, S. (1982). *Women and male violence: The visions and strategies of the battered women's movement*. Boston: South End.
Vinton, L. (1998). A nationwide survey of domestic violence shelters' programming for older women. *Violence Against Women*, *4*, 559-571.
West, T. C. (1999). *Wounds of the spirit: Black women, violence and resistance ethics*. New York: New York University Press.
Williams, O. (1993). Treatment for African American men who batter. *CURA Reporter*, *25*, 6-10.
Williams, O. (1998). African American men who batter: Treatment considerations and community response. In R. Staples (Ed.), *The Black family: Essays and studies* (pp. 265-279). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.

Denise A. Donnelly, Ph.D., C.F.L.E., is associate professor in the department of sociology and an affiliate of the Women's Studies Institute at Georgia State University in Atlanta. Her research interests include culturally competent services to battered women and batterers, involuntary celibacy, and comparisons of civil rights in the United States and Northern Ireland. She is the author (or coauthor) of two books and 22 articles or book chapters and has been active in the battered women's movement for more than 15 years.

Kimberly J. Cook, Ph.D., is associate professor and chair of the criminology department at the University of Southern Maine. Her research interests include public opinion and politics around abortion and capital punishment, restorative justice, and violence against women. She is author of Divided Passions: Public Opinions on Abortion and the Death Penalty *(Northeastern University Press, 1998) as well as several journal articles and book chapters. In 2001, she was awarded a Senior Scholar Fulbright Award to study restorative justice in Australia.*

Debra Van Ausdale, Ph.D., is assistant professor of sociology at the Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs at Syracuse University. Her research interests lie in exploring the connections between contemporary racism and

childhood experiences and the phenomenon of White privilege. She is coauthor, with Joe R. Feagin, of The First R: How Children Learn Race and Racism.

Lara Foley, Ph.D., is assistant professor of sociology and a member of the women's studies governing board at the University of Tulsa. Her current research focuses on midwives' identity work in relation to their occupation, the medical community, and the public. She teaches courses in sociology of medicine, women's health, and sociology of law.