
GOOD MOTHERS WITH GUNS: FRAMING BLACK WOMANHOOD IN THE BLACK PANTHER, 1968-1980

By Linda Lumsden



This article examines the Black Panther Party newspaper's frames of black womanhood to explore larger questions about how social movement media construct social reality, create and maintain group identity, and counter hegemonic media. It uses framing and social movement theory to analyze the Black Panther's reframing of black womanhood from restrictive essentialist stereotypes to empowering portrayals of female resistance. The newspaper's evolving frame of black women makes it an important artifact of the culture of resistance regarded as the foundation of black feminist thought. Its discussions of the interlocking oppressions of race, class, and gender were a major contribution to feminism.

Contrary to the iconic hyper-masculine image of the Black Panther Party as a gang of rifle-toting men clad in black leather, its weekly newspaper was profoundly feminist. The *Black Panther's* framing of black womanhood illuminates what William Gamson calls radical media's role as the "central battleground" for dissident groups to define themselves and their issues as they challenge dominant hegemony.¹ The *Panther* is an important artifact of the "culture of resistance" that Patricia Hill Collins regards as the foundation of black feminist thought.² As the BPP created one of the twentieth-century's most salient counter-hegemonic images of black resistance, the newspaper provided alternative frames on women's issues, such as women in prison, politics, labor, and developing nations; reproductive rights; welfare rights; and the women's movement.

The *Panther's* challenge to mass media representations of black women is a vital but overlooked aspect of the BPP newspaper, the "most visible, constant symbol of the party," according to former Panther David Hilliard.³ The newspaper became a premiere forum for challenging the negative associations of African American women disseminated by mainstream media—what historian Jane Rhodes calls the "central purveyors of the framing of black America."⁴ Positive, respectful *Panther* frames of black women exemplify what John Downing states is the radical media mission "to disrupt the silence, to counter the lies, to provide

the truth.”⁵ Those frames also demonstrate how social movements use media to construct and maintain group identity.⁶ The *Panther’s* public rhetoric about women, however, obscures private intraparty gender battles, a common tension in social movements.⁷ Female Panthers challenged sexist stereotypes that appeared in the *Black Panther* during its shaky first year, and by autumn 1969 the newspaper unfailingly framed black women and men as equals. It published pioneering analysis by Panther women that expanded Second Wave feminism by addressing the intersection of race, gender, and class.⁸ It never portrayed black women as sex objects or as consumers. The newspaper’s verbal and visual rhetoric offered a paradoxical blend of traditional and radical frames of womanhood. Its most provocative imagery of mothers with guns fused militant Panther rhetoric advocating armed self-defense with the traditional image of woman as guardian of the home.

Downing argues that radical social-movement media such as the *Black Panther* are critical for democracy, as they are “the chief standard bearers of a democratic communication structure.”⁹ Gamson says a social movement’s periodical uses framing to create a collective identity. According to Robert Entman, “To frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described.”¹⁰ Framing is a key part of the “negotiation over meaning” that Gamson and Gadi Wolfsfeld say occurs between social movement organizations such as the BPP and hegemonic media, which typically frame dissidence negatively.¹¹ Framing also helps to construct an enemy, in part through confrontational rhetoric, which further builds group identity, according to Robert Scott and Donald Smith.¹² David Snow and Robert Benford describe the centrality of “collective action frames” in social movement media to inspire and legitimate group activities and campaigns.¹³

Many scholars have examined the consequences of mainstream media’s hostile framing of deviant social movements. Sociologist Todd Gitlin’s landmark study of media coverage of the New Left shows how framing can impose authoritarian ideology.¹⁴ Cultural theorist Stuart Hall argues media can spread or maintain racism through news frames and their claim of objectivity.¹⁵ Rhodes’s groundbreaking study of BPP imagery characterized media coverage of the Panthers as permeated by “racially coded frames” that reflected deeply ingrained beliefs of black criminality, violence, and inferiority.¹⁶ Entman found that the media framed the Panthers’ story as a threat by angry, young black men instead of as a response to racism and poverty.¹⁷ Other studies show media frames encouraged the idea that Black Power was a problem that should be addressed by police authorities, a classic example of Hall’s claim that media frames help preserve the dominant social order.¹⁸ Angela McRobbie and Sarah Thornton, however, argue that deviant social groups use their own

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"niche" media to reframe negative mass media portrayals and defend their mission.¹⁹

Numerous scholars have described the Black Power movement as incorrigibly misogynist.²⁰ Previous scholarship on *Panther* coverage of women, however, often has not ventured beyond 1968, the newspaper's first year, when its essentialist gender discourse was blatantly sexist. Rhodes cites only two 1968 articles as evidence that *Panther* commentary "regularly" advocated "masculine authority and a sexual division of labor."²¹ Similarly, Rodger Streitmatter cites two 1968 articles and another in early 1969 as evidence that the *Panther* emphasized masculine authority and patriarchy.²² Matthew Hughey uses a 1968 *Panther* essay as evidence of BPP misogyny. Although Hughey cites later articles to conclude that the BPP "re-envisioned black masculinity in important ways," he does not discuss the newspaper's feminist framing of black women.²³ Erica Doss claims that the BPP's visual imagery "reinscribed the most egregious forms of patriarchal privilege."²⁴ Although Samuel Josephs does cite *Black Panther* content beyond 1969 to demonstrate the "rather dramatic transformation" in BPP gender ideology, which he calls a "critical component" of the party, he focuses on party framing of black manhood.²⁵ John Courtright's assertion that Panthers used their guns "to declare their masculinity" overlooks the *Panther's* many portrayals of women with guns.²⁶ Simon Wendt, whose 2007 observation that BPP rhetoric "tended to legitimize the subordination of women" ignores its newspaper's empowering social construction of black womanhood.²⁷

This analysis of the *Panther's* reframing of black womanhood joins other works since 1998 that emphasize what Stephen Ward calls the "vibrant political, cultural, and intellectual" contributions of the Black Power movement.²⁸ Some scholars argue that black feminism significantly influenced that movement.²⁹ They also have reclaimed the important role women played in the Black Panthers.³⁰ Former *Panther* Kathleen Cleaver argues Panther women belong in the "longer tradition of fighting women" in African American history.³¹ Tracye Matthews' 1998 dissertation, for example, cites *Panther* articles as evidence that "Black women were critical players in the BPP."³² Matthews discusses how changing frames over time in the *Black Panther* demonstrated that the party's "ideological formulations on gender roles were being constantly revised" ³³ Her study, however, ends in 1971.

This article will examine *Panther* frames of black womanhood to explore larger questions about how social movement media construct social reality, create and maintain group identity, and counter hegemonic media. It traces what themes recur, disappear, or evolve in *Panther* frames of women over time. It analyzes the relatively swift transformation of those frames, from restrictive stereotypes to an embrace of female empowerment, in search of insights on how ideology evolves in a social movement. It seeks evidence that would connect the *Panther* to the historical tradition of black female resistance. The historical research involved scanning headlines of all *Panther* issues from 1968 through 1980 available in the Underground Newspaper Microfilm Collection.

Gender frames and discourse identified in more than two hundred articles on women's issues and female Panthers were then closely analyzed.³⁴ The visual rhetoric of dozens of illustrations featuring women also was examined. Dozens of memoirs and secondary sources supplemented primary published sources.

Masculinity was a focal point of the Black Power movement that competed with the relatively conservative civil rights movement in the late 1960s.³⁵ The Black Panther Party for Self Defense, founded in Oakland, California, in October 1966 by Bobby Seale and Huey P. Newton, urged poor urban blacks to forcefully resist oppression, particularly police brutality. The first issue of the *Black Panther*, a four-page mimeograph on April 25, 1967, said of the Panthers, "These Brothers are the cream of Black manhood."³⁶ They created a ten-point program Seale once summarized as "Land, bread, housing, education, clothing, justice, and . . . peace."³⁷ More than 5,000 people across the nation joined the party by 1970, and many more showed support by clenching their upraised fists in the Panthers' iconic gesture of resistance. Caribbean revolutionist Frantz Fanon's emphasis on armed struggle inspired the Panthers' militaristic rhetoric and conspicuous display of guns.³⁸

The Party and Its Newspaper

The Panthers were not the first African Americans to call for armed resistance: Herbert Aptheker found evidence of some 250 slave uprisings, anti-lynching crusader Ida Wells-Barnett proclaimed in 1892 that African Americans should arm themselves in self-defense, and blacks carried arms to protect themselves against white rioters in East St. Louis in 1917.³⁹ News accounts, however, constructed the Panthers as lawless black counterparts of the Ku Klux Klan. Media frames focusing on their guns reflected the journalistic imperative for conflict and novelty as well as unconscious racism instead of issues raised by the BPP. Editor Eldridge Cleaver, however, intended to shock with obscenity-laden, inflammatory rhetoric such as the Panthers' notorious call to "Off the pigs!"⁴⁰ The crude phrase epitomizes the adversarial nature of collective action frames. Such confrontational rhetoric—a typical cover story attacked "Fascism in America"—further forged Panther group identity by defining the enemy. *Panther* news stories framed that enemy as institutionalized American racism, reflected in a 1972 headline, "Poverty is a Crime, and Our People are the Victims."⁴¹ The *Panther's* counter-hegemonic frames of police brutality and of governmental mistreatment of poor, urban blacks substantiate Downing's characterization of radical periodicals as fundamental to contributing diverse viewpoints that are requisite for a healthy democracy.⁴²

By the mid-1970s, a number of Panthers and police had died in shootouts, and some 700 Panthers had been arrested as a result of the Federal Bureau of Investigation's secret, illegal COINTELPRO campaign started in 1970.⁴³ Despite these setbacks, the *Black Panther* proved amazingly resilient, appearing every week from January 1968 through 1978, when finances forced the *Panther* to scale back to monthly publication. Peak circulation hit 139,000 in 1970.⁴⁴ Rhodes writes that the *Panther's*

radical verbal and visual rhetoric made the weekly tabloid the “paradigmatic periodical of black revolutionary politics.”⁴⁵

Coverage throughout 1968 centered on the party’s theatrical “Free Huey!” campaign in response to Newton’s arrest and murder trial. Even after Cleaver fled to Algeria that April to avoid murder charges, the newspaper continued to feature the *Soul on Ice* author’s powerful essays during the tenure of a handful of male successors over the next two years. The paper’s quality improved and its rhetoric toned down under editor Elaine Brown from 1970 through 1972 and Ericka Huggins, who assisted her beginning in 1971 and briefly succeeded her in early 1972. By then, the Panthers had largely abandoned militaristic rhetoric. “We’ve rejected the rhetoric of the gun; it got about forty of us killed and sent hundreds of us to prison,” Newton said.⁴⁶ David Du Bois’s insistence on collective decision making during his tenure as editor from 1973 to 1975 helped ensure that female staffers’ voices were heard. The *Black Panther* outlasted the party, which fell apart when the influential Brown quit in 1977 after learning Newton had ordered the beating of a female Panther, a flagrant example of the chasm between BPP words and deeds.⁴⁷ Following a series of quick editor turnovers, JoNina Abron served as its final editor from March 1978 through 1980.⁴⁸

Black Panther’s Reframing of Women

Articles initially framed women as subordinate. Female writers throughout 1968 extolled women to train their energy on men as part of the party mission to salvage black manhood. One wrote that a Panther woman should be “supportive”: “Her main objective should be to assist in the re-birth of the black man’s mind.”⁴⁹ Another framed women as mystically maternal, a state similar to the “feminine mystique” that Betty Friedan said entrapped white middle-class housewives.⁵⁰ The author stated a revolutionary woman must fulfill black men “in every way that they must be fulfilled in order to live and fight.”⁵¹ A companion article continued the theme of female subservience: “The woman’s place is to stand behind the black man . . .”⁵² This rhetoric reflected the Panthers’ prioritization of reclaiming black masculinity and, as Rhodes observed, their idealization of traditional gender roles.⁵³ It also aligned the newspaper with hegemonic media by reinforcing male dominance, a troublesome contradiction in a social movement opposed to oppression.

Subverting the construction of subordinate black womanhood, however, was the empowering visual rhetoric of female resistance in illustrator Emory Douglas’s self-described “revolutionary art.”⁵⁴ Best known for his *Panther* cartoons of pigs in police uniforms, as early as March 1968 Douglas created back-cover, two-color, poster-like images of women brandishing guns or knives that romanticized Panther women as warriors.⁵⁵ Douglas also drew a wide range of portraits showing poor black women resisting authority in everyday life, such as a middle-aged matron singing, “I just want to testify/I’m not going to sit around any longer/I’ve got freedom on my mind.”⁵⁶ Douglas believed art should raise viewers’ consciousness about oppression. His *Panther* illustrations

included the three elements Gamson lists as elements of collective action framing: injustice, agency, and identity.⁵⁷ Curator Sam Durant describes Douglas's art as "a visual mythology of power for people who felt powerless and victimized."⁵⁸

The newspaper's imagery was a striking contrast to popular culture stereotypes of black women as self-sacrificing mammies, sexual objects, or emasculating matriarchs.⁵⁹ Douglas's illustrations of everyday women represented what Deborah King calls the "multifaceted nature of black womanhood."⁶⁰ They broadened and strengthened the organization's group identity. Douglas lent dignity to the women he drew, with their jaws set and eyes looking forward.⁶¹ A 1972 illustration was a striking version of Dorothea Lange's iconic Depression photo, "Migrant Mother."⁶² Images of Sojourner Truth and Harriet Tubman graced a 1978 back cover, a connection to black women's long history of resourceful resistance.⁶³ In the *Panther's* early years Douglas mentored the party's first female member, Matilaba (Joan Lewis), who also drew black women carrying guns.⁶⁴

Matilaba's poem in a November 1968 issue indicated that not all Panther women were content simply standing behind their men. It began "Revolutionary brother/ And a/ Revolutionary Sister/ Work/ Hand and Hand/ Together/ As a/ team ... They have reached the level/ Where man-woman/ Hangups don't exist"⁶⁵ By 1969, *Panther* frames of women began to catch up with Matilaba's sentiment. In the May 4 issue, June Culberson publicly challenged the party's restrictive gender views. Culberson asserted, "[O]ur role is to fight in and participate in this revolution on an equal footing with our men."⁶⁶ Behind the scenes, some Panther men were even beating up women, a topic that was publicly taboo.⁶⁷ A key turning point in public policy occurred on July 5, 1969, when the *Panther* published a letter from Cleaver instructing Panther men to treat Panther women as equals. Readers took note as the newspaper was the main vehicle by which leaders disseminated party policies and instructions. The letter was prompted by murder charges filed against member Ericka Huggins. "The incarceration and the suffering of sister Erica [sic] should be a stinging rebuke to all manifestations of male chauvinism within our ranks," Cleaver wrote. He recommended mandatory disciplinary action against those who "manifest male chauvinism behavior." He concluded, "[T]he liberation of women is one of the most important issues facing the world today."⁶⁸

Although Panther men and women continued to battle over sexual equality behind the scenes, future frames of women were uniformly empowering. Feminist discourse accelerated, and sexism was framed as counter-revolutionary. On August 2, 1969, for example, the newspaper printed the entire text of member Roberta Alexander's speech decrying intraparty sexism at a radical conference sponsored by the BPP. Alexander's bold accusation against Panther men challenged the BPP's social group identity: "[Women] are oppressed because they are workers and oppressed because they are Black. In addition, Black women are oppressed by Black men. ... The problem of male supremacy can't be overcome unless it's a two way street. Men must struggle, too."⁶⁹ The

next issue contained Candi Robinson's appeal to other women Panthers: "Sisters, let's educate our people. Combat liberalism, and combat male chauvanism [sic]."⁷⁰ Robinson's statement combined a call for justice, imbued women with agency, and strengthened their identity as revolutionaries, hallmarks of collective action framing. Panther recognition of female oppression marked an important transformation in the party's frames of black womanhood. Significantly, the change was largely a product of female Panthers' active resistance to sexism, through both public discourse on *Panther* pages and in behind-the-scenes discussions.

A full-page interview of six unnamed *Panther* women on women's liberation in September 1969 elaborated on their expectations of sexual equality. One interviewee said, "I think it's important that within the context of that struggle that black men understand that their manhood is not dependent on keeping their black women subordinate." Class struggle figured prominently in the women's gender analysis. "[W]e have come to realize that male chauvinism and all its manifestations are bourgeois and that's one of the things we're fighting against," one of the women told the *Panther*.⁷¹ The interview highlights the newspaper's major contribution to feminist discourse: addressing the multiple oppressions black women experience at the intersection of race, sex, and class. The *Black Panther* addressed the "triple oppression" of black women in a 1970 essay that again demonstrated Panthers, at least on the public platform provided by their newspaper, were on the cutting edge of feminist thought in their call for a broader view of women's liberation.⁷² Angela Davis, mainstream media poster girl for Black Power radicalism, expanded feminist discourse in long *Panther* interviews that reframed sexism as just one facet of a broader system of economic and political oppression. "Women's liberation is an extremely important element of the broader revolutionary struggle," she said in 1972. "I think that there exists a tremendous revolutionary potential among women—particularly women of color and working women. ... But this potential is by no means realized by the present Women's Liberation Movement in this country."⁷³

Panther editor Brown shared Davis's reservations about women's lib's apparent focus on white, middle-class concerns. The former communications secretary of the Los Angeles chapter, Brown was part of the vocal female "clique" that challenged BPP subordination of women.⁷⁴ The *Panther* published many articles written from a Marxist feminist perspective throughout Brown's tenure as editor, and continued when she was acting head of the party from 1972 through 1974. Her influence is one reason *Panther* frames of women became more empowering. Female members' potential identification with women's libbers potentially threatened the "oppositional consciousness" Panther women and men shared as members of a social movement challenging the dominant white power structure. An oppositional consciousness unifies members of an oppressed group to reform or overthrow their oppressors.⁷⁵ Without it, social movements wither. *Panther* rhetoric that divided the world into "we" and "they" played a key role in maintaining

members' oppositional consciousness. The concept of black men oppressing black women jeopardized party identity because framing Panther men as part of the adversarial "they" shattered that neat dichotomy.

Although occasional misogyny tested female members' sense of shared consciousness, it was difficult for them to identify with middle-class white women. Nonetheless, party leaders, aware of the schism between Panther men and women, worried about losing female members who felt discriminated against. By 1970, women comprised 40% to 70% of party membership.⁷⁶ The BPP attempted to resolve the dilemma by expanding its self-definition. Cleaver's 1969 letter banning sexism is an example. Another is Newton's August 1970 directive ordering the BPP to recognize and respect the women's liberation and gay liberation movements. Besides reflecting his expanding theory about global oppression, disavowing sexism and anti-gay behavior offered a practical benefit. "[T]hey are our allies," he stated, "and *we need as many allies as possible.*"⁷⁷

The public policy change enabled the BPP to retain its group identity by reframing "we" as oppressed people of both genders and "they" as white-male-dominated capitalism. That reframing kept intact BPP oppositional consciousness. The next month, the *Panther* published a philosophical letter on gender from imprisoned members Joan Bird and Afeni Shakur that, in effect, blamed capitalism for racism and sexism.⁷⁸ The anti-capitalist outlook enabled Kathleen Cleaver, without sounding traitorous, to claim in *The Black Scholar* in 1971 that ridding the world of male supremacy is "the most revolutionary element in changing the social order." She absolved black men, by adding, "[T]he oppression of the woman by the black man is something that is perpetuated and encouraged by the system of colonialism run by the white man."⁷⁹

Another reason the *Panther* framed women as equals after 1968 was the fact that no one could ignore the dangers they took. The newspaper lionized Huggins when she was jailed in New Haven and gave her equal billing with Seale during their 1970-71 murder trial.⁸⁰ Davis called Huggins "the strongest, most courageous Black woman in America," in a letter to her published in the *Panther*.⁸¹ An accompanying photograph of Huggins in front of the courthouse with her upraised fist clenched in the iconic Black Power symbol exemplified how the newspaper's visual rhetoric celebrated female resistance. The *Panther* published an excerpt of a letter Huggins wrote from prison to her toddler daughter. "If I should return, I shall kiss you," she wrote. "If I should fall on the way, I shall ask you to do as I have in the name of the revolution."⁸² The radical newspaper's framing of imprisoned female Panthers as martyrs for the cause ironically reiterated traditional ideals of maternal sacrifice. "I always think of the pain you feel at being torn asunder from Mai," Kathleen Cleaver wrote to Huggins in another letter published in the *Panther*. "Because you are a revolutionary, you know that sacrifice is the essence of love, and love is the essence of victory."⁸³

Role Models of Resistance

The *Panther's* most radical framing was illustrations of women with guns. The imagery paradoxically often incorporated traditional ideas about motherhood into the imagery, perhaps in an attempt to make armed women more palatable to readers. A 1968 illustration of a woman in African tribal dress carrying a baby on her back—a “Black Studies” book in one hand and a rifle in the other—framed black womanhood as encompassing motherhood, intellect, pride, agency, and resistance. Its caption read, “Until the day of liberation, protection for my child can only be guaranteed through the barrel of the gun.”⁸⁴ The caption of a 1970 Douglas drawing of a woman toting a child and a rifle said, “Kill the pigs before they kill you.”⁸⁵ A 1971 back cover depicted a determined-looking woman cradling a toddler in one hand and a rifle in the other.⁸⁶ Images of mothers toting both guns and children, however, conveyed the not-so-radical message that women could justifiably kill to protect their children and homes. The *Panther* was more reluctant to depict men in domestic roles, although photographs occasionally showed men feeding children in the BPP Free Breakfast for Children program begun in 1968. Imagery of women with guns, however, upheld the notion that Panthers equated gunmanship with masculinity. A 1971 story about racism in the welfare system, for example, was accompanied by a drawing of a mild-looking, middle-aged woman pulling a large pistol from her purse outside a welfare department’s door.⁸⁷ A 1968 drawing by Matilaba of a mother teaching her son to shoot subverted the idea that Panthers deemed weapons-handling as an exclusively masculine endeavor.⁸⁸

The *Panther* extolled the egalitarian, gun-toting example of women revolutionaries who fought alongside men in places such as Palestine and Zimbabwe.⁸⁹ Stories highlighted Panther globalism, another one of the newspaper’s hallmarks. They reflected Newton’s 1970 shift from Black Nationalism to an “intercommunal” struggle against global capitalism that cut across color and gender lines.⁹⁰ The new emphasis also indicated a retreat from police and legal battles that had decimated Panther ranks by the early 1970s. After David Du Bois (stepson of black activist W.E.B. Du Bois) became editor at the end of 1972, the *Panther* routinely published articles about revolutionary movements around the world.

Articles reiterated female revolutionaries’ strength and maternal sacrifices. “Many of these women,” read a 1980 editorial, “are mothers who have risked death so that their children might grow up to live in peace.”⁹¹ Panther women cited North Vietnam’s women soldiers as role models.⁹² Like the early Panthers, women revolutionaries in other countries linked shooting skills to personal empowerment. A female resistance leader in Guinea-Bissau, for instance, in 1976 equated handling a gun with finding her voice. “Before I joined the struggle I was very timid and didn’t speak much. . . . Now I don’t hesitate to talk and have learned to use a gun myself.”⁹³ The *Panther* also published many accounts of international women’s issues syndicated by radical news services, such as a 1975 series about women protesting apartheid in South Africa.⁹⁴ A

feminist perspective informed articles about women fighting pervasive sexism in developing countries, such as a campaign to relax divorce laws in Guinea-Bissau.⁹⁵

Such resistance was the common thread among *Panther* portrayals of black womanhood both abroad and at home. Back in the United States, positive *Panther* coverage of Davis during her 1971-1972 murder trial countered hegemonic media representations of Davis in racially and sexualized stereotypes that delegitimized her critiques of racism. *Panther* collective action frames celebrated Davis even though she was not an official member of the BPP. "Free Angela! Free all of us!" stated a headline announcing her acquittal.⁹⁶ The *Panther* routinely covered activities of several female Panthers who epitomized the *Panther's* ideal. Brown, Huggins, and Cleaver, like Davis, were young, attractive, and casually stylish, sporting Afro hairdos that indicated militancy.⁹⁷ But it was their activism, invariably informed by resistance, that embodied meaningful black womanhood. A 1974 editorial praised Brown's "youthful vigor, progressive commitment, and intelligent foresight."⁹⁸

Coverage in the mid-1970s demonstrates the party's move from calls for revolution in the late 1960s to reform through established institutions. Female Panther political candidates afforded a new angle for framing women as citizen activists. Brown twice ran unsuccessfully for Oakland City Council and remained active in Bay Area politics.⁹⁹ Nationally, the newspaper endorsed avowed feminist and NOW co-founder Rep. Shirley Chisholm (D-N.Y.) for president in 1972.¹⁰⁰ The most glaring evidence of the BPP's more conservative approach was the *Panther's* front page announcing Huggins's 1976 election to the Alameda County Board of Education, a far cry from the 1971 front-page photograph of Huggins defiantly making the Black Power fist on the courthouse steps during her murder trial.¹⁰¹

Douglas's illustrations also celebrated the ballot over bullets. A woman on a May 27, 1972, back cover, for example, carried a "Vote for Survival" sign that supported Seale for Oakland mayor.¹⁰² A 1974 drawing demonstrated how *Panther* frames equated power with education instead of weaponry. A heavyset, middle-aged woman wearing a house-dress and holding a child says: "This baby of mine is going to know her true history and her role in this present day society because she'll be going to the [Panthers'] Intercommunal Youth Institute."¹⁰³ Other illustrations publicized constructive new BPP community programs in the 1970s such as a school, free food, and safety patrols for senior citizens. Photographs of male Panthers escorting old women across the street offered alternative frames of masculinity from early images of rifle-toting men.

The newspaper consistently framed disempowered groups of women as heroes in contrast to mass media constructions of them as deviant. These frames support McRobbie and Thornton's observation that deviant social groups use their "niche media" to counter the dominant hegemony.¹⁰⁴ Unlike the hostile framing of welfare recipients in mainstream media,¹⁰⁵ for example, the paper portrayed protesting welfare recipients as courageous challengers of an oppressive system.¹⁰⁶ The

term “welfare mother” carried none of the negative connotations it did in the popular press. “Right On, Welfare Moms!” proclaimed the headline of an account of a Massachusetts Welfare Rights Organization protest.¹⁰⁷

Women in prison also received positive coverage, perhaps in part because so many Panthers had experienced life behind bars. The *Panther* hailed women inmates’ resistance in a 1973 account of prisoners demanding classes and a library. The headline “Our Sisters in Bondage” framed incarceration as slavery, which countered fear-mongering mainstream media frames of black criminality.¹⁰⁸ Other stories exposed horrible prison conditions.¹⁰⁹ In 1975, JoAnne Little came to personify the oppression of black female inmates for the *Panther*. Charged with stabbing to death a white prison guard whom she charged raped her in a North Carolina cell, Little became a *cause célèbre*. Her dilemma resonated because it replicated slave owners’ sexual abuse of women. The newspaper framed Little’s act as a courageous act of resistance against oppression and her acquittal as a milestone for women’s rights.¹¹⁰

**Reproductive Rights,
Sexuality,
and
Feminism**

One of the few issues on which *Panther* frames significantly diverged from those of the feminist press was reproductive rights. Early newspaper frames of the practice as black genocide indicated how the historical experiences of African Americans made it almost impossible for them to think of birth control in the same way as middle-class white women.¹¹¹ Female resistance, however, pushed the newspaper to reframe the topic. Black feminists outside the party, such as lawyer Florynce Kennedy, argued for birth control.¹¹² Inside the party, female members, many of them single mothers, challenged party opposition to birth control; the *Panther* remained silent on the debate. In 1972, Audrea Jones, leader of the Boston branch, issued a position paper arguing for a BPP birth-control policy.¹¹³ In 1974, the party instructed members to practice birth control. The newspaper still lagged in addressing the issue. Only in its final years in the late 1970s when federal rulings began to limit poor women’s access to abortion did the *Panther* editorialize in support of “women’s rights” to abortion.¹¹⁴

The usually outspoken *Panther* remained curiously circumspect on other aspects of sexuality. The newspaper’s chasteness contrasts with accounts of the party’s communal sexual experimentation.¹¹⁵ The *Panther*’s public silence hid members’ private struggles that, like the birth-control debate, risked shattering group identity by polarizing BPP men and women. Sexual freedom often translated into sexual exploitation, as when Panther men pressured women to have sex as part of their revolutionary duty. Pregnant women often were left to raise their children alone.¹¹⁶ Perhaps in reaction to those sexual consequences, infrequent stories about sex adopted a sober tone, such as a 1973 article about a YWCA program aimed at reducing teen pregnancy.¹¹⁷

Editors never framed black women as sex objects in any issues examined for this research. The *Panther*’s refusal to showcase the female black body marked a rejection of the damaging and painful history of

racist and prurient media representations of black women.¹¹⁸ In the midst of the sexual revolution, the newspaper also campaigned against prostitution. A 1975 editorial stated: "Prostitution in America is the outgrowth of our historically male-dominated, chauvinistic culture which through the centuries has treated women as little more than servants of male pleasure."¹¹⁹ Except for Newton's declaration of support for gay liberation published in the *Panther* on August 21, 1970, lesbians and gay men remained virtually unmentioned in the newspaper. The silence suggests editors committed what sociologist Gaye Tuchman calls the "symbolic annihilation" of an undesirable group.¹²⁰

Black Panther pages show that Panthers did work with women's lib groups despite their reservations about white feminists. For instance, a 1969 article describes a rally organized by Panthers and New York women's lib groups.¹²¹ Later that year women inmates quoted a leaflet produced jointly by the Panthers and "N.Y. Women's Liberation" that, according to its headline, detailed "The Torture of Panther Women" in prison.¹²² The paper published accounts of a 1970 FBI report on the women's movement that "carefully" documented feminists' support for the BPP.¹²³ A 1975 story on the nearly defunct National Black Feminist Organization further demonstrated that the *Panther* framed feminism as relevant to black women.¹²⁴ By the mid-1970s, more evidence of the diluted BPP's move from revolution to reform appeared in *Panther* reports on liberal feminist campaigns once ignored as irrelevant reforms. This liberal feminist news agenda, however, also indicated the dissipation of Panther identity throughout the 1970s, as it is a far cry from its original revolutionary calls for Black Power. A 1973 editorial even exulted when Billie Jean King drubbed Bobby Riggs in their "Battle of the Sexes" tennis match.¹²⁵ Articles the next year discussed the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights investigation of gender bias and a National Organization of Women's class-action suit.¹²⁶ One of the paper's final editorials in 1980 cited the failure to ratify the Equal Rights Amendment as evidence the United States remained "in the dark ages as far as women's rights are concerned."¹²⁷

The findings illustrate the counter-hegemonic role the radical press can play in representing social movements that are ridiculed, vilified, or ignored by mainstream media. The *Black Panther's* positive framing of women on welfare or in prison exemplifies what Downing calls radical media's important contribution to democratic discourse. *Panther* frames of women as oppressed by American institutions offered an important alternative to mainstream news framing of them as deviant. *Panther* rhetoric reframed the public debate on social issues such as poverty, poor housing, and failed inner-city schools to hold public institutions responsible for those crises rather than flaws in African American character. The newspaper's coverage of women generally followed the model of adversarial collective action framing as described by Gamson. Accounts of police and prison brutality or bureaucratic humiliation of women instilled a sense of injustice among readers; imagery of armed

Conclusion

Panther women in Oakland or female revolutionaries in Africa bestowed agency upon women; and confrontational rhetoric in headlines or photos of the raised, clenched Black Power fist solidified group identity by creating a “we” versus “they” mentality. Inclusion of women among “we” was crucial to preserving BPP members’ oppositional consciousness.

Panther reframing of black womanhood from restrictive essentialist stereotypes to empowering portrayals of female resistance illuminates how social movement ideology evolves. Several factors steered the *Panther’s* reframing of black women: a handful of vocal, resistant female members who challenged sexism in the BPP; the newspaper’s function as a discussion forum on the topic; the increasing visibility of women in the party as men were lost to prison and violence; the competing visibility of the Women’s Liberation movement; male leaders’ willingness to change their views on women’s role; the influence of female editors; and artist Emory Douglas’s unflagging devotion to opposing all forms of oppression. The reframing process shows that multiple factors inside and outside a social movement influence its ideology. The *Panther’s* gradual reframing of birth control from genocidal to a matter of reproductive rights is another example of how social movements evolve to remain relevant. The newspaper’s changing frames of women attest to the BPP’s ideological fluidity, which enabled the newspaper to last as long as it did.

The contradictions between its public representation of women warriors and private battles with sexism likewise reflect how social movements do not occur in a vacuum and are influenced by the larger culture. Idealized frames of motherhood, even if armed, demonstrate how difficult it is for the most dedicated social rebels to cast off internalized cultural beliefs. Similarly, the discrimination and physical abuse some female Panthers endured attests to the limits of rhetoric to change behavior and the limits of a periodical to cohere a social movement. Gender issues on which the *Panther* remained mostly silent—sexuality, homosexuality, and sexual violence—reveal areas that were most uncomfortable for its publishers because of glaring gaps between theory and practice. They threatened its group identity as an egalitarian social movement seeking social justice. Addressing these issues would have forced *Panther* editors to point fingers at themselves or their male readership instead of entrenched public institutions or abstractions such as “male chauvinism” that they relished attacking.

The *Black Panther’s* major contribution to feminism was its pioneering discussions on the interlocking oppressions of race, class, and gender. For more than a decade, the *Panther* constructed an empowering vision of black womanhood that creatively combined elements old and new, conventional and radical. The most dramatic example is how it added an edge to the image of the resistant black woman by putting a gun in her hands. Even when a ballot box replaced guns as the BPP backed off its revolutionary rhetoric, the *Panther’s* ideal black woman unapologetically practiced the resistance that historically has served as the touchstone of black female identity.¹²⁸ Coverage of Davis’s legal saga

countered hegemonic stereotypes that ignored her call for social justice. Emory's illustrations dignified a broad range of women either invisible or demeaned in mainstream media. Further, *Panther* collective action frames constructed black womanhood in a positive light that privileged activism over appearance—an approach that framed women as subject instead of as object. The distinction is vital because it infused black women with agency; they became actors instead of being acted upon. *Panther* portrayals of black womanhood should be counted among the contributions scholars only have begun to attribute to the Black Panthers.

NOTES

1. William Gamson, *The Strategy of Social Protest*, 2d ed. (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing Co., 1990), 147.

2. Patricia Hill Collins, *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment*, rev. 10th anniversary 2d ed. (NY: Routledge, 2000), 142. See also Kathleen Thompson and Hilary Mac-Austin, eds., *The Face of Our Past: Images of Black Women from Colonial America to the Present* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1999), 84.

3. David Hilliard and Lewis Cole, *This Side of Glory: The Autobiography of David Hilliard and the Story of the Black Panther Party* (NY: Little, Brown and Co., 1993), 149.

4. Jane Rhodes, *Framing the Black Panthers: The Spectacular Rise of a Black Power Icon* (NY: The New Press, 2007), 43.

5. John Downing, *Radical Media: Rebellious Communities and Social Movements* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2001), 15.

6. A social movement is "an organized, uninstitutionalized, and significantly large collectivity that emerges to bring about or to resist a program for change in societal norms and values, operates primarily through persuasive strategies, and encounters opposition in what becomes a moral struggle." Charles Stewart and Craig Allen Smith, eds., *Persuasion and Social Movements* (Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press, 1989), 17.

7. Downing, *Radical Media*, 17.

8. See Rosalyn Baxandall, "The Making of the Vanguard Center: Black Feminist Emergence in the 1960s and 1970s," in *Still Lifting, Still Climbing: African American Women's Contemporary Activism*, ed. Kimberly Springer (NY: New York University Press, 1999), 83; and Rose M. Brewer, "Theorizing Race, Class and Gender: New Scholarship of Black Feminist Intellectuals and Black Women's Labor," in *Theorizing Black Feminisms: The Visionary Pragmatism of Black Women*, ed. Stanlie James and Abena Busia (NY: Routledge, 1993), 13, 7.

9. Downing, *Radical Media*, 43.

10. Robert Entman, "Framing: Toward Clarification of a Fractured Paradigm," *Journal of Communication* 43 (December 1993): 52.

11. William Gamson and Gadi Wolfsfeld, "Movements and Media as

Interacting Systems," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 528 (July 1993): 117. See Paula B. Johnson, David O. Sears, and John B. McConahay, "Black Invisibility, the Press, and the Los Angeles Riot," *American Journal of Sociology* 76 (January 1971): 698-721; Douglas McLeod, "Communicating Deviance: The Effects of Television News Coverage of Social Protest," *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media* 39 (winter 1995): 4-19; and Pamela Shoemaker, "Media Treatment of Deviant Political Groups," *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly* 61 (spring 1984): 66-75, 82.

12. Robert L. Scott and Donald K. Smith, "The Rhetoric of Confrontation," in *Readings on the Rhetoric of Social Protest*, 2d ed., ed. Stephen Browne and Charles Morris (State College, PA: Strata Publishing, 2001), 29.

13. See David Snow and Robert Benford, "Master Frames and Cycles of Protest," in *Frontiers of Social Movement Theory*, ed. Aldon Morris and Carol Mueller (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1992).

14. Todd Gitlin, *The Whole World Is Watching: Mass Media in the Making and Unmaking of the New Left* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1980), 7. See Laura Ashley and Beth Olson, "Constructing Reality: Print Media's Framing of the Women's Movement, 1966 to 1986," *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly* 75 (summer 1998): 263-77; and Robert Entman, *Projections of Power: Framing News, Public Opinion, and U.S. Foreign Policy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003).

15. Stuart Hall, "The Whites of Their Eyes: Racist Ideologies and the Media," in *Media Studies: A Reader*, 2d ed., ed. Paul Marris and Sue Thornham (NY: New York University Press, 2000), 271-82.

16. Jane Rhodes, "Fanning the Flames of Racial Discord," *Harvard International Journal of Press/Politics* 4 (fall 1999): 114.

17. Entman, "Framing," 51-58. See also Robert Entman and Andrew Rojecki, *The Black Image in the White Mind: Media and Race in America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 209.

18. Stuart Hall, "Encoding/Decoding," in *Culture, Media, Language: Working Papers in Cultural Studies, 1972-79*, ed. Stuart Hall, Dorothy Hobson, Andrew Lowe, and Paul Willis (NY: Routledge, 1991), 107-16. See also Stuart Hall, "Deviance Politics and the Media," in *Deviance and Social Control*, ed. Paul Rock and Mary McIntosh (London: Tavistock, 1974), 261-305; Herbert Gans, *Deciding What's News* (NY: Pantheon, 1979); James Hertog and Douglas McLeod, "Anarchists Wreak Havoc in Downtown Minneapolis: A Multi-Level Study of Media Coverage of Radical Protests," *Journalism & Mass Communication Monographs* (June 1995): 1-48; Carolyn Martindale, "Selected Newspaper Coverage of Causes of Black Protest," *Journalism Quarterly* 66 (winter 1989): 920-23, 964; and Pamela Shoemaker, "Media Treatment of Deviant Political Groups," *Journalism Quarterly* 61 (spring 1984): 66.

19. Angela McRobbie and Sarah Thornton, "Rethinking Moral Panic in a Multi-Mediated World," *The British Journal of Sociology* 46 (December 1995): 559-74.

20. Paula Giddings, *When and Where I Enter: The Impact of Black Wo-*

men on Race and Sex in America (NY: William Morrow, 1984), 316; Jacqueline Jones, *Labor of Love, Labor of Sorrow: Black Women, Work, and the Family from Slavery to the Present* (NY: Basic Books, 1985), 277; Johnnetta Betsch Cole and Beverly Guy-Sheftall, "Collisions: Black Liberation Versus Women's Liberation," in *Gender Talk: The Struggle for Women's Equality in African American Communities* (NY: One World/Ballantine Books, 2003), 84; and Deborah Gray White, *Too Heavy a Load: Black Women in Defense of Themselves, 1894-1994* (NY: W.W. Norton Co., 1999), 220.

21. Rhodes, *Framing*, 107, 108.

22. Rodger Streitmatter, *Voices of Revolution: The Dissident Press in America* (NY: Columbia University Press, 2001), 230-31.

23. Matthew Hughey, "Black Aesthetics and Panther Rhetoric: A Critical Decoding of Black Masculinity in *The Black Panther*, 1967-80," *Critical Sociology* 35 (1, 2009): 40, 48.

24. Erica Doss, "Imaging the Panthers: Representing Black Power and Masculinity, 1970s-1990s," *Prospects: Annual of American Cultural Studies* 23 (October 1998): 493; and Erica Doss, "Revolutionary Art Is a Tool of Liberation: Emory Douglas and the Protest Aesthetics at the *Black Panther*," in *Liberation, Imagination, and the Black Panther Party: A New Look at the Panthers and Their Legacy*, ed. Kathleen Cleaver and George Katsiaficas (NY: Routledge, 2001), 178.

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27. Simon Wendt, "'They Found Out That We Really Are Men': Violence, Non-Violence, and Black Manhood in the Civil Rights Era," *Gender and History* 19 (November 2007): 543-64.

28. Stephen Ward, "The Third World Women's Alliance: Black Feminist Radicalism and Black Power Politics," in *Black Power Movement: Rethinking the Civil Rights-Black Power Era*, ed. Peniel E. Joseph (New York: Routledge, 2006), 119. See also Paul Alkebulan, *Survival Pending Revolution: The History of the Black Panther Party* (Tuscaloosa, AL: The University of Alabama Press, 2007); Jessica Christina Harris, "Revolutionary Black Nationalism: The Black Panther Party," *Journal of Negro History* 85 (summer 2000): 162-74; Hilliard and Cole, *This Side of Glory*; Charles E. Jones, ed., *The Black Panther Party [Reconsidered]* (Baltimore, MD: Black Classic Press, 1998); and Jama Lazerow and Yohuru Williams, eds., *In Search of the Black Panther Party: New Perspectives on a Revolutionary Movement* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006).

29. Hughey, "Black Aesthetics," 40. See Kimberly Springer, "Black Feminists Respond to Black Power Masculinism," in *Black Power Movement: Rethinking the Civil Rights-Black Power Era*, ed. Joseph, 118; Ward, "Third World Women," 120; Linda Burnham, "The Wellspring of Black Feminist Theory," *Southern University Law Review* 28 (Special Edition 2001): 265-70; and Jeffrey Ogbar, *Black Power: Radical Politics and African American Identity* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005),

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30. See Elaine Brown, *A Taste of Power: A Black Woman's Story* (NY: Pantheon Books, 1992); Kathleen Cleaver, "Women, Power, and Revolution," in *Liberation*, ed. Cleaver and Katsiaficas, 123-27; Angela D. LeBlanc-Ernest, "The Most Qualified Person to Handle the Job: Black Panther Party Women, 1966-1982," in *Black Panther Party [Reconsidered]*, ed. Jones, 305-34; Tracye Matthews, "No One Ever Asks What a Man's Role in the Revolution Is: Gender and Sexual Politics in the Black Panther Party, 1966-1971," in *Black Panther Party [Reconsidered]*, ed. Jones, 267-303; and Robyn Ceanne Spencer, "Engendering the Black Freedom Struggle: Revolutionary Black Womanhood and the Black Panther Party in the Bay Area, California," *Journal of Women's History* 20 (spring 2008): 90-113.

31. Cleaver, "Women, Power," 126.

32. Tracye Matthews, "No One Ever Asks What a Man's Role in the Revolution Is: Gender and Sexual Politics in the Black Panther Party, 1966-1971," (Ph.D. diss., University of Michigan, 1998), 8.

33. Matthews, "No One Ever Asks," 327.

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38. Courtright, "Rhetoric of the Gun," 253.

39. See Herbert Aptheker, *American Negro Slave Revolts* (NY: Columbia University Press, 1943); Ida Wells-Barnett, *The Collected Works of Ida B. Wells-Barnett* (Charleston, SC: Biblio Bazaar, 2007), 37; and Charles Lumpkins, *American Pogrom: The East St. Louis Race Riot* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press), 106.

40. Abron, "Raising the Consciousness," 351. See *Black Panther* covers featuring guns on November 1, 1969; December 6, 1969; February 21, 1970; February 17, 1970; February 28, 1970; and July 11, 1970.

41. *Black Panther*, December 7, 1972, 24.

42. Downing, *Radical Media*, 43.

43. See Jim Vander Wall, *Agents of Repression: The FBI's Secret Wars Against the Black Panther Party and the American Indian Movement* (Boston: South End Press, 1988).

44. Alkebulan, *Survival Pending Revolution*, 49; and Lauren Kessler,

The Dissident Press: Alternative Journalism in American History (Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications, 1984), 45.

45. Rhodes, *Framing*, 102.

46. Quoted in Courtright, "Rhetoric of the Gun," 251.

47. Brown, *A Taste of Power*, 444.

48. Abron, "Raising the Consciousness," 344.

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51. Linda Greene, "The Black Revolutionary Woman," *Black Panther*, September 28, 1969, 11.

52. Gloria Bartholomew, "A Black Woman's Thoughts," *Black Panther*, September 28, 1969, 11.

53. Rhodes, *Framing*, 109.

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57. William Gamson, *Talking Politics* (United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 85.

58. Quoted in Audrey Peterson, "The Art of Liberation," *American Legacy* 13 (2001): 36.

59. Micki McElya, *Clinging to Mammy: The Faithful Slave in Twentieth-Century America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007), 3, 46. See also Kim Marie Vaz, *Black Women in America* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Press, 1995), 5-6; and "Cultural Images as Symbols of African American Womanhood," in *From Mammy to Miss America and Beyond: Cultural Images and the Shaping of U.S. Social Policy*, ed. K. Sue Jewell (NY: Routledge, 1993), 35-54.

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61. See *Black Panther*, September 30, 1972, 24.

62. *Black Panther*, December 7, 1972, 24.

63. *Black Panther*, February 4, 1978, 28.

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66. June Culberson, "The Role of the a [sic] Revolutionary Woman," *Black Panther*, May 4, 1969, 9.

67. See Brown, *A Taste of Power*, 9, 189, 225, 308-09; Hilliard and Cole, *This Side of Glory*, 243-45; and LeBlanc-Ernest, "The Most Qualified Person," 311. See also Spencer, "Engendering the Black Freedom Struggle," 100.

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68. "Message to Sister Ericka Huggins of the Black Panther Party," *Black Panther*, July 5, 1969, 16.
69. "Roberta Alexander at Conference," *Black Panther*, August 2, 1969, 7. See also "Interview with D.C.—Field Marshal Black Panther Party," *Black Panther*, November 1, 1969, 6. Alexander's critique predated the 1970 publication of Frances Beal's pioneering essay, "Double Jeopardy: To Be Black and Female," widely credited as Second Wave feminism's first articulation about the intersection of race and gender. See Frances Beal, "Double Jeopardy: To Be Black and Female," in *The Black Woman: An Anthology*, ed. Toni Code (NY: Signet, 1970), reprinted in Guy-Sheftall, *Words of Fire*, 146-56.
70. Candi Robinson, "Message to Revolutionary Women," *Black Panther*, August 9, 1969, 23.
71. "Sisters," *Black Panther*, September 13, 1969, 12-13. See also Jackie Harper, "Sisters-Comrades at Arms," *Black Panther*, November 8, 1969, 17.
72. Eve, "Women's Liberation," *Black Panther*, July 11, 1970, 18.
73. "Angela Davis: A Black Woman in the Liberation Struggle, Part II," *Black Panther*, March 11, 1972, special supplement, npg.
74. Brown, *A Taste of Power*, 192.
75. Aldon Morris and Naomi Braine, "Social Movements and Oppositional Consciousness," in *Oppositional Consciousness: The Subjective Roots of Social Protest*, ed. Jayne Mansbridge and Aldon Morris (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), 25.
76. Ogbar, *Black Power*, 225, n51. Seale estimated that 60% of Panthers were women as early as 1968. Bobby Seale, *A Lonely Rage: The Autobiography of Bobby Seale* (NY: Times Books, 1978), 177.
77. See Huey Newton, "The Women's Liberation and Gay Liberation Movements: 15 August 1970," in *To Die for the People: The Writings of Huey Newton*, ed. Toni Morrison (NY: Vintage Books, 1972), 152-55. [italics in original]
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79. "Black Scholar Interviews Kathleen Cleaver," *Black Scholar* 3 (December 1971): 54, 59.
80. "Notes on the Trial of Bobby Seale and Ericka Huggins," *Black Panther*, October 24, 1970, 11. See also "The Trial of Bobby Seale and Ericka Huggins," *Black Panther*, March 6, 1971, 5; "Bobby and Ericka's Struggle Is Our Struggle," *Black Panther*, March 6, 1971, 5; "The Trial of Ericka Huggins & Bobby Seale," *Black Panther*, January 2, 1971, 3; and "Case Against Chairman Bobby and Ericka Dismissed," *Black Panther*, May 29, 1971, 1, 6.
81. "Black Women in the Struggle for the Liberation of the People—Angela and Ericka," *Black Panther*, June 12, 1971, 10-11.
82. "Excerpts from a Letter from Ericka," *Black Panther*, February 13, 1971, 6.
83. "Letter from Kathleen Cleaver to Ericka Huggins," *Black Panther*, March 6, 1971, 9. See also *Black Panther*, February 12, 1972, 1.
84. *Black Panther*, March 16, 1968, 23.

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85. *Black Panther*, August 29, 1970, 24.
86. *Black Panther*, February 27, 1971, 24. [ellipsis in original] See also illustration, *Black Panther*, July 25, 1970, 18; "Sister Bobbie Watson Won't Play the City's Games," *Black Panther*, February 12, 1972, 9, 15-16; "Another Mother for Struggle," *Black Panther*, February 12, 1972, 10-13; and "S.F. Black Woman Fights Eviction," *Black Panther*, March 18, 1978, 9.
87. "Family Assistance Plan and Welfare—Racist Institutions," *Black Panther*, March 13, 1971, 4.
88. *Black Panther*, December 7, 1968, 14.
89. "The Heroic Palestinian Women," *Black Panther*, July 26, 1969, 7; and "Why I Joined N.A.N.L.A.s Women's Detachment," *Black Panther*, June 22, 1974, 16. See also "Cuban Women: A Stage of Inventiveness and Drive," *Black Panther*, March 13, 1971, 12; and "Angola Woman Tells Why She Joined M.P.L.A.," *Black Panther*, July 6, 1974, 17.
90. Abron, "Raising the Consciousness," 353.
91. "In Honor of Women," *Black Panther*, February 25, 1980, 7. See also "Young Black Angola Girl," *Black Panther*, October 9, 1976, 21.
92. "Sisters," *Black Panther*, September 13, 1969, 12-13.
93. "Carmen Pereira on the Role of Women in the Guinea-Bissau Revolution," *Black Panther*, January 24, 1976, 19.
94. "Apartheid and the African Woman," *Black Panther*, September 8, 1975, 18. See also "Revolution and Women," *Black Panther*, March 15, 1970, 5; and "Women in the Zimbabwe Liberation Struggle, Part I," *Black Panther*, November 13, 1976, 19-20.
95. "Women Continue Struggle for Equality in Guinea-Bissau," *Black Panther*, December 4, 1974, 17-18. See also "Mozambican Women Organize," *Black Panther*, May 7, 1977, 19, 24.
96. "Free Angela! Free all of us! Angela Davis finally acquitted of false charges," *Black Panther*, June 10, 1972, 1, 10. Davis, then a member of the Communist Party, was involved in legal efforts in 1970 to free three imprisoned Panthers. When a judge was killed in a failed attempt to free the trio, Davis was charged as an accomplice because one of the guns was registered in her name. She fled, was captured, and eventually acquitted in 1972. See "WELCOME HOME, ANGELA DAVIS," *Black Panther*, March 13, 1971, 1; *Black Panther*, March 4, 1972, cover and special supplement; Eldridge Cleaver, "On the Case of Angela Davis," *Black Panther*, January 23, 1971, 5; and "Free Angela," *Black Panther*, March 13, 1971, 1.
97. "Biographical Sketch of Elaine Brown Candidate for Oakland City Council," *Black Panther*, April 14, 1973, 4.
98. "Oakland Needs Elaine," *Black Panther*, December 28, 1974, 2. See also editorial, "To Elect Elaine, It's Up to You," *Black Panther*, February 8, 1975, 2; and "Elect Elaine: Our 'Key to the Kingdom,'" *Black Panther*, April 12, 1975, 1, 11.
99. "Elaine Brown Leads Delegation Seeking 10,000 Jobs," *Black Panther*, September 4, 1976, 1. See also "Reading Balks at Appointing Women," *Black Panther*, July 7, 1973, 5.
100. "Find Someone Who Can Hear the People Cry," *Black Panther*, May 6, 1972, 11. See also "Register to Vote for Shirley Chisholm," *Black Panther*, May 15, 1972, 1.

101. "Black Panther Wins Seat on County Board," *Black Panther*, May 23, 1976, 1, 6.

102. See also *Black Panther* back covers, January 29, 1972; May 29, 1971; May 27, 1972; June 3, 1972; and January 13, 1973.

103. *Black Panther*, June 15, 1974, 24.

104. McRobbie and Thornton, "Rethinking Moral Panic," 568.

105. See Premilla Nadasen, "Expanding the Boundaries of the Women's Movement: Black Feminism and the Struggle for Welfare Rights," *Feminist Studies* 28 (summer 2002): 271-301.

106. "'Operation Nevada' for Welfare Rights," *Black Panther*, February 27, 1971, 4. See also "The State of Nevada and Welfare Mothers," *Black Panther*, March 20, 1971, 2; "Family Assistance Plan and Welfare—Racist Institutions," *Black Panther*, March 13, 1971, 6; "Pasadena Welfare Mothers Demand: 'Land, Bread, Housing, Education, Clothing, Justice and Peace,'" *Black Panther*, June 5, 1971, 2; "Milwaukee Welfare Rights Group Sues Over Food Stamp Outreach," *Black Panther*, March 15, 1975, 4; and "24 Women Arrested in Atlanta A.F.D.C. Protest," *Black Panther*, April 9, 1977, 9.

107. *Black Panther*, March 28, 1970, 12.

108. "Our Sisters in Bondage: Women in San Bruno Jail Present List of Demands," *Black Panther*, January 13, 1973, 3, 10. See also "Women Inmates Seek Protection of Constitutional Rights," *Black Panther*, January 25, 1974, 7; "Women Prisoners Seek Change," *Black Panther*, March 2, 1974, 5; "Very Little Tenderness: Women's Prison Organizing Against Oppression," *Black Panther*, January 22, 1972, 4, 9; "Women Prisoners Protest Forced Behavior Modification," *Black Panther*, October 6, 1973, 8; and "Women's Prison Group Protests Mother-Child Separation," *Black Panther*, November 13, 1973, 3.

109. See "3 Sisters Tell of Prison Horrors," *Black Panther*, December 29, 1973, 4; "Federal Probe Demanded into Treatment of Women in North Carolina Prisons," *Black Panther*, December 4, 1974, 9; "Protest Leaders Remain in 'the Hole' at No. Carolina Women's Prison," *Black Panther*, November 15, 1975, 9; "Women Behind Bars, Part I," *Black Panther*, May 26, 1977, 10; "Women Behind Bars, Part II," *Black Panther*, June 4, 1977, 10; "Panel Condemns Treatment of Women Inmates as 'Inhuman,'" *Black Panther*, May 7, 1977, 3; and "Black Women Drugged at Georgia Prison," *Black Panther*, May 12, 1980, 5.

110. "'Free JoAnne Little' Rally Draws 500 to Learning Center," *Black Panther*, July 21, 1975, 3. See also "1,000 Rally for JoAnne Little at Trial Opening," *Black Panther*, July 28, 1975, 1, 8; editorial, "JoAnne Little Case," *Black Panther*, August 18, 1975, 2; "JoAnne Little to Address Oakland Victory Rally," *Black Panther*, August 25, 1975, 1, 25. "B.P.P. Names JoAnn [sic] Little 'Woman of the Year,'" *Black Panther*, June 30, 1975, 1; editorial, "Honor JoAnne," *Black Panther*, August 25, 1975, 2; and "Oakland Welcomes JoAnne Little," *Black Panther*, September 1, 1975, 1, 14-15.

The *Panther* adopted a similarly feminist stance in its coverage of San Francisco rape survivor Inez Garcia, charged with murdering a man who raped her. See "Women's Rights—A Long Way to Go," *Black Panther*, November 9, 1974, 2; "Rape Victim Asserts Woman's Right to Self-

Defense," *Black Panther*, October 5, 1974, 1, 3, 20; "Inez Garcia is Convicted," *Black Panther*, October 12, 1974, 7; "Inez Garcia Supporters Set October 21 for Nationwide Strike," *Black Panther*, October 19, 1974, 7; and "Inez Garcia Sentenced—Five to Life," *Black Panther*, November 2, 1974, 7. Nearly three years later, Garcia was acquitted in a new trial.

111. "Concerning Birth Control," *Black Panther*, May 31, 1970, 7. See also "Letter from Brenda Hyson," *Black Panther*, July 4, 1970, 2.

112. See Florynce Kennedy and Diane Schurder, *Abortion Rap* (NY: McGraw-Hill, 1971).

113. LeBlanc-Ernest, "The Most Qualified Person," 319-20.

114. "Women's Rights Set Back By Supreme Court Rulings," *Black Panther*, July 16, 1977, 14. See also "Supreme Court Rulings Attack Women's Rights," *Black Panther*, January 1, 1977, 7; "Carter to Poor Women Seeking Abortions: Tough Luck!" *Black Panther*, July 30, 1977, 9; and "Poor Women: Pawns in the Abortion Controversy," *Black Panther*, February 25, 1980, 7.

115. Brown, *A Taste of Power*, 107.

116. See Margo Perkins, "'Inside Our Dangerous Ranks': The Autobiography of Elaine Brown and the Black Panther Party," in *Still Lifting*, ed. Springer, 91-106; and Spencer, "Engendering the Black Freedom Struggle," 103-04.

117. "Teen Family Planning Program Serves Community," *Black Panther*, February 24, 1973, 13.

118. See Murray, "The Liberation of Black Women," reprinted in Guy-Sheftall, *Words of Fire*, 190; Maria Cristina Crisco, "Dark Histories, Bright Revisions, Writing the Black Female Body," *Nebula* 3.1 (April 2006): 65-72; and Kimberley Gisele Wallace-Sanders, *Skin Deep, Spirit Strong: The Black Female Body in American Culture* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2002).

119. "A Blow to Prostitution," *Black Panther*, March 8, 1975, 2.

120. See Gaye Tuchman, "The Symbolic Annihilation of Women," in *Hearth and Home: Images of Women in the Media*, ed. Gaye Tuchman, Arlene Kaplan Daniels, and James Benet (NY: Oxford University Press, 1978), 3-38.

121. "Free Our Sisters," *Black Panther*, December 6, 1969, 2.

122. "The Torture of Panther Women," *Black Panther*, November 22, 1969, 13. See also "Statement to the Press from Woman's [sic] Liberation," *Black Panther*, October 24, 1970, 8.

123. "Intense F.B.I. Spying on Women's Movement Exposed," *Black Panther*, March 12, 1977, 5, 20.

124. "National Black Feminist Organization Seeks Solutions to Problems of Black Women," *Black Panther*, October 6, 1975, 11.

125. "The Battle of the Sexes" *Black Panther*, September 29, 1973, 2.

126. "Civil Rights Commission to Investigate Jobs for Poor Women," *Black Panther*, June 15, 1974, 9, 22; and "Feminist Groups Challenge Discrimination," *Black Panther*, December 7, 1974, 5. See also "Women Fight Sexism in Textbooks, Jobs," *Black Panther*, December 21, 1974, 7, 22; "Equal Funding Bill for Women's Athletics to Ford," *Black Panther*, March 8, 1975, 23; and "Women's Commission Charges California with Hiring

Policy Bias," *Black Panther*, March 13, 1976, 5.

127. "In Honor of Women," *Black Panther*, February 25, 1980, 7.

128. Collins, *Black Feminist Thought*, 142; and Angela Davis, "Reflections on the Black Woman's Role in the Community of Slaves," *Black Scholar* 3 (December 1971): 2-15.