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Agnes Nestor: Labor Leader, Politician, and Social Reformer--A Portrait of a Leader

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LOYOLA UNIVERSITY CHICAGO

AGNES NESTOR: LABOR LEADER, POLITICIAN, AND SOCIAL REFORMER—
A PORTRAIT OF A LEADER

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO
THE FACULTY OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION
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DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

PROGRAM IN EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION AND SUPERVISION

BY
TIMOTHY M. GRIVOIS-SHAH

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS
MAY 2012
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This dissertation represents a major accomplishment in my career as a scholar, teacher, and leader. It is fitting to acknowledge those who have supported me along the way.

Getting to know Agnes Nestor within the archives of the Chicago History Museum Research Center transformed my understanding of history. My deep appreciation extends to the CHM staff for carrying box after box of Agnes Nestor papers from the stacks, and for making Chicago’s archived materials available to documentary researchers.

Loyola University Chicago School of Education has inspired me as a scholar and a leader. My dissertation committee, Dr. Janis Fine, Dr. Marla Israel, and Dr. Beth Myers, are exemplars of the discipline and rigor required to become a leader capable of advancing social justice through scholarly inquiry.

As a junior at Dobson High School, Elizabeth Viator taught me to write. As a senior in her course in Mythology, Mrs. Viator taught me to read. Most importantly, I learned in her classroom that hard work precedes every worthwhile accomplishment. May this particular work remind her and all of us who teach children precisely how far as teachers our reach extends.

This dissertation is dedicated to my husband, Dr. Ravi Grivois-Shah, who likely knows as much about Agnes Nestor as I do. This dissertation exists through your
patience, love, and care, but mostly because you are now and always will be by my side in every achievement, adventure, and challenge.
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ABSTRACT

School leadership is about effecting change in education and promoting excellence in teaching and learning. School leaders, however, practice leadership in multiple arenas with diverse stakeholders. Students, local community members, faculty, staff, and each layer of government represent unique and often conflicting interests. Understanding how a leader such as Agnes Nestor resolved conflicts of interests has the potential for helping school leaders access various sources of power to effect change in their milieu.

This study explores the life of Agnes Nestor, a labor leader, politician, and social reformer. Nestor’s public life included organizing women workers in Chicago in the early 1900s, running for public office, serving on national commissions to promote education, and in securing work-hour limitations for women. Sources for this study include historical newspaper clippings, books and articles written by Agnes Nestor, and primary source documents from the Agnes Nestor Papers currently archived in the Chicago History Museum Research Center.

Using Gareth Morgan’s fourteen sources of power as a theoretical framework, the documentary record reveals a narrative of a leader who accessed various sources of power as labor leader, politician, and social reformer to effect change. In each leadership context, Agnes Nestor relied on *Gender and the Management of Gender Relations*, *Formal Authority*, and *Control of Scarce Resources* most frequently as sources of power.
Nestor appears to underutilize *Ability to Cope with Uncertainty*. These findings indicate that leaders have an array of available power sources, and that leaders may, depending on leadership context, find more value in certain power sources than in others. Similarly, leaders may lose capacity to effect change when unable to cope with uncertain outcomes.
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Purpose

The purpose of this dissertation is to investigate the life of Agnes Nestor as labor leader, politician, and social reformer to explore how Nestor used various sources of power in her practice of leadership. Gareth Morgan defines power as “the medium through which conflicting interests are ultimately resolved.”\(^1\) The researcher will analyze primary source documents, interpreting them through the lens of Gareth Morgan’s sources of power:\(^2\)

Table 1. Fourteen Sources of Power

<table>
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<th>Formal Authority</th>
<th>Authority one holds that is associated with the position one holds in an organization.</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Control of Scarce Resources</td>
<td>Ability to control the resources an organization uses to accomplish its work, or conversely, the ability to reduce an organizations’ dependency on external resources.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of organizational structure, rules, and regulations</td>
<td>Ability to invoke laws, policies, and procedures to one’s advantage.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


\(^2\)Ibid., 163.
### Table 1 (continued)

| Control of decision processes | Influence over decision premises (control of agenda and strategies that force or guide attention to our point of view) decision processes (how, when, and where decisions are made, and who gets to make them), and decision issues and objectives (control of reports and information upon which decisions will be made, and rhetorical skill in arguing for perspectives). |
| Control of knowledge and information | Possessing the right information at the right time, having exclusive access to data, or talent in organizing, synthesizing, and applying data. |
| Control of boundaries | Influence over transactions occurring at junctures between different elements within an organization. |
| Ability to cope with uncertainty | Describes how well a leader copes with unpredictable events both in the external and internal organizational landscape. |
| Control of technology | Control over technology that converts organizational inputs into outputs allows leader to determine the pace and quality of the organization’s work. |
| Interpersonal alliances, networks, and control of “informal organization” | Leaders can systematically build and cultivate power through interpersonal alliances and networks, incorporating whenever possible the help and influence of those who have common interests. The currency in these alliances is one of mutual dependency and exchange. |
| Control of counterorganizations | Counterorganizations exist to balance the power of an existing power structure. Unions, consumer groups, and social movements are examples of organizations that can wield considerable countervailing power and effect considerable organizational and environmental change. |
| Symbolism and the management of meaning | Ability to shape the organization’s story, to call to mind certain images, symbols, and expressions that guide work and decision making a certain way, and influence over the way followers interpret their place in the organization. |
| Gender and the management of gender relations | Leaders can manipulate prevailing views and stereotypes on the role of men and women at work to increase their influence over organizations and their environment. |
| Structural factors that define the stage of action | Ability to access sources of powers given structural realities that affect the internal and external environment in which leadership is practiced. |
| The power one already has | The presence of power attracts others who want to feed off a leader’s influence, lending the power holder uninvited support. Similarly, the experience of success becomes a transforming force as one victory leads to another. |
By analyzing the words and actions of Agnes Nestor as well as the words and actions of those who corresponded with Agnes Nestor in her life as labor leader, politician, and social reformer, the researcher will uncover which sources of power, if any, Agnes Nestor accessed in her practice of leadership.

**Research Questions**

This dissertation is guided by the following questions:

1. From what sources of power did Agnes Nestor draw as a labor leader to effect change?
2. From what sources of power did Agnes Nestor draw as a politician to effect change?
3. From what sources of power did Agnes Nestor draw as a social reformer to effect change?
4. How do the sources of power that Agnes Nestor accessed as labor leader, politician, and social reformer compare to each other?
5. What implications do power sources accessed in various domains of Agnes Nestor’s practice of leadership have for the practice of school leadership?

**Significance of the Study**

Agnes Nestor is an intriguing candidate for a case study in leadership. Modern school leaders could enhance their own practice by exploring Nestor’s leadership praxis in three unique contexts as labor leader, politician, and social reformer. In many respects, Nestor’s role in labor, politics, and social reform are similar. In all three realms, Nestor worked to effect change and to resolve conflicts of interests in a manner favorable to her
agenda. Key differences, however, in whose interests were in conflict demarcate labor, politics, and social reform into separate leadership contexts for Nestor. For this study, labor leader, politician, and social reformer are delineated below:

Table 2. Definitions

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<tr>
<th>Labor Leader</th>
<th>Politician</th>
<th>Social Reformer</th>
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<td>A person who mediates conflicts of interests between employers and employees on behalf of workers.</td>
<td>A person who mediates conflicts of interests between her/his own constituencies and formal government institutions on behalf of her/his constituencies.</td>
<td>A person who mediates conflicts of interests between dominant and marginalized societal groups on behalf of the marginalized.</td>
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In labor, Nestor worked to resolve conflicts of interests between women workers and their employers. As politician, Nestor worked to resolve ideological conflicts of interests between her various constituencies and formal government institutions. Finally, as social reformer, Nestor worked to resolve conflicts of interests between women and prevailing notions of the proper role of women in society. This study will investigate what sources of power Agnes Nestor accessed to effect change in each leadership context—labor leader, politician, and social reformer—to resolve the different conflicts of interest inherent to each domain.

**Historical Context**

Nestor’s rise to national prominence occurred at a unique time for women workers in the United States. As woman and as a labor leader, Nestor battled both conflicting interests of women workers and employers as well as conflicting beliefs of the role of women in society. Although industrialization brought women into the workforce
in previously unseen numbers, the movement to organize women faced several challenges. One such challenge was low participation by women in trade unions. Kessler-Harris notes in *Gendering Labor History* that by 1920, approximately one in five male workers was represented by a trade union while barely one in twenty women were organized. Thus, Agnes Nestor organized women workers in a climate unaccustomed to trade unionism among women. In fact, during Nestor’s early career as a glove worker, “most wage-earning women were young, temporary workers who looked to marriage as a way to escape the shop or factory; 85 percent of these women were unmarried, and nearly half were under twenty-five years old.” Young, unmarried women socialized to view marriage as their ultimate horizon tended to view their working life as transitory. Few working women regarded glove-making as a permanent career, and thus, without a sense of permanency, union membership lacked urgency. However, the rising number of women in the workforce as well as the rapid expansion of trade unionism at the turn of the century in the United States suggests a potential for organization among women workers that never materialized.

During Nestor’s public life, wage-earning women faced three key barriers to organizing in trade unions: prevailing notions of gender, misaligned economic incentives, and established trade unions themselves. At the time of Nestor’s active work as a labor leader, politician, and social reformer:

---


4 Ibid.
notions of propriety served as the organizational principles for women’s workforce participation. They created a reciprocally confirming system in which successful job experiences for women were defined in terms of values appropriate to future home life: neatness, morality, cleanliness, sex segregation, and clean language all defined appropriate women’s jobs. Men’s jobs, in contrast, reflected ambition, competition, aggression and the search for increased income.5

Working in a milieu that valued civility over assertiveness proved inimical to success as an organized labor movement. Nestor’s efforts to organize glove workers in a factory that segregated female workers from male workers, valued virtuous obedience, and saw ambition as appropriate in men but suspect in women was highly unusual. That she successfully founded a union and negotiated a collective bargaining agreement suggests that Nestor did not necessarily share prevailing notions of a woman’s role.

Employers were also a barrier to women who wished to organize into unions. One particular advantage for employers to hire women is that they were typically not organized and generally worked for less pay than men. Nestor’s own work with the Department of Women and Children in Industry Committee on Standards bears out that experience where of seventeen companies that responded to a survey regarding equal pay for men and women, only three answered that men and women in their employ receive equal pay for the same work.6 Kessler Harris notes:

Their extraordinarily low pay and exploitative working conditions enabled employers to speed up the process of capital accumulation. Women’s labor was critical to industrial expansion, yet they were

5Ibid., 123.

6Report of Department of Woman and Children in Industry Committee on Standards, September 15, 1917, box 1, folder 8, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.
expected to have few job-related aspirations and to look forward instead to eventual marriage.⁷

Although employers increasingly staffed their shops, factories, and offices with women workers, the primary motivation for doing so was economic. From the employers’ perspectives, to allow women to organize threatened companies’ steady supply of cheap labor. From a business perspective, encouraging women to unionize undermined the economic motivations for hiring women in the first place. Unionized women able to negotiate for higher wages and better working conditions would only increase operating costs, and if they were to work for pay equal to a man’s wage, then employers would have no incentive to hire women at all.

Furthermore, women organizers faced threats from organized labor itself. Because unions exist to protect the wages and working conditions of their members through collective action, any increase in the non-organized workforce tended to dilute union influence. Ostensibly, large numbers of women without representation entering the workforce should have incentivized established labor organizations like the American Federation of Labor to enroll women in their membership as quickly as possible, thereby increasing the collective power of established labor movements. However, the same economic motives that drove employers to hire women tended to alienate women workers from organizations such as the AFL. According to Kessler-Harris, “unionists tended to be suspicious of women who worked for wages and to regard them as potentially

⁷Kessler Harris, Gendering Labor History, 24.
threatening to men’s jobs.”8 The AFL could have responded to the threat of a rapidly expanding female workforce by organizing women as allies. Instead organized labor took active steps to exclude women from the workplace entirely. In some instances, established labor organizations simply refused to grant charters to female locals. “Repeatedly, women who organized themselves into unions applied for entry to the appropriate parent body only to be turned down or simply ignored.”9

Three key events underscore Nestor’s potential value as the subject of such study. First Nestor was instrumental in organizing women workers in Chicago and throughout many industrial cities in the United States. Second, she ran as a Democratic candidate for the Illinois General Assembly in 1928. Third, she successfully negotiated passage of work hour limitations for working women. Understanding how she accomplished those goals will be a significant contribution to the study of leadership.

**Formation of the International Glove Worker’s Union of America—Agnes Nestor as Labor Leader**

Nestor was the second of four children, and was born in Grand Rapids, Michigan in 1880.10 Agnes Nestor’s father, Thomas Nestor, was a machinist by training, but later purchased a grocery business in town. Heavily involved in local politics, Thomas Nestor was elected Fifth Ward Alderman, and later City Marshal in Grand Rapids. After his

8Ibid., 24.

9Ibid., 28.

election to the City Marshal position, Thomas Nestor sold his family grocery business and moved to a downtown office. However, Thomas Nestor lost his election bid for the Sheriff’s office in the midst of a recession during the 1890s, and sought work as a tradesman in Chicago. Thomas soon sent for his wife, Anna Nestor, and their four children: Arthur, Mary, Agnes and Owen. Soon after arriving in Chicago, Agnes left school to find work. Although she rarely expressed regrets in any of her writing, Nestor frequently viewed her lack of formal education as a deficiency, and spent much of her life promoting “a combination of vocational and liberal education which might give the worker-to-be vocational training without denying him cultural background.”

By 1900, Nestor had moved to Chicago and most likely was in her third year of work at the Eisendrath Glove Company. Although labor organizations were increasingly visible and powerful in the Chicago community, workers at the Eisendrath Glove Company had not organized into a union shop. The management structure included a foreman who supervised a number of workers. Each worker, in turn completed a specific portion of the glove-making process. Eisendrath then paid workers a set amount per piece of work produced. Eisendrath supplies most of the glove-making materials, and

13Ibid., 144.
workers procured the rest of their supplies at their own expense, including needles, scissors, and even oil for maintaining sewing machines. Employees whose work required machinery rented the machines from the company. At the end of a shift, the foreman tallied the number of saleable pieces produced, minus any flawed pieces, and paid workers in cash. One advantage to the piece work system was that working girls could work at their own pace, earning as much as they were reasonably able to complete during their shifts, but one significant disadvantage was that workers themselves maintained company machines and secured their own supplies. Less often, glovemakers earned daily rates, a pay structure that demanded a change in climate as well. Workers earning daily rates were expected to be at work making gloves at every moment. Shifts for workers changed depending on seasonal demand for gloves, but generally ranged from ten to fourteen hours per day, often seven days per week. Eisendrath workers, like others in non-union shops, stitched gloves together for as many hours as management required, and without an organized union to resist, workers had no expectation of improvements in wages or working conditions.

Management actively worked to isolate different departments, resulting in a defacto gender separation between men who typically worked as cutters, and women who sewed cut pieces together. By segregating workers, Eisendrath stymied union organizers from engaging a sufficient mass of workers capable of significantly disrupting operations.

15Nestor, Women’s Labor Leader, 28.

Despite management efforts to isolate departments and to prevent communication between workers,\textsuperscript{17} newly organized Eisendrath cutters reached out to women workers sewing gloves. Nestor was one of those women, and worked with the few men at Eisendrath who were represented by a union to organize a company-wide strike. At late night meetings after closing time at the plant, representatives from the Chicago Federation of Labor worked to find a spokesperson for the striking women and created a committee to engage management at Eisendrath. This meeting changed the trajectory of Agnes Nestor’s life, marking the moment when Nestor became a leader. Nestor recalls her first strike meeting:

“Evidently the union officers thought I was their ringleader, for when the committee was appointed to represent our group, my name was called. When Mary heard it, she said: “Why did they put Agnes on? She can’t talk!”\textsuperscript{18}

However, as leader of this committee, Nestor quickly found her voice. Soon, this small organization of women in one factory became the International Glove Workers Union of America, an organization of thousands of Chicago workers and many thousands more throughout the United States and Canada. Nestor’s work as founder of the International Glove Workers Union of America ultimately led to national recognition in labor, politics, and women’s social reform issues.

\textsuperscript{17} Nestor, \textit{Women’s Labor Leader}, 29.

\textsuperscript{18} Ibid., 33.
Campaign for State Representative—Agnes Nestor as Politician

In February of 1928, Agnes Nestor decided to run for State Representative in the Illinois General Assembly, representing what was at that time the Sixth Senatorial District. Nestor began her campaign with a “little group meeting at [her] home Monday evening, the 13th, called by Dr. John A. Lapp.” This meeting led to an organization that mounted a significant challenge to her opponent in the Democratic primary, incumbent James Weber. In the absence of formal institutional support from the Democratic Party, Nestor campaigned primarily through her network of friends and professional contacts. According to Nestor, “Mr. Weber, against whom I am running, is depending upon the organization putting him over, and I am trying to break down that support, as much as I can, as well as build up all my personal support throughout the district.”

This dependence on personal networking continued throughout her campaign, with Nestor claiming, “Thus far I have not had to arrange many meetings, because I have had so many opportunities to speak to organizations in their regular meetings and this has helped very much.” Because Nestor was running against an incumbent Democrat in a district that included the north part of Chicago and all of Evanston, her campaign depended on

19Agnes Nestor to Mr. Forstall, February 1, 1928, box 6, folder 2, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

20Ibid.

21Agnes Nestor to Margaret Robins, March 17, 1928, box 6, folder 2, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

22Agnes Nestor to Winnifred Mason Huck, March 28, 1928, box 6, folder 3, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.
her reaching voters that the Democratic political organization did not already control. The extent to which Nestor succeeded in reaching new audiences and the sources of powers she used to accomplish this task are uniquely related to the purposes of this study.

As a woman running for office in 1928, that Nestor was on the ballot at all testified to her political acumen. Nevertheless, Weber ultimately defeated Nestor for the seat in the Illinois General Assembly by a margin of 12,834 to 5,424 votes.\(^{23}\) However, Nestor managed to gain nearly half of the votes cast in her race without the benefit of a formal political organization or prior experience as a candidate. Even those whom Nestor did not know personally considered her campaign a success. Ethel M. Colson, a citizen who followed both Nestor’s campaign and career as a women’s leader, wrote to her after the election, “it is pleasant to realize that every such stand, and every such fight brings nearer the good conditions for which we all hunger, and that no-one merely human can measure the good accruing from efforts that, on the surface, seem to fail.”\(^{24}\) Curiously, little evidence exists to suggest that Nestor agreed with Colson, beyond that Nestor saved this letter. Nestor’s campaign for State Representative is absent from her autobiography, and she never writes nor mentions her campaign again. Still, although Nestor’s skill as a politician did not overcome her obstacles in defeating Weber in the Democratic Primary of 1928, much of her career in leadership involved politics in some form. To explore the

\(^{23}\)“Primary Results,” *Chicago Tribune*, April 12, 1928, 8.

\(^{24}\)Ethel M. Colson Brazelton to Agnes Nestor, April 16, 1928, box 6, folder 3, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.
sources of power Nestor used as a politician is to understand much of her success in this dimension of her career.

**Ten-Hour Work Day—Agnes Nestor as Social Reformer**

When Agnes Nestor began her career as a glove maker, Agnes was working ten hours per day, six days per week.\(^{25}\) However, there was no statutory limit on the number of hours that any person could work, and the Supreme Court of the United States was unwilling to allow government to interfere with employers’ perceived right to conduct business as they pleased, typically nullifying work hour restrictions based on precedent set in *Lochner v. New York*.\(^{26}\) Delivering the majority opinion in this case, Justice Rufus Peckam, wrote “The statute necessarily interferes with the right of contract between the employer and employes [sic], concerning the number of hours in which the latter may labor.”\(^{27}\) Interpreting work hour restrictions as impinging on a worker’s right to sell labor, the Supreme Court was itself an immense obstacle for reformers seeking legislative remedies to long work hours.

Faced with a string of Supreme Court defeats, activists for shorter work days for women employed a new strategy. In 1903, Oregon enacted a statute that prevented women who worked outside of the home from working more than ten hours in a row.\(^{28}\)


\(^{27}\) *Lochner v. New York*.

\(^{28}\) *State v. Muller*, 48 Ore. 252; 85 P. 855, (1906).
When a laundry owner from Oregon named Muller was later arrested for requiring an employee to work thirteen hours, he appealed his conviction in light of the Supreme Court of the United States ruling in Lochner. The Oregon Supreme Court, however, in State v. Muller, upheld the law as a health measure meant to protect women.\textsuperscript{29} The Oregon Supreme Court affirmed the state legislature’s intent to afford women special protections under the law because such protections were necessary for working women to a marked degree not present for working men. Although limited to the state of Oregon, this ruling was widely seen as a victory for reformers such as Agnes Nestor who sought to improve working conditions for female laborers. Later, the United States Supreme Court bolstered the Muller decision in Bunting vs. Oregon,\textsuperscript{30} narrowly affirming that the Oregon Law was not meant to limit the productivity of factories or other employers but to advance the health of women. Because the Oregon statute capped the workday for any woman in a factory to ten hours per day on the grounds that longer work hours posed health hazards for women, the Court reasoned that government had a legitimate interest in regulating hours of employment. By upholding the Oregon ten-hour law, the Supreme Court of the United States allowed Nestor and the Women’s Trade Union League to approach their lobbying efforts from a perspective that, given a Judiciary relatively hostile to labor interests, was at least constitutionally defensible. Nestor and her network of reformers maintained in their efforts at social transformation a concerted effort to educate those in power as well as to incite outrage. While lobbying the Illinois General

\textsuperscript{29}State v. Muller, 48 Ore. 252; 85 P. 855, (1906).

Assembly for an eight hour workday for women, Nestor and fellow activists repeatedly countered employer complaints of lowered production and lost wages with images of women hunched over worktables in dark rooms. In an editorial cartoon from the Chicago Daily News, Luther Bradley portrays a women working at a sewing machine. In this cartoon entitled “Sacred Motherhood,” Bradley depicts a nursing woman bearing an expression of visceral pain bent over a sewing machine. Casting those opposed to work hour limitations as cruel masters filled rampant avarice became a favored strategy of Nestor and her network. As more news stories appeared in the Chicago Tribune describing the plight of women in sweatshops, people in power became more receptive to the notion that women needed protection.

On April 13, 1909, Agnes Nestor traveled with Jane Addams, Margaret Dreier Robins, and Anna Nichols for lobbying both for women’s suffrage and for an eight hour workday. Although Nestor did support efforts to secure for women the right to vote, she was principally in Springfield to secure passage of a bill limiting the hours for all women working in factories, restaurants, or laundries to eight hours in a day. During those two months of legislative work, Nestor discovered that bills as introduced rarely end up before the General Assembly as planned. The Chicago Tribune quotes Nestor:

_________________________________________________________________________________


32 Ella S. Stewart and Catharine W. McCulloch to Agnes Nestor, [ca 1909], Illinois Equal Suffrage Association, box 1, folder 4, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.
“I would not take $10,000 for my experience at Springfield,” said Miss Nestor the other day. “I learned a lot that I did not know before about the way laws are made. When I went to Springfield, I was enthusiastic over the prospect of fighting the question out on its merits with bona fide arguments. But I soon learned that the legislature is a peculiar machine. You put a bill into it and then wait in anguish and despair for it to come out. And you may not recognize it as your own when it does finally make its appearance.”

Nestor and the Women’s Trade Union League originally drafted an eight-hour bill that applied to women in factories, restaurants, and laundries, but quickly discovered that the legislature would not pass such a measure. After much compromise, Nestor worked with the legislature on a compromise bill that applies only to women in factories and laundries, excluded laundries from work day restrictions, and limited the workday to ten hours. Nestor was disappointed, feeling that she had compromised too much, but when a ten-hour bill passed the Illinois General Assembly at the end of the legislative session in 1909, Nestor had not only won a legislative victory but earned the respect of many noted men and women in Illinois and national politics as a woman capable of shaping the political landscape of the time.


34Nestor, Women’s Labor Leader, 96.

35Josephine Casey to Agnes Nestor, April 26, 1911, box 1, folder 5, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.
Methodology

Method for Historical Documentary Analysis

The purpose of documentary research is to create knowledge by connecting a series of historical documents in new ways. Researchers create knowledge by reviewing relevant documentary sources and applying a unifying theoretical framework that recreates, sustains, and justifies a new perspective on data which is typically very old. Researchers thus must understand the following: what counts as data in a historical documentary study; and, how primary sources sustain new perspectives on old texts.

Because historical documentary research is a process of using humankind’s preserved texts to discover, interpret, and justify a narrative, researchers must first clarify what counts as historical data. In historical documentary research, researchers investigate a subject through the lens of the accumulated preserved texts that others have left behind. Gary McCulloch writes, “to understand documents is to read between the lines of our material world,”36 and for the documentary researcher, the diaries, newspaper articles, notes on postcards, personal and professional correspondence, public records, emails, song lyrics, videos, and photographs preserved in the archive are far more than simply people’s accumulated “stuff.” Rather, such artifacts allow the researcher bring together discrete pieces of text from a variety of sources to create new stories and new ways of understanding the past. The basic process of documentary research is deceptively simple: first, accumulate a variety of documents on a particular topic of interest; second, review...

the documents and explain what they reveal. However, the practice and rigor of
documentary research require a robust understanding of what documents are and how to
use them to sustain a narrative.

Defining documents and understanding their uses and limitations in research is
crucial to conducting a rigorous investigation into the past. As McCulloch explains,
documentary research is “concerned mainly with documents that have been produced
without any direct involvement on the part of the researcher, produced for other purposes
and often with different priorities from those of the researcher.”37 Documentary analysts
typically do not interact with their subjects, and often utilize texts separated from the
research process by many years, if not lifetimes. Sometimes the researcher is lucky when
authors make their intentions plain, but more frequently, the author’s original purpose,
choice of format, or intention is inscrutable in isolation. The researcher, whenever
possible, must position each discrete text relative to its neighbors in the archive and also
to the context in which the text was made. As McCulloch explains:

“It is necessary to find out as much as possible about the document from
internal evidence elicited from the text itself, but it is no less important to
discover how and why it was produced, and how it was received.
Documents are social and historical constructs, and to examine them
without considering this simply misses the point.”38

By checking various kinds of documents from different authors against each other,
common historical themes emerge. Authors often use similar vocabulary, or they might
mention similar issues. Authors often express their opinions and reveal their activities in

37Ibid., 2.

38Ibid., 6.
the midst of well-documented historical events. From there emerge poignant
guideposts to a person’s outer narrative of place and time as well as a rich inner narrative
revealing key actors’ thoughts and feelings about events. For example, a detail in a photo
positions a subject within a particular period of history, reveals acquaintances and
friendships, and often suggests the purpose of a gathering. A postmark, date, and return
address on a letter identifies the city, state, date and time of at least a fraction of a
conversation and provides an entry into the important events in the life of a person or an
organization. On their own, these documents encompass a very small moment in time.
Taken together, time is recreated through a new lens, and a new understanding of the
meaning of life for a person, organization, or even a nation can materialize. At the same
time, researchers can use documents to recreate the inner story of a person’s thoughts and
values. The creators of most documents used in documentary research never intended the
researcher ever to find them, and likely never expected that their words would be of any
import beyond their intended recipient. Their words are often more frank, less guarded,
and highly intimate, and reveal not only the sequence of events within a particular
narrative, but also what the key people involved thought about events, the values from
which they acted, and the motivations behind key decisions. This inner story allows
researchers, at least partially, to reconstruct the worldview through which people viewed
the events. Knowing this framework allows researchers to recreate more than just the
sequence of events in a narrative, but also to infer both the reasons why the narrative’s
key players made certain choices, as well as to reconstruct somewhat the political, social,
and personal environment in which the research subject existed.
Documentary researchers distinguish between primary documents and secondary documents. Primary documents are original texts created by those who actually lived through and witnessed the events that the researcher studies. Secondary documents are texts based on primary sources that describe the events that these primary sources reveal. Because documentary researchers have to decide what text counts as quality data and what text serves as someone else’s conclusions on that same data, they must delineate sharply between primary and secondary sources. Generally, maintaining clear boundaries between primary and secondary sources is simple. For example, when Agnes Nestor wrote to Margaret Drier Robins discussing her 1928 bid for the State Legislature,\(^{39}\) Nestor indubitably created a primary source. Such primary sources represent the vast majority of resources consulted in this study. Conversely, future scholars who studied Nestor, the National Women’s Trade Union League, or any number of topics that required documents related to Agnes Nestor created secondary sources that represent their own work. Although understanding how other people view Agnes Nestor and her practice of leadership can be helpful, secondary source documents constrict scholarly researchers to outside perspectives on a subject that seldom correlate with the researcher’s interests. In Agnes Nestor’s case especially, most researchers using her primary source documents focus less on her leadership than on the impact of organizations in which she served. Because this study investigates Agnes Nestor as a leader, few secondary source documents would count as data.

\(^{39}\)Agnes Nestor to Margaret Dreier Robins, Chicago, February 22, 1928, box 6, folder 2, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.
Occasionally, however, documents resist easy classification. When documentary researchers study people who themselves create secondary sources, they must decide whether to treat these sources as primary sources that reveal original data on the research subject or secondary resources removed from the original data. This dissertation makes use of Agnes Nestor’s autobiography, an especially problematic work. Although Nestor was an active participant and eyewitness of many of the events, her published autobiography is full of facts, dates, and stories that do not coincide with other, slightly more primary, sources. For example, Agnes Nestor’s passport and her journal indicate that her birthday would be in 1880. Taken with other primary sources, that would make her seventeen years old when she first came to Chicago. In her autobiography, however, she claims that she started at the Eisendrath Glove Company at fourteen years of age. In another portion, she denies ever having pushed a strike-breaking woman into a horse trough, despite numerous news stories and other

\[\text{Footnotes:}\]

40United States Passport, Issued June 13, 1923, box 7, folder 3, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

41Agnes Nestor, journal, June 24, 1900 to June 23, 1901, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

42Nestor, Women’s Labor Leader, 3. If Nestor arrived in Chicago in 1887, then she would have been 17 if her passport and journal reveal her correct age.

43Ibid., 4.

44Ibid., 36.

witnesses who related the same events over the years. Clearly, using Nestor’s autobiography as a source of accurate dates or a reliable accounting of events is highly problematic. Even more challenging is that Nestor herself relies on newspaper clippings, editorial cartoons, and other primary sources to tell her own story. On the literal level, her autobiography is in many respects a secondary source, and cannot be used to recreate an accurate narrative of Nestor’s life.

If, however, the focus of the study is on Nestor’s values, perceptions, and priorities, researchers can use Nestor’s autobiography such that her book would qualify as a primary source. Indeed, what Nestor chooses to include and exclude in her own account of her life is vital to understanding the inner story of events pieced together elsewhere. For example, archived letters and postmarks may reveal Nestor’s location on a specific date, but her autobiography reveals how she wanted those events to be remembered. Similarly, what Nestor excludes from her autobiography reveals much about other events in the archived record. To illustrate, Nestor ran for the state legislature in 1928.46 That she ran for office at all indicates that by 1928, Nestor was already well-connected with the people and resources needed to mount a serious campaign against a formidable incumbent. Proportionally, few women serve in public office today, and prevailing heteronormative values in Nestor’s environment made her candidacy all the more unique. However, Nestor never mentions her bid for state


46Minutes from campaign meeting in Chicago, February 21, 1928, box 6, folder 2, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.
representative in her autobiography, and few documents related to her candidacy exist after 1928. Given that she finished her manuscript shortly before her death, dedicating much of her last year of life to creating what she hoped would preserve her legacy on her own terms, Agnes Nestor’s choice to include her work as an educator, world traveler, and labor leader but to exclude her work as a politician reveal much about what she considered to be her principal contributions to humankind. Nestor’s autobiography is an example of how although documentary research does demarcate clearly between primary and secondary sources, some sources share characteristics of both. Thus, classifying sources such as Agnes Nestor’s autobiography depend on the perspective of the researcher. While a cursory reading of *Women’s Labor Leader* against the archival record reveals a highly problematic text in terms of sustaining a timeline of events, a deeper reading allows researchers to look back on Nestor’s past through her own eyes.

Equipped with a substantial volume of primary source text, documentary researchers begin the process of creating and interpreting a narrative. However, the rigor of documentary research requires that researchers approach each document as both a storyteller and an investigator. The goal of documentary research is not only to use primary sources to create a story, but to create new knowledge about a subject within the limits of what each document can reveal. To do this, according to McCulloch, “there are some basic well established rules that apply in appraising and analysis documents, and these are generally discussed in terms of authenticity, reliability, meaning and
theorisation.”47 First, researchers assess each document’s authenticity to ensure that their data is genuine. Only with unquestionable confidence in the date and authorship of the texts and materials used as data can a researcher create meaningful work. In the case of archived sources, knowing the collection’s provenance and handling in the archive can help the researcher determine a collection’s authenticity. Also, the sheer volume of artifacts from the same person can help researchers develop a sense of an author’s style, word choice, and handwriting. Thousands of letters from Agnes Nestor and several other key actors in her story survive in the Agnes Nestor Papers collection at the Chicago History Museum Research Center. Researchers familiar with all of them can compare one against the large number of other examples to discern whether one particular piece of writing appears to fit alongside similar documents telling the same story.

Once researchers establish the authenticity of their data, they assess each document’s reliability. Reliability is the extent to which the researcher can trust the account that the document reveals. A document’s reliability depends on issues related to the document itself, and also to the company it keeps. Within the document, researchers must account for an author’s particular agenda in writing a text. Agnes Nestor was clearly a partisan labor leader, and her worldview colors everything she wrote. Nestor’s understanding of her role in the world, (and the historian’s understanding of Nestor) depends on recognizing the particular structures that inform her thinking and purposes behind creating the documents in the first place. Similarly, authors may not always have the expertise, experience, or eagerness to record events accurately even when they wish

47McCulloch, Documentary Research in Education, 42.
to write of them. Finally, authors themselves may give false accounts. Even if a document’s authenticity is beyond question, the researcher must assess both whether the author had the capacity to witness events faithfully as well as determine whether the document itself ultimately bears trustworthy evidence from which to build a narrative.

However, reliability affects more than each document by itself. The reliability of the entire collection affects the quality of documentary research as much as the trustworthiness of any single document. One issue affecting the reliability of entire collections of documents is selective deposit. Researchers can only utilize documents that actually exist and are available for the researcher to view. Although the Chicago History Museum Research Center has thousands of pages of documents related to Agnes Nestor and her work, they likely only represent a fraction of what she actually wrote. Similarly, many forms of primary sources related to Agnes Nestor are far more likely to survive than others simply because of what they are. One good example of such selective deposit and survival is the contrast between records of governments, institutions, and the media and personal documents of individuals. In most cases, “the bureaucratic records of the State in western nations are housed in public archives, well-guarded and meticulously catalogued. Many other documents are routinely discarded.”48 Statutes, proceedings of committee meetings, and financial records survive, while personal letters, telephone messages, and ticket stubs often do not because they may not have seemed worthwhile to save when created. Thus, the narrative most likely to survive often represents an official

48Ibid., 43.
perspective that individuals or organizations without the means carefully to record and preserve their own history may not share. Furthermore, numerous people including her siblings Mary and Owen Nestor and various archivists at the Chicago History Museum have made choices determining which of Agnes Nestor’s papers to preserve. Family members and friends handling Nestor’s papers chose documents which they felt best represented the sum total of her life and rejected others. Because the first people to process Nestor’s papers were family members, the possibility that unflattering texts never made it to the archive increases considerably. Conversely, Owen and Mary Nestor may have had reason to malign their sister, choosing to highlight evidence of personal failings they wanted to enshrine. Developing an accurate narrative requires extensive triangulation with a number of sources. Researchers can only work with documents actually available for study, so even when working with a large collection of unquestionably authentic documents which when considered individually contain reliable information, documentary researchers must decide to what extent the available data represent all that could be known about their subject.

Once researchers have established the reliability of a document, they proceed to consider its meaning. First, researchers ensure that the text in the document is “clear and comprehensible.” At the most basic level, the researcher must have a basic capacity to read the language on the page and understand the meaning of the words. Every document has a meaning that can be understood on its own terms, and this literal sense of meaning

49Ibid., 45.
is the basis for any other inference researchers could make on their subjects. A letter of congratulations, a bank statement, or a train ticket receipt each has its own vocabulary, tone of discourse, and relevance from which the discrete meaning of the document is plain. For example, I cannot infer from the train ticket receipt that someone is to wed: I need the letter of congratulations. However, with a train receipt, a bank statement with a corresponding withdrawal, and a letter of congratulations that asks about dates for the celebration, I can infer a story line that involves a person receiving good news, purchasing train fare, and taking a trip on a certain date. Thus, a document’s literal meaning on its own and as related to other documents forms the raw data from which the researcher constructs a narrative.

**Description of Primary and Secondary Sources**

As Carolyn Steedman writes: “Nothing starts in the Archive, nothing ever at all, though things certainly end up there. You find nothing in the archive except stories caught half way through: the middle of things; discontinuities.”\(^{50}\) The challenge of documentary research is to create a defensible narrative that completes the halfway through stories, transforming discrete texts into a new way of understanding a life. Investigating Agnes Nestor as a leader is doubly challenging because most secondary works that include her typically focus on her goals: improving working conditions and creating new educational opportunities for women laborers. Because this study principally centers on Agnes Nestor and her practice of leadership, the best resources in

\(^{50}\)Carolyn Steedman, *Dust* (Manchester University Press, 2001), 45.
creating and sustaining a narrative of Agnes Nestor as leader are the primary sources that relate to her work. These primary sources include:

1. Personal letters
2. Professional correspondence
3. Newspaper Articles
4. Government Records
5. Meeting minutes and proceedings
6. Miscellany
7. Agnes Nestor’s Autobiography

Although minimal secondary literature focuses on Nestor’s work as a leader, three secondary sources help position Agnes Nestor’s work in the appropriate historical context. Kessler-Harris work, *Gendering Labor History* describes Kessler-Harris’ research on women in labor and exposes the paradox of large numbers of women entering the workforce and how prevailing gendered attitudes affected the capacity of women to organize and the efficacy of their work. Karen M. Mason’s dissertation, *Testing the Boundaries: Women, Politics, and Gender Roles in Chicago, 1890-1930*, presents case studies of Mary McDowell, Ida Wells-Barnett, Madeleine Wallin Sikes, and Agnes Nestor. These case studies explore each woman’s notions of domesticity and politics and how domesticity and politics affected her work. Finally, Julie Novkov’s work, *Constituting Workers, Protecting Women: Gender, Law, and Labor in the Progressive Era and New Deal Years*, has a chapter that specifically explores the impetus for legislation specifically protecting women workers. Although the primary methodology is
an analysis the primary source record, these secondary sources play a part in setting the stage for Nestor’s narrative. 

**Method for Interpretation: Gareth Morgan’s Sources of Power** 

The state of research into Agnes Nestor’s rich public life and work leaves room for multiple studies into her practice of leadership beyond the scope of this work. Particularly because Nestor affiliated with several organizations expressly concerned with women and because she was a nationally noted woman leader, future researchers may wish to investigate Nestor’s life through one of many theoretical frameworks stemming from women intellectuals. For example, researchers employing a theoretical framework based in Noddings’ or Gilligan’s ethics of care may discover to what extent Nestor valued her relationships or to what extent she was aware of how her choices affected those relationships. Another intriguing possibility might be for researchers familiar with Dorothy Smith’s or Patricia Hill Collins’ work in standpoint theory to investigate how prevailing notions of Americanism, work, and gender were perceived by the unique constituencies that Nestor represented.

However, the purpose of this dissertation is to investigate the life of Agnes Nestor as labor leader, politician, and social reformer in order to explore how Nestor used various sources of power in her leadership to effect change. Although the researcher is aware of the unique feminist dimensions of Nestor’s practice of leadership, the primary focus of this dissertation is to discover what sources of power Nestor employed to resolve conflicts of interests in ways that transformed labor, politics, and society. Gareth Morgan’s unique array of currencies that leaders use to resolve conflicts of interests
provides fourteen clearly demarcated schemata through which to understand precisely what Nestor did to effect change.

Leaders practice in environments strewn with conflict. Whether conflict arises from within the organization or from the organization’s external environment, leaders work to resolve conflict to further their vision and goals for the organization. Gareth Morgan defines power as the “medium through which conflicts of interest are ultimately resolved;” characterizing power as a currency that leaders use to resolve conflicts in their favor. Morgan’s fourteen sources of power are presented below. 

Table 3. Sources of Power

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Formal Authority</th>
<th>Authority one holds that is associated with the position one holds in an organization.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Control of Scarce Resources</td>
<td>Ability to control the resources an organization uses to accomplish its work, or conversely, the ability to reduce an organizations’ dependency on external resources.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of organizational structure, rules, and regulations</td>
<td>Ability to invoke laws, policies, and procedures to one’s advantage.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control of decision processes</td>
<td>Influence over decision premises (control of agenda and strategies that force or guide attention to our point of view) decision processes (how, when, and where decisions are made, and who gets to make them), and decision issues and objectives (control of reports and information upon which decisions will be made, and rhetorical skill in arguing for perspectives).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control of knowledge and information</td>
<td>Possessing the right information at the right time, having exclusive access to data, or talent in organizing, synthesizing, and applying data.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


52Ibid.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of Power</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Control of boundaries</td>
<td>Influence over transactions occurring at junctures between different elements within an organization.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to cope with uncertainty</td>
<td>Describes how well a leader copes with unpredictable events both in the external and internal organizational landscape.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control of technology</td>
<td>Control over technology that converts organizational inputs into outputs allows leader to determine the pace and quality of the organization’s work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpersonal alliances, networks, and control of “informal organization”</td>
<td>Leaders can systematically build and cultivate power through interpersonal alliances and networks, incorporating whenever possible the help and influence of those who have common interests. The currency in these alliances is one of mutual dependency and exchange.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control of counterorganizations</td>
<td>Counterorganizations exist to balance the power of an existing power structure. Unions, consumer groups, and social movements are examples of organizations that can wield considerable countervailing power and effect considerable organizational and environmental change.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Symbolism and the management of meaning</td>
<td>Ability to shape the organization’s story, to call to mind certain images, symbols, and expressions that guide work and decision making a certain way, and influence over the way followers interpret their place in the organization.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender and the management of gender relations</td>
<td>Leaders can manipulate prevailing views and stereotypes on the role of men and women at work to increase their influence over organizations and their environment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structural factors that define the stage of action</td>
<td>Ability to access sources of powers given structural realities that affect the internal and external environment in which leadership is practiced.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The power one already has</td>
<td>The presence of power attracts others who want to feed off a leader’s influence, lending the power holderuninvited support. Similarly, the experience of success becomes a transforming force as one victory leads to another.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The researcher will analyze the words and actions of Agnes Nestor through the lenses of each of the fourteen sources of power. The research will also subject the words and actions of those whom Nestor interacted in her practice of leadership to the same
analysis to determine if the words and actions of others indicate if and when Nestor accesses certain sources of power in as a labor leader, politician, and social reformer.

**Proposed Chapters**

This study will be divided into the following chapters:

Chapter One—Introduction

Chapter Two—Agnes Nestor: Labor Leader

Chapter Three—Agnes Nestor: Politician

Chapter Four—Agnes Nestor: Social Reformer

Chapter Five—Summary, Discussion, Conclusions

Chapter One introduces Agnes Nestor as a leader worthy of further study, principal guiding research questions, and method of collecting and analyzing data that will be used to answer the research questions. Chapter Two, Chapter Three, and Chapter Four tell the story of Agnes Nestor as labor leader, politician, and social reformer, respectively. Each chapter will end with an analysis of words and actions of Agnes Nestor and the words and action of others to uncover which, if any, sources of power Nestor accessed to effect change. Finally, Chapter Five summarizes and discusses research findings and draw conclusions that will illuminate the practice of leadership in modern contexts.
CHAPTER II
AGNES NESTOR—LABOR LEADER

Our union shop, we felt, was our most important gain.
—Agnes Nestor, Woman’s Labor Leader

Introduction

For nearly fifty years, Agnes Nestor was recognized as a women’s labor leader. This chapter explores Agnes Nestor’s work as a labor leader, defined as a person who mediates conflicts of interest between employees and employers on behalf of workers. Working locally in Chicago’s International Glove Workers Union of America, and nationally as President of the National Women’s Trade Union League, Nestor accessed multiple sources of power as she resolved conflicting interests between women employees and their employers.

Formation of the International Glove Workers Union of America

Agnes writes in her autobiography that she started working at the Eisendrath Glove Company at age fourteen. Nestor, however, claims that she left Grand Rapids in 1897.\(^1\) Therese Townsend, principal of Central Grammar School in Grand Rapids, notes in her transfer papers that “Agnes Nestor who is a member of our eighth grade is soon to

\(^1\)Nestor, *Women’s Labor Leader*, 3.
leave us. She is a good attentive and faithful student,\(^2\) suggesting that Nestor may indeed have been fourteen when she left Grand Rapids. This is puzzling, because her passport lists the year of her birth as 1880.\(^3\) Furthermore, Nestor’s journal from 1900 confirms this date, because on her birthday in 1900, she writes “I am 20 years old today,”\(^4\) with many brief entries describing working at the factory and attending mass at Chicago parishes. That would mean that Nestor was seventeen when she arrived in Chicago. In another portion of her autobiography, Nestor claims that she left Central Grammar School, not to move to Chicago, but to attend a parochial school at St. Alphonsus Parish.\(^5\) Although available documents offer no clear resolution at to the inconsistency in dates, the preponderance of evidence from her journal and government records suggest that Nestor transferred schools in 1887 and remained in Grand Rapids at least until at least 1890. Nestor had most likely moved to Chicago in 1897, and she had been working at the Eisendrath Glove Company for at least three years.

Organized labor was already a strong stakeholder in Chicago, yet the Eisendrath Glove Company was not a union shop. Eisendrath Glove Company structured their factory so that a foreman supervised a number of workers, and each worker completed a

\(^2\)Therese Townsend, Principal of Central Grammar School, Grand Rapids, MI, March 2-June 1897, box 7, folder 3, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

\(^3\)United States Passport, Issued June 13, 1923, box 7, folder 3, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

\(^4\)Agnes Nestor, journal, June 24, 1900 to June 23, 1901, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

specific portion of the glove-making process. Eisendrath supplied thread, fabric, but workers themselves provided all other supplies, including needles, machine oil, and scissors at their own expense, and even paid Eisendrath rent to use machines needed to make the gloves. Eisendrath paid its workers on a piece-work system, meaning that workers earned a set amount per piece of work produced. The foreman counted the number of pieces produced, deducted any imperfect parts, and paid workers in cash at the end of the day. Although one benefit of the piece-work system was that management did not castigate women who broke needles or worked more slowly than expected, one significant disadvantage was that workers spent considerable time and money to maintain machinery and to buy quality supplies for their craft. Broken needles and poorly maintained machines meant lost money for workers, even when the cause of the delay was a company responsibility. Less often glovemakers earned daily rates, yet even in these shops employers expected every person to be at work making gloves at every moment. Shifts for workers varied by season, but could range from ten to fourteen hours per day stitching gloves, often seven days a week. Eisendrath workers stitched fabric together for as many hours as employers required, and in the absence of an organized union, had neither voice nor leverage to expect any redress from management.

Throughout 1902, workers in different departments at Eisendrath Glove Company began to organize. Management, however, worked to isolate groups of workers, so “that


7Nestor, Women’s Labor Leader, 29.

no girl must leave her own sewing room at noon to eat lunch with a girl in another room.”

Despite management efforts to isolate departments, unionized Eisdendrath workers continuously reached out to women workers at the plant. Soon, nearly all workers at Eisendrath were members of the Chicago Federation of Labor, and although inexperienced in union procedure, they were at least organized as one body. This new organization took on even greater importance when Nestor had to decide whether to join her first strike. In late May 1902, Eisendrath glove cutters and banders walked out of the factory:

We walked out. We did not use the near-by stairs, but walked through the next room in order that the girls there might see us leaving. The girls there were busily at work quite unconscious of our strike movement. I knew that our cause was lost unless we got those girls to join us. When we got out to the street, I told my companions that all was lost unless we could get those others to walk out too. We lined up across the street shouting, “Come on out!” and calling out the names of some of the girls. We kept this up until a few did obey us. Gradually others follow until the shop was almost emptied.

Soon, the shop was nearly empty, and most of Eisendrath’s factory was in a meeting hall. Representatives from the Chicago Federation of Labor worked to find a spokesperson for the striking women and created a committee to engage management at Eisendrath. This meeting changed the trajectory of Agnes Nestor’s life, marking the moment when Nestor became a change-agent. Rather than remain among many women seeking better working

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10Ibid., 30.

11Ibid., 31.

12Ibid., 32-33.
conditions, Agnes Nestor chose to lead. “Evidently the union officers thought I was their ringleader, for when the committee was appointed to represent our group, my name was called. When Mary heard it, she said: “Why did they put Agnes on? She can’t talk!”13 However, as leader of this committee, Nestor quickly found her voice. Soon, this small organization of women in one factory became the International Glove Workers Union, an organization that changed the lives of thousands of Chicago workers and many thousands more throughout the United States and Canada. Ultimately, the strike was settled so that workers did receive a raise in pay, no longer paid rent on their machines, and the Eisendrath Glove Company took greater responsibility for their machinery.14

As leader of the International Glove Workers Union of America, Nestor also networked closely with other leaders in organized labor. One example of this networking regarded merchants’ licenses to use the IGWU label on gloves sold in stores. John McNamee, editor and manager for the Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen, wrote Nestor of a fellow Brotherhood member in Kansas who “is very particular about wearing union made clothes, gloves, etc.” but “has come to the conclusion that they are not really union made gloves because they are not stamped, but have a tag tied on with a string and

13Ibid., 33.

14Contract between the Eisendrath Glove Company and the International Glove Workers of America Local 4 and 18. 1904, box 1, folder 1, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.
the words “union made” thereon.”

McNamee identifies the store selling suspiciously labeled gloves and counsels Nestor to “send him a reliable description or reproduction of your union label.”

McNamee later publishes the genuine IGWU label in “the June issue of our Magazine and would direct your attention to page 807 where you will find short item together with cut of your label.”

Through McNamee, Nestor was able to promote her union label not only in Chicago but Kansas as well.

By 1904, the media and established labor organizations began to take notice of Nestor’s status of leader of a trade union for women. In 1904, the American Federation Labor referred reporter Frank Carpenter to Agnes Nestor as a source of information on the burgeoning trend towards women organization. Carpenter’s original questionnaire follows:

“Your name has been given me by the American Federations of Labor as one who can represent your trade as to organized labor from a woman’s standpoint.

Will you kindly tell me something about women in the International Glove Workers Union. How many are there and what do they do? What wages, etc.?

I enclose a list of questions which I am sending to the representative women in different trades and the answers to which I expect to publish in one letter in the Chicago-Record-Heralds and Boston Globe, and other papers of my syndicate.”


16. Ibid.

17. John McNamee to Agnes Nestor, June 4, 1906, box 1, folder 3, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.
1. What should women do to help their sex as to labor matters?
2. Are trades unions a good thing for women?
3. Do they not tend to unsex them and make them masculine?
4. What is the aim of the woman’s trades union—as to hours? As to wages?
5. What hours do your people work? And for what wages?
6. Will the time come when women will receive the same pay and hours as men?
7. Will the women stand by the unions in strikes and lock-outs? Give examples
8. Do you believe in the “closed shop”?
9. What should be done with the non-union girl?
10. What has woman’s organized labor done for your trade?
11. Do you believe in strikes? The boycotts?
12. Are women’s unions increasing?
13. Will they extend to clerks, typewriters, servant girls?
14. Please add any information or opinion of value to the public on your branch of woman’s labor organized or unorganized.¹⁸

The subject of Carpenter’s questions range from basic empirical observations on working conditions in factories to Nestor’s philosophical underpinnings as a labor leader, and request of Nestor a markedly gendered perspective on women’s trade union organizations. Nestor’s reply is, unfortunately, not available for review, but Nestor is leading an entirely new kind of organization in Chicago: a labor union where women lead.

**Women’s Clubs**

As President of the International Glove Worker’s Union, Nestor gained prominence among labor leaders and earned access to notable women in Chicago society. One interesting aspect of Nestor’s work towards social transformation was her involvement in Women’s Clubs. Generally, women’s clubs served as social outlets,

¹⁸Frank G. Carpenter to Agnes Nestor, March 15, 1904, box 1, folder 1, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.
political organizations, and potent agents for social justice. Some feared that women’s clubs would “undermine that old and salutary spirit of humility in the presence of masculine judgment on which the gentlemen of the old school were wont to believe that the foundations of society rested.” During the Progressive Era, many advocacy organizations cooperated with women’s clubs to advance social issues in American life, such as the rights of labor, improved working conditions for women and children, as well as the right of women to vote. The Chicago Tribune reported in 1906 that at a meeting of the General Federation of Women’s Clubs, Ms. Rheta Childe Dorr, President of the Federation’s Industrial Committee, spoke before the membership claiming “an industrial revolution was painted on the horizon and clubwomen were told they must take steps to bring about the betterment of conditions of the toiler or they would have a revolution to reckon with.”

However, women were not a homogenous group. There were several salient differences between those typically referred to as “Club Women” and those who were called “Working Girls.” Club women were affluent, white married women who did not


work outside of their home and frequently had substantial domestic help to manage
daily household affair, and typically completed some type of formal education. In
contrast, working women were those women, married and unmarried, who worked in
factories or private homes and relied on their wages for financial support. They typically
did not progress beyond an elementary education, and worked because their families
needed their income. Working women rarely participated in women’s clubs, and would
even less frequently be members. At the same meeting where Dorr advocated that Club
Women stand in solidarity with working women, Agnes Nestor and fellow organizer
Josephine Casey were involved in a conflict over the proper relationship between
women’s clubs and women’s trade unions. After offering their “descriptions of
conditions surrounding the toilers of Chicago” several clubwomen were offended:

Ms. Casey’s remarks apparently stirred the wrath of some of the
St. Louis clubwomen, who have been coping with the servant girl
problem, and when the conference was over they made a charge on Miss
Casey, firing a rapid volley of arguments and questions at her until the
poor girl was overwhelmed. Mrs. Chivvis, heading the charge with wildly
gesticulating arms ordered the working girls “Back to the kitchens,” which
she said were yawning for them and offered a panacea for all the troubles
of the working girls depicted in Miss Casey’s address […] Miss Casey
replied that most working girls were competent to do housework, did not
like to do housework, and did not intend to run homes for women too
incompetent to run them for themselves.22

Newspaper reports might have exaggerated the incident, but Nestor reports the
commotion in her autobiography, and other details from that meeting such as when “a
woman came up to me and felt the material of my white blouse. ‘You’re not a real

21 Ibid.
22 Ibid.
working girl,’ said she. ‘Look at the good blouse you are wearing!’ At least this time I had the satisfaction that the blouse was recognized for what it was and was not called ‘a black dress with a touch of white around the neck.’”

Aware of the division along class lines between women of wealth and working class women, Nestor continued to engage Women’s Clubs throughout the Midwest. Whether speaking to the Jefferson-Lincoln Club on “The Workers of the City” attending luncheon with Elizabeth Edwards Fields of the Wilmette Club, or to the Social Services Club on “the various bills which are now pending in the Legislature,” Agnes Nestor frequently interacted with a number of prominent Chicago-area club women. One interesting invitation came from Grace Pebbles of the Nineteenth Century Club of Oak Park:

Our subject for the afternoon of the 9th is the “Girl in the Factory” and I’m sure you can do a great deal with this subject. Can you give us some reason as to why she is there—what the effect of her being forced into factory work means to the nation etc. as well as conditions now found in factories, how they may be improved, what women can do to help and so on. Just a few words about the strike will not be amiss, although we have had some of that in our previous meeting. We are studying “The Girl” all this year, and have just had “The Girl in the Sweat Shop.” I might add


Mary Spaulding Lee to Agnes Nestor, January 18, 1909, box 1, folder 4, Agnes Nestor Papers Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

Elizabeth Edwards Field to Agnes Nestor, January 1, 1911, box 1, folder 5, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

Grace Abbot to Agnes Nestor, March 16, 1911, box 1, folder 5, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.
that by “we” I mean the Social Economics Department of the Nineteenth Century Club.”

By 1911, Nestor is known in the labor community and in the social network of women’s clubs as an expert on working conditions for women, and spent much of her time as a labor leader in outreach efforts aimed at building relationships with women’s clubs. Although Agnes Nestor attended these speaking events and conferences as “the guest of the Club” rather than a member, she networked closely with Chicago area women’s clubs to further the agenda of the International Glove Workers Union.

Women’s Trade Union League

Many times throughout her career, Nestor actively sought out opportunities to work together with other organizations on labor and social issues, and as early as March of 1909, Nestor was working with various Chicago clubs to lobby with the Illinois Equal Suffrage Association. In 1909, Agnes Nestor, Jane Addams, Margaret Drier Robins, and Anna E. Nicholes campaigned together for the right of women to vote. Jane Addams was a widely respected and well-educated Chicago social worker. Margaret

27Grace M. Pebbles to Agnes Nestor, January 2, 1911, box 1, folder 5, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

28Grace Abbot to Agnes Nestor, March 16, 1911, box 1, folder 5, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

29Ella S. Stewart and Catharine W. McCulloch to Agnes Nestor, [ca 1909], Illinois Equal Suffrage Association, box 1, folder 4, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

30“Speakers and Delegates Appointed to Represent Various Chicago Clubs at the Suffrage Hearing in Springfield,” leaflet, [ca 1909], box 1, folder 4, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.
Drier Robins and Anna E. Nicholes were officers in the Women’s Trade Union League (WTUL), a women’s club predominately concerned with working conditions for women.

Nestor herself notes the irony inherent in the Women’s Trade Union League, which

was not a movement which had begun at the bottom among the lowly. Sparking the organization were women like Mary McDowell and Jane Addams, women who had the advantage of cultural background and high social standing, but who were also motivated by a high sense of social justice.31

Unlike other women’s clubs, the Women’s Trade Union League admitted women regardless of class, and had members of high social standing as well as those who made gloves. Nestor found the WTUL capable partners in lobbying, organizing, and fundraising, and helped shape the WTUL into a powerfully transformative organization. The seal of the WTUL bears the phrases “The Eight Hour Day,” “A Living Wage,” and “To Guard the Home,”32 indicating that the WTUL believed that by reducing work hours and raising wages, women workers would be better able to attend to domestic responsibilities. By contrast, the seal of the American Federation of Labor reads “Labor Omnia Vincit,”33 revealing a markedly different ideology. By 1913, Agnes Nestor was

31Nestor, Women’s Labor Leader, 64.


the President of the National Women’s Trade Union League,\textsuperscript{34} and served as president of the National Women’s Trade Union League of Chicago until her death in 1948.\textsuperscript{35}

One notable time when Nestor organized a collaborative effort on behalf of workers was during a large strike of garment workers in Philadelphia. The International Glove Worker’s Union, Midwestern club women, and the National Women’s Trade Union League organized picket lines and provided food and legal support to strikers. Nestor writes in her autobiography that “picket line girls were being arrested every day. We had to be prepared with bail and also to hire an attorney where necessary and to follow the cases to court.”\textsuperscript{36} When one of the arrested strikers was charged with disorderly conduct and held for bail, Nestor “hurried to telephone Mrs. Laurence Lewis, a well-known woman who belonged to one of the old families of Philadelphia”\textsuperscript{37} who invited Nestor to her home and secured bail for the striker over breakfast. During the same strike, Nestor “decided to have as observers particularly well-known women of Philadelphia who would find out first-hand what was really happening in the picket line and whose word would be taken in the courts.”\textsuperscript{38} The Philadelphia strike was a long, \\

\textsuperscript{34}Program of the Thirty-Fifth Anniversary of the National Women’s Trade Union League, February 4, 1939, box 4, folder 1, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

\textsuperscript{35}U.S. Individual Income Tax Return Form 1040, 1948 box 7, folder 4, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

\textsuperscript{36}Nestor, \textit{Women’s Labor Leader}, 106.

\textsuperscript{37}Ibid., 107.

\textsuperscript{38}Ibid., 108.
protracted struggle. Ultimately, the strike resolved so that workers “would have a fifty-two-and-a-half-hour week. There would be no more charging for power, for machine straps, or for needles. The strikers would go back to work with wages adjusted. A board of arbitrators would be set up to settle other differences upon which the manufacturers and the union could not at once agree.”  

Although little of Nestor’s correspondence relates directly to the time of the strike, several letters received immediately after the strike was over indicate a long, protracted struggle. One striker that Nestor got to know over the course of the conflict was Annie Staimovitz, a garment worker from Philadelphia:

“All us girls miss you very much, but I hope we will soon meet again in the near future. In regard to the settlement things are not all together satisfactory, but I suppose it will a little time before everything gets straightened out. I am working at the present time in my old place, but all of our girls are not back yet as our employer is sending for the girls individually. He is about the only one that has not kept up to the agreement but as far as we girls are concerned that are working, he is treating us exceptionally nice.”

Although Staimovitz does not believe that workers and management have completely reconciled every difference, she is confident that the struggle did produce some tangible benefits for her and her colleagues. I. Sacke, a Philadelphia labor leader reported:

“The standing of our organization is good, very good, better still than we had ever expected to be. We lost very few of our membership. They pay their dues regularly. It seems as a while that they have no more to complain. They have won in some measures materially, and on the

39Ibid., 111.

40Annie Staimovitz to Agnes Nestor, February 28, 1910, box 1, folder 5, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.
outset I expect that this organization will be so permanently in its existence.”

Other labor leaders involved in the Philadelphia strike, however, were not entirely optimistic. Max Katzman, a Philadelphia worker and labor organizer writes to Agnes a three months after the strike is settled:

Our organization is not altogether as it should be after such a struggle and after even such a settlement. We have certainly [sic] won some favorable points, which could develop [sic] a strong body with the conceit of the imployers [sic], that is avoiding strikes and quarrels in the shops, but not all the girls, it seems, have understood it and if our union is in bloom now, if our meetings are lively, it could be very much more successful if they had the power of strife and will as of the time during the strike, that is the main illness of our Jewish organization---strike fever.”

Aside from indicating a close working relationship with Katzman and fellow workers and organizers, Katzman’s letter to Nestor indicates his belief that the workers have achieved a remarkable settlement, but that the union membership is still learning how to relate to employers other than through strikes.

**Labor Mission to Europe**

One outcome of her committee work during the First World War was that Samuel Gompers invited her to join a Labor Mission to Europe. Before World War I ended in November of 1918, Samuel Gompers organized a group of journalists, labor leaders, and

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41 I. Sacke to Agnes Nestor, March 21, 1910, box 1, folder 5, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

42 Max Katzman to Agnes Nestor, April 26, 1910, box 1, folder 5, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

43 George H. Barnes of the Cabinet of the British Government to Samuel Gompers, November 10, 1917, box 1, folder 8, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.
industrialists to visit Europe and invited Nestor to be one of two women attending. Although some members of the Women’s Trade Union League “fear[ed] we are not considering the work on this side of the seas,” Nestor was honored to accept Gomper’s invitation to join the labor mission. The purpose of the voyage was to cultivate international relationships between labor groups in the United States and in Europe and to promote greater international cooperation once the war ended. Nestor travelled frequently around the United States, but found the trip across the Atlantic to be one of her greatest adventures. Braving “submarine-infested” waters to give good cheer to labor leaders and working women in Europe, Nestor takes advantage of every opportunity to engage new experiences. She writes to her sister Mary and brother Owen that she “saw where the tanks are made and then went to the field where they are tested and rode in one,” and even had the honor of meeting King George the Fifth at Buckingham Palace. Agnes Nestor, who had never completed high school and earned a living stitching gloves and forming unions, was chosen to inspire European labor unions, meet with foreign ambassadors, and have luncheon with the British royal family.

44Sullivan to Agnes Nestor, February 2, 1918, box 2, folder 6, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

45Nestor, Women’s Labor Leader, 184.

46Ibid., 186.

47Agnes Nestor to Mary Nestor, April 13, 1918, box 2, folder 3, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

48Invitation from King and Queen of England to Agnes Nestor, May 16, 1918, box 2, folder 4, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.
Mission to Europe was a genuinely formative experience in Nestor’s life in which she came to view her work on behalf of women as having international significance.

During the 1930s and the Great Depression, Nestor continued to serve in leadership roles. Like virtually every class of employee during the Great Depression, the International Glove Workers Union of America suffered greatly. A note from 1931 estimates that only 20 percent of IGWU members had full-time employment. Another 30 percent worked less than full-time, and half of all glove workers had no work at all.  

Not only did Nestor struggle with the work of the organizations she led, but also struggled with finding the resources necessary to complete her work. The Women’s Trade Union League’s work with unemployed women compounded throughout the Great Depression, stressing the ability of private organizations to render aid. Evidence suggests that Nestor increased the amount of time spent raising funds. According to one source “Things are desperate up here and seem to be getting steadily worse. The ten million that was raised here by privite [sic] subscription will be exhausted by the first of March. Now the drive is on to get ten million from public funds through the State legislature. Furthermore, the Women’s Trade Union League “is certainly feeling the hard times. This year contributions have been reduced and cut off entirely by some of our very good friends. From the end of November up through December we lost $700. That came in last year and yesterday $50.00 that was due the first of this year so it means great

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49 Typed Note on Index Card [ca 1931], box 3, folder 5, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.
resourcefulness needed for this year." In another note, Elisabeth Christman, longtime member and friend of the Women’s Trade Union League, writes, “Dear Agnes, Sorry to be so late. Enclosed is my card and check for $3.00-Jan. Feb. Mar. Apr. May 1932.” One other letter comes from a priest in Calumet City, Indiana who “saw the appeal in the Federation so I am sending my last five to help the Girls you are doing a wonderful work for the working girls and I hope you will be able to get the money” Finding resources to accomplish the work of her organizations was a challenge and a central concern for Nestor and the organizations she led during the Great Depression.

**Union Activity in Nestor’s Later Years**

By 1940, Agnes Nestor was already in her last decade of life. At a point in her life when many might consider retirement, Nestor appeared to increase her activity, and focus primarily on recruiting unorganized glove workers to join the International Glove Workers Union of America. The majority of her correspondence related to organizing work is with Thomas Durian, then current President of the International Glove Workers of America, and William Green of the American Federation of Labor. In one letter to Green, Nestor writes:

> Durian wrote you about happenings here. It is not as hopeless as it may seem but to successfully organize here we must have an organizer

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50 Agnes Nestor to Mrs. Robins, January 6, 1932, box 3, folder 5, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

51 Elisabeth Christman to Agnes Nestor, April 5, 1932, box 3, folder 5, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

52 Philip P. Broderick to Agnes Nestor, June 20, 1932, box 3, folder 5, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.
here steadily full time for at least two months. […] What we need is a Polish Woman from our trade who can stay in the field full time for a long enough time to accomplish something.  

Without an organizer who could speak the language of the workers and remain in contact with them on a daily basis, Nestor felt that the workers she was trying to organize were vulnerable to “the Amalgamated Clothing Workers in that field” who were also trying to recruit women glove workers.  Green, however, appeared nonplussed:

I have received your letter of February 6th in which you comment upon a copy of a letter I received from President Durian and which I sent you a short time ago.

In your letter you present difficulties with which your international union is confronted. I regard your letter as about the same as the one sent me by President Durian. Both your letters present a rather discouraging situation. […]

I must be frank with you and tell you that it is simply impossible for me to continue to finance your international union.

While maintaining a strong presence serving as the national president of the Women’s Trade Union League, Agnes appears to refocus her energies on forming new local unions of glove workers and staving off competition from the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO).  Nestor wrote to Durian, informing him of a competing organizer

53 Letter to William Green, President of the American Federation of Labor from Agnes Nestor, February 6, 1941, box 4, folder 3, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

54 Agnes Nestor to William Green, February 12, 1941, box 4, folder 3, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

55 William Green to Agnes Nestor, February 10, 1941, box 4, folder 3, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.
who arrived at a meeting of glove workers in Effingham with an offer to organize the plant with help from the Amalgamated Clothing Workers:

Now to tell you something else, Frank Sherman from Dubows was at the meeting and sat in the front row. I expected he was there for a purpose but he said nothing nor was he asked to say anything. While we were discussing organization he turned to me and said the Amalgamated told him to tell us that if we wanted help the Amalgamated would sent [sic] two or three organizers out to help organize Osborns. I said no we don’t need the Amalgamated we have our own organizers, all we want. Rosenthal snapped at him and said we belong to the International. No one else hear him because he had talked quietly. After the meeting he walked down the street with Nordstrom and Johnson – or rather with Johnson because Nordstrom walked with me. I watched [sic] him close and was relieved when he did not talk to any of those who feel friendly to the CIO.56

Nestor appears to have considered the Amalgated Clothing Workers a serious threat to the International Glove Workers Union of America, and worked closely with Durian to ensure the survival of her own organization.

Nestor also worked to prevent or reduce the relaxation of labor laws during the Second World War. One report of her work with the Women’s Trade Union League of Chicago states Nestor’s position clearly:

One problem presented the first of the year was the announcement by the Director of Labor for Illinois, Francis B. Murphy, that in the interest of war production the Women’s Eight Hour Law and the One Day’s Rest in Seven Law could be suspended or relaxed in defense industries.57

56 Agnes Nestor to Thomas Durian, March 25, 1939, box 4, folder 1, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

57 A Brief report of the Work of the Women’s Trade Union League of Chicago During 1942, Chicago, December 1942, box 4, folder 4, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.
Nestor believed that labor laws meant to protect workers, particularly women workers, were only meaningful if enforced even amidst a crisis situation. Nestor wrote to Ralph Bard, then Assistant Secretary in the Navy Department, reminding him that “you urged the 6 day week, the 8 hour day and the 48 hour week as approximately the best working schedule for sustained efficiency and urged that plants now employing industrial workers longer than 48 hours a week should carefully analyze their present situation with respect to output and time lost because of absenteeism, accident, illness, and fatigue.”

Although the stated policy of the War Department was not to ask for relaxations of any labor laws, the War Department worked with officials in the Illinois state government to develop an official procedure through which employers could petition the Illinois War Labor Standards Board to require employees to work seven days a week and in beyond legal work hour limitations. The principal requirement to receiving waivers for labor laws without fear of legal repercussions was that:

The employer must show that he is engaged in war production and that the exemption is being requested for such production exclusively. Acceptable proof of the fact that the employer is engaged in war production is a letter addressed to the State Director of Labor by the Army, Navy, or War Production Board or other Governmental war procurement agency certifying that the firm is engaged in war production and that the output must be advanced to meet war needs.

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58 Agnes Nestor to Mr. Ralph A. Bard, Assistant Secretary, Navy Department, DC, June 9, 1943, box 4, folder 4, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

Essentially, the War Department could override local worker protections by writing a letter to an Illinois agency affiliated with defense interests claiming that increased demands on workers was unavoidable. The potential for corruption and inherent conflict of interest between the Illinois War Labor Standards Bureau and the War Department was clear to Agnes Nestor and fellow unionists, and Nestor spent many hours as WTUL President publicly and privately working to prevent breakdowns in working conditions for all workers.

Nestor took ill for the last time in October of 1948. A report from her physician indicates that she had a “mass in the lower aspect of right breast” and that she suffered from “lung disease.” Nevertheless, IGWU President Durian mailed her a letter in the hospital reminding Nestor about an upcoming Labor Conference and that “after the conference is over, I would appreciate to get a copy of the proceedings from your office. And do drop me a word whether your health is improving [sic] and let me know if you will be able to write an article for our December Bulletin.” Agnes did not attend that labor conference, and she did not write an article for the December Bulletin. She was, however, a recognized labor leader from her youth until her death.

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60 Dr. Foster McMillan, Physician’s Report, Chicago, October 29, 1948, box 5, folder 3, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

61 Thomas Durian, President of International Glove Workers of America, October 30, 1948, box 5, folder 3, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.
Analysis

Gareth Morgan defines power as the “medium through which conflicts of interest are ultimately resolved”\(^6^2\). Within the above narrative, it is evident that Nestor drew from several sources of power to effect change. The sources of power that emerge can be categorized into fourteen distinct methods in which leaders can increase their currency in their organizations and their external environments (see Appendix A for complete analysis in chart form). The words and actions that are evidence of sources of power Nestor used as a labor leader are illustrated below:

**Words and Actions of Agnes Nestor**

| Formal Authority | Authority one holds that is associated with the position one holds in an organization. |

**Words**

“Evidently the union officers thought I was their ringleader, for when the committee was appointed to represent our group, my name was called. When Mary heard it, she said: “Why did they put Agnes on? She can’t talk!”\(^6^3\)

**Actions**

By 1913, Agnes Nestor was the President of the National Women’s Trade Union League.\(^6^4\)

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\(^6^3\)Nestor, *Women’s Labor Leader*, 33.

\(^6^4\)Program of the Thirty-Fifth Anniversary of the National Women’s Trade Union League, February 4, 1939, box 4, folder 1, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.
Nestor belonged to the Labor Council,\textsuperscript{65} the Bureau of Registration and Information,\textsuperscript{66} the Women’s Advisory Committee of the Council of National Defense,\textsuperscript{67} and finally, the Women in Industry Committee.\textsuperscript{68}

| Control of Scarce Resources | Ability to control the resources an organization uses to accomplish its work, or conversely, the ability to reduce an organization’s dependency on external resources. |

\textbf{Words}

Durian wrote you about happenings here. It is not as hopeless as it may seem but to successfully organize here we must have an organizer here steadily full time for at least two months. […] What we need is a Polish Woman from our trade who can stay in the field full time for a long enough time to accomplish something.\textsuperscript{69}

Nestor felt that the workers she was trying to organize were vulnerable to “the Amalgamated Clothing Workers in that field”\textsuperscript{70}

\textsuperscript{65}Ida Glatt to Agnes Nestor, January 17, 1917, box 1, folder 8, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

\textsuperscript{66}Elizabeth Martin, chairman of the Bureau of Registration and Information of the National League for Woman’s Service, to Agnes Nestor, April 30, 1917, box 1, folder 8, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

\textsuperscript{67}Newton D. Baker, Secretary of War and Chairman of the Council of National Defense, to Agnes Nestor, May 7, 1917, box 1, folder 8, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

\textsuperscript{68}Agnes Nestor, Chairman of Women in Industry Committee to the Women’s Committee of the Council of National Defense, August 23, 1917, box 1, folder 8, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

\textsuperscript{69}Letter to William Green, President of the American Federation of Labor from Agnes Nestor, February 6, 1941, box 4, folder 3, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

\textsuperscript{70}Agnes Nestor to William Green, February 12, 1941, box 4, folder 3, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.
**Actions**

Ultimately, the strike resolved so that workers “would have a fifty-two-and-a-half-hour week. There would be no more charging for power, for machine straps, or for needles. The strikers would go back to work with wages adjusted. A board of arbitrators would be set up to settle other differences upon which the manufacturers and the union could not at once agree.”\(^{71}\)

Nestor wrote to Ralph Bard, then Assistant Secretary in the Navy Department, reminding him that “you urged the 6 day week, the 8 hour day and the 48 hour week as approximately the best working schedule for sustained efficiency and urged that plants now employing industrial workers longer than 48 hours a week should carefully analyze their present situation with respect to output and time lost because of absenteeism, accident, illness, and fatigue.”\(^{72}\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Use of organizational structure, rules, and regulations</th>
<th>Ability to invoke laws, policies, and procedures to one’s advantage.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Words**

*No specific words noted.*

**Actions**

Nestor writes in her autobiography that “picket line girls were being arrested every day. We had to be prepared with bail and also to hire an attorney where necessary and to follow the cases to court.”\(^{73}\)

\(^{71}\)Nestor, *Women’s Labor Leader*, 111.

\(^{72}\)Agnes Nestor to Mr. Ralph A. Bard, Assistant Secretary, Navy Department, DC, June 9, 1943, box 4, folder 4, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

\(^{73}\)Nestor, *Women’s Labor Leader*, 106.
Control of decision processes
Influence over decision premises (control of agenda and strategies that force or guide attention to our point of view) decision processes (how, when, and where decisions are made, and who gets to make them), and decision issues and objectives (control of reports and information upon which decisions will be made, and rhetorical skill in arguing for perspectives).

| Words |
| No specific words noted. |

| Actions |
| No specific actions noted. |

| Control of knowledge and information |
| Possessing the right information at the right time, having exclusive access to data, or talent in organizing, synthesizing, and applying data. |

Words

The Department of Women in Industry obviously can not offer to every woman in the community opportunities for daily service in the same way as they can be offered in, for example, the field of home economics. The work of the Department of Women in Industry is necessarily to a great extent of a more specialized character. Its most general work is concerned with the upholding of labor standards, and every woman who cares to have a share in this work can do so by watching for violations of her state labor laws, or for other bad conditions and reporting them to her local Department of Women in Industry (or, where no local department exists, to the Department of Women in Industry, Woman’s Committee, Washington,) being sure that in helping to prevent the breaking down of standards she is rendering service to her country. Those who are particularly interested or informed with regard to women in industry should get in touch with their local departments and co-operate with them in the various branches of their local work. Working women and others who possess first-hand knowledge of conditions can be especially valuable to these departments and it is hoped they will not hesitate to offer their co-operation “concerned with the upholding of labor standards.”

74 Agnes Nestor, Memorandum as Executive Chairman of Department of Women in Industry, [ca 1917], box 1, folder 8, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.
**Actions**

…offering their “descriptions of conditions surrounding the toilers of Chicago”\(^75\)

Whether speaking to the Jefferson-Lincoln club on “The Workers of the City”\(^76\) attending luncheon with Elizabeth Edwards Fields of the Wilmette Club,\(^77\) or to the Social Services Club on “the various bills which are now pending in the Legislature,”\(^78\) Agnes Nestor frequently interacted with a number of prominent Chicago-area club women. During the same strike, Nestor “decided to have as observers particularly well-known women of Philadelphia who would find out first-hand what was really happening in the picket line and whose word would be taken in the courts.”\(^79\)

One strategy employed by the Department of Women in Industry was to gather data. In one survey created by the Department of Women in Industry, Nestor and the Committee surveyed employers throughout Chicago, explicitly seeking information regarding working conditions for women:\(^80\)

| Control of boundaries | Influence over transactions occurring at junctures between different elements within an organization. |

**Words**

“a woman came up to me and felt the material of my white blouse. ‘You’re not a real working girl,’” said she. ‘Look at the good blouse you are wearing!’ At least this time I

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\(^75\)Ibid.

\(^76\)Mary Spaulding Lee to Agnes Nestor, January 18, 1909, box 1, folder 4, Agnes Nestor Papers Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

\(^77\)Elizabeth Edwards Field to Agnes Nestor, January 1, 1911, box 1, folder 5, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

\(^78\)Grace Abbot to Agnes Nestor, March 16, 1911, box 1, folder 5, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.


\(^80\)Report of Department of Woman and Children in Industry Committee on Standards, September 15, 1917, box 1, folder 8, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.
had the satisfaction that the blouse was recognized for what it was and was not called ‘a black dress with a touch of white around the neck.’”

**Actions**

Whether speaking to the Jefferson-Lincoln club on “The Workers of the City”
attending luncheon with Elizabeth Edwards Fields of the Wilmette Club, or to the Social Services Club on “the various bills which are now pending in the Legislature,” Agnes Nestor frequently interacted with a number of prominent Chicago-area club women.

Although Agnes Nestor attended these speaking events and conferences as “the guest of the Club” rather than a member, she networked closely with Chicago area women’s clubs to further the agenda of the International Glove Workers Union.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ability to cope with uncertainty</th>
<th>Describes how well a leader copes with unpredictable events both in the external and internal organizational landscape.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Words**

*No specific words noted.*

**Actions**

*No specific actions noted.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Control of technology</th>
<th>Control over technology that converts organizational inputs into outputs allows leader to determine the pace and quality of the organization’s work.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Notes**


82. Mary Spaulding Lee to Agnes Nestor, January 18, 1909, box 1, folder 4, Agnes Nestor Papers Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

83. Elizabeth Edwards Field to Agnes Nestor, January 1, 1911, box 1, folder 5, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

84. Grace Abbot to Agnes Nestor, March 16, 1911, box 1, folder 5, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

85. Ibid.
Interpersonal alliances, networks, and control of “informal organization”

Leaders can systematically build and cultivate power through interpersonal alliances and networks, incorporating whenever possible the help and influence of those who have common interests. The currency in these alliances is one of mutual dependency and exchange.

Nestor herself notes the irony inherent in the Women’s Trade Union League, which “was not a movement which had begun at the bottom among the lowly. Sparking the organization were women like Mary McDowell and Jane Addams, women who had the advantage of cultural background and high social standing, but who were also motivated by a high sense of social justice.”86

“We walked out. We did not use the near-by stairs, but walked through the next room in order that the girls there might see us leaving. The girls there were busily at work quite unconscious of our strike movement. I knew that our cause was lost unless we got those girls to join us. When we got out to the street, I told my companions that all was lost unless we could get those others to walk out too. We lined up across the street shouting, “Come on out!” and calling out the names of some of the girls. We kept this up until a few did obey us. Gradually others follow until the shop was almost emptied.”87

In April of 1909, Agnes Nestor, Jane Addams, Margaret Drier Robins, and Anna E. Nicholes campaigned together for the right of women to vote.88

86Nestor, Women’s Labor Leader, 64.

87Nestor, Women’s Labor Leader, 32-33.

88“Speakers and Delegates Appointed to Represent Various Chicago Clubs at the Suffrage Hearing in Springfield,” leaflet, [ca 1909], box 1, folder 4, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.
When one of the arrested strikers was charged with disorderly conduct and held for bail, Nestor “hurried to telephone Mrs. Laurence Lewis, a well-known woman who belonged to one of the old families of Philadelphia” (1954) who invited Nestor to her home and secured bail for the striker over breakfast.89

| Control of counterorganizations | Counterorganizations exist to balance the power of an existing power structure. Unions, consumer groups, and social movements are examples of organizations that can wield considerable countervailing power and effect considerable organizational and environmental change. |

**Words**

Now to tell you something else, Frank Sherman from Dubows was at the meeting and sat in the front row. I expected he was there for a purpose but he said nothing nor was he asked to say anything. While we were discussing organization he turned to me and said the Amalgamated told him to tell us that if we wanted help the Amalgamated would sent [sic] two or three organizers out to help organize Osborns. I said no we don’t need the Amalgamated we have our own organizers, all we want. Rosenthal snapped at him and said we belong to the International. No one else hear him because he had talked quietly. After the meeting he walked down the street with Nordstrom and Johnson – or rather with Johnson because Nordstrom walked with me. I watched [sic] him close and was relieved when he did not talk to any of those who feel friendly to the CIO.90

“One problem presented the first of the year was the announcement by the Director of Labor for Illinois, Francis B. Murphy, that in the interest of war production the Women’s Eight Hour Law and the One Day’s Rest in Seven Law could be suspended or relaxed in defense industries.”91

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90Agnes Nestor to Thomas Durian, March 25, 1939, box 4, folder 1, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

91A Brief report of the Work of the Women’s Trade Union League of Chicago During 1942, Chicago, December 1942, box 4, folder 4, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.
**Actions**

*No specific actions noted.*

| Symbolism and the management of meaning | Ability to shape the organization’s story, to call to mind certain images, symbols, and expressions that guide work and decision making a certain way, and influence over the way followers interpret their place in the organization. |

**Words**

*No specific words noted.*

**Actions**

*No specific actions noted.*

| Gender and the management of gender relations | Leaders can manipulate prevailing views and stereotypes on the role of men and women at work to increase their influence over organizations and their environment. |

**Words**

“a woman came up to me and felt the material of my white blouse, ‘You’re not a real working girl,’” said she. ‘Look at the good blouse you are wearing!’ At least this time I had the satisfaction that the blouse was recognized for what it was and was not called ‘a black dress with a touch of white around the neck.’”  

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93 Ibid., 108.
by a high sense of social justice.\textsuperscript{94}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Structural factors that define the stage of action</th>
<th>Ability to access sources of powers given structural realities that affect the internal and external environment in which leadership is practiced.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Words**

Nestor often felt that “this Woman’s Committee did seem like a fifth wheel and not to fit into the regular machinery of the Council of National Defense,”\textsuperscript{95}

**Actions**

*No specific actions noted.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The power one already has</th>
<th>The presence of power attracts others who want to feed off a leader’s influence, lending the power holder uninvited support. Similarly, the experience of success becomes a transforming force as one victory leads to another.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Words**

*No specific words noted.*

**Actions**

*No specific actions noted.*

**Words and Actions of Others**

The words and actions of other key actors with whom Agnes interacted used as a labor leader that are evidence of sources of power used by Agnes Nestor in her practice of leadership as a labor leader are illustrated below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Formal Authority</th>
<th>Authority one holds that is associated with the position one holds in an organization.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

\textsuperscript{94}Ibid., 64.

\textsuperscript{95}Ibid., 174.
**Words**

No specific words noted.

**Actions**

Contract between the Eisendrath Glove Company and the International Glove Workers of America Local 4 and 18. 1904, box 1, folder 1, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago. 96

| Control of Scarce Resources | Ability to control the resources an organization uses to accomplish its work, or conversely, the ability to reduce an organizations’ dependency on external resources. |

**Words**

No specific words noted.

**Actions**

Contract between the Eisendrath Glove Company and the International Glove Workers of America Local 4 and 18. 1904, box 1, folder 1, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago. 97

| Use of organizational structure, rules, and regulations | Ability to invoke laws, policies, and procedures to one’s advantage. |

**Words**

No specific words noted.

**Actions**

No specific actions noted.

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96 Contract between the Eisendrath Glove Company and the International Glove Workers of America Local 4 and 18. 1904, box 1, folder 1, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

97 Ibid.
Control of decision processes

Influence over decision premises (control of agenda and strategies that force or guide attention to our point of view) decision processes (how, when, and where decisions are made, and who gets to make them), and decision issues and objectives (control of reports and information upon which decisions will be made, and rhetorical skill in arguing for perspectives).

Words

No specific words noted.

Actions

No specific actions noted.

Control of knowledge and information

Possessing the right information at the right time, having exclusive access to data, or talent in organizing, synthesizing, and applying data.

Words

No specific words noted.

Actions

No specific actions noted.

Control of boundaries

Influence over transactions occurring at junctures between different elements within an organization.

Words

“an industrial revolution was painted on the horizon and clubwomen were told they must take steps to bring about the betterment of conditions of the toiler or they would have a revolution to reckon with.” 98

“Our subject for the afternoon of the 9th is the “Girl in the Factory” and I’m sure you can do a great deal with this subject. Can you give us some reason as to why she is there—what the effect of her being forced into factory work means to the nation etc. as well as conditions now found in factories, how they may be improved, what women can do to help and so on. Just a few words about the strike will not be amiss, although we have had some of that in our previous meeting. We are studying “The Girl” all this year, and have just had “The Girl in the Sweat Shop.” I might add that by “we” I mean the Social Economics Department of the Nineteenth Century Club.”

**Actions**

No specific actions noted.

| Interpersonal alliances, networks, and control of “informal organization” | Leaders can systematically build and cultivate power through interpersonal alliances and networks, incorporating whenever possible the help and influence of those who have common interests. The currency in these alliances is one of mutual dependency and exchange. |

**Words**

“All us girls miss you very much, but I hope we will soon meet again in the near future. In regard to the settlement things are not all together satisfactory, but I suppose it will a little time before everything gets straightened out. I am working at the present time in my old place, but all of our girls are not back yet as our employer is sending for the girls individually. He is about the only one that has not kept up to the agreement bus as far as we girls are concerned that are working, he is treating us exceptionally nice.”

“The standing of our organization is good, very good, better still than we had ever expected to be. We lost very few of our membership. They pay their dues regularly. It seems as a while that they have no more to complain. They have won in some measures


99 Grace M. Pebbles to Agnes Nestor, January 2, 1911, box 1, folder 5, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

100 Annie Staimovitz to Agnes Nestor, February 28, 1910, box 1, folder 5, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.
materially, and on the outset I expect that this organization will be so permanently in its existence.”\(^{101}\)

“At last I have heard from you. I was really [sic] angry that you should not write, being so active and so near to us during the strike. Well, I am glad you found my address, I hope you will write again. Our organization is not altogether as it should be after such a struggle and after even such a settlement. We have certainly [sic] won [sic] some favorable points, which could develop [sic] a strong body with the conceit of the employers [sic], that is avoiding strikes and quarrels in the shops, but not all the girls, it seems, have understood it and if our union is in bloom now, if our meetings are lively, it could be very much more successful if they had the power of strife and will as of the time during the strike, that is the main illness of our Jewish organization---strike fever.”\(^{102}\)

**Actions**

Nestor was acquainted with Newton Baker, Secretary of War during the First World War, since at least 1910.\(^{103}\)

| Control of counterorganizations | Counterorganizations exist to balance the power of an existing power structure. Unions, consumer groups, and social movements are examples of organizations that can wield considerable countervailing power and effect considerable organizational and environmental change. |

**Words**

“All us girls miss you very much, but I hope we will soon meet again in the near future. In regard to the settlement things are not all together satisfactory, but I suppose it will a little time before everything gets straightened out. I am working at the present time in my old place, but all of our girls are not back yet as our employer is sending for the girls

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\(^{101}\) I. Sacke to Agnes Nestor, March 21, 1910, box 1, folder 5, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

\(^{102}\) Max Katzman to Agnes Nestor, April 26, 1910, box 1, folder 5, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

\(^{103}\) Newton Baker to Miss S. M. Franklin, December 6, 1910, box 1, folder 5, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.
individually. He is about the only one that has not kept up to the agreement bus as far as we girls are concerned that are working, he is treating us exceptionally nice."  

“The standing of our organization is good, very good, better still than we had ever expected to be. We lost very few of our membership. They pay their dues regularly. It seems as a while that they have no more to complain. They have won in some measures materially, and on the outset I expect that this organization will be so permanently in its existence.”

“At last I have heard from you. I was realy [sic] angry that you should not write,, being so active and so near to us during the strike. Well, I am glad you found my address, I hope you will write again. Our organization is not altogether as it should be after such a struggle and after even such a settlement. We have certainly [sic] wone [sic] some favorable points, which could develop [sic] a strong body with the conceit of the imployers [sic], that is avoiding strikes and quarrels in the shops, but not all the girls, it seems, have understood it and if our union is in bloom now, if our meetings are lively, it could be very much more successful if they had the power of strife and will as of the time during the strike, that is the main illness of our Jewish organization--strike fever.”

**Actions**

No specific actions noted.

| Symbolism and the management of meaning | Ability to shape the organization’s story, to call to mind certain images, symbols, and expressions that guide work and decision making a certain way, and influence over the way followers interpret their place in the organization. |

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104 Annie Staimovitz to Agnes Nestor, February 28, 1910, box 1, folder 5, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

105 I. Sacke to Agnes Nestor, March 21, 1910, box 1, folder 5, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

106 Max Katzman to Agnes Nestor, April 26, 1910, box 1, folder 5, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.
Words

The seal of the WTUL bears the phrases “The Eight Hour Day,” “A Living Wage,” and “To Guard the Home,”\(^\text{107}\) indicating that the WTUL believed that by reducing work hours and raising wages, women workers would be better able to attend to domestic responsibilities.

By contrast, the seal of the American Federation of Labor reads “Labor Omnia Vincit,”\(^\text{108}\) revealing a markedly different ideology.

Actions

No specific actions noted.

| Gender and the management of gender relations | Leaders can manipulate prevailing views and stereotypes on the role of men and women at work to increase their influence over organizations and their environment. |

Words

“undermine that old and salutary spirit of humility in the presence of masculine judgment on which the gentlemen of the old school were wont to believe that the foundations of society rested.”\(^\text{109}\)

“Ms. Casey’s remarks apparently stirred the wrath of some of the St. Louis clubwomen, who have been coping with the servant girl problem, and when the conference was over they made a charge on Miss Casey, firing a rapid volley of arguments and questions at her until the poor girl was overwhelmed. Mrs. Chivvis, heading the charge with wildly gesticulating arms ordered the working girls “Back to the kitchens,” which she said were yawning for them and offered a panacea for all the troubles of the working girls depicted


in Miss Casey’s address […] Miss Casey replied that most working girls were competent to do housework, did not like to do housework, and did not intend to run homes for women too incompetent to run them for themselves.”

Our subject for the afternoon of the 9th is the “Girl in the Factory” and I’m sure you can do a great deal with this subject. Can you give us some reason as to why she is there—what the effect of her being forced into factory work means to the nation etc. as well as conditions now found in factories, how they may be improved, what women can do to help and so on. Just a few words about the strike will not be amiss, although we have had some of that in our previous meeting. We are studying “The Girl” all this year, and have just had “The Girl in the Sweat Shop.” I might add that by “we” I mean the Social Economics Department of the Nineteenth Century Club.”

The creation of the Advisory Committee on Woman’s Defense work was prompted by an appreciation on the part of the Council of the very valuable service that the women of the country can and are anxious to render in the national defense, and the desire to establish some common medium through which the Council might be brought into closest touch with them and into the fullest utilization of their service.

With reference to the suggestion that employment adjustment bureaus be maintained in connection with registration centers under the direction of the proper federal and state departments, it was thought unwise for the committee on Women’s Defense Work to undertake this.

With reference to the suggestions that enrollment for training classes be conducted in connection with general registration centers, and that training classes be organized to fit women to take the places of men in general occupations and trades, it was thought the Women’s Committee might be helpful in that connection, and the Director was instructed to ask the Women’s Committee to outline to the Council the proposed method of accomplishing such training.

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110 Ibid.

111 Grace M. Pebbles to Agnes Nestor, January 2, 1911, box 1, folder 5, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

112 Newton D. Baker to Dr. Elizabeth Shaw of the Women’s Advisory Committee of the Council of National Defense, June 16, 1917, box 1, folder 8, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.
With reference to the suggestion that plans be adopted for the enlistment of women as non-commissioned officers for service in those departments of the Army and Navy in which they may be substituted for men, it was thought inadvisable to take such action.

[...] The Council approved the recommendations made with reference to food conservation and home economics, if carried out with the full cooperation of Mr. Hoover.  

1. What should women do to help their sex as to labor matters?  
2. Are trades unions a good thing for women?  
3. Do they not tend to unsex them and make them masculine?  

**Actions**

*No specific actions noted.*

| Structural factors that define the stage of action | Ability to access sources of powers given structural realities that affect the internal and external environment in which leadership is practiced. |

**Words**

WHEREAS governmental agencies have taken over the initiation, administration, and support of nearly all of the work outlined in the Woman’s Committee program [...] so that even advisory guidance for such work is beyond the jurisdiction of the Woman’s Committee [...] we respectfully beg to ask if the work of the Advisory Woman’s Committee is not now at an end.  

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113 W.S. Gifford of Council of National Defense to Dr. Anna Howard Shaw, Chairman of Committee on Woman’s Defense Work July 6, 1917, box 1, folder 8, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

114 Frank G. Carpenter to Agnes Nestor, March 15, 1904, box 1, folder 1, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

115 Resolution Presented by Mrs. McCormick of the Woman’s Committee appointed last April by the Secretary of War, November 28, 1917, box 1, folder 8, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.
Actions

No specific actions noted.

| The power one already has | The presence of power attracts others who want to feed off a leader’s influence, lending the power holder uninvited support. Similarly, the experience of success becomes a transforming force as one victory leads to another. |

Words

No specific words noted.

Actions

One outcome of her committee work during the First World War was that Samuel Gompers invited her to join a Labor Mission to Europe.  

Discussion of Analysis

Examining Nestor’s use of power through Morgan’s fourteen sources of power reveals that Nestor accessed a variety of sources of power as she practiced leadership in the context of organized labor from the early 1900s to her death in 1948. Striking patterns emerge when examining which sources of power Nestor accessed most frequently, and how some sources of power related to each other in her work as a labor leader.

Sources of Power by Frequency of Use

The first pattern that emerges stems from which sources of power Nestor utilized most frequently in her practice of leadership as a labor leader. The documentary sources relevant to Nestor’s sources of power appear to concentrate around the following sources:

116George H. Barnes of the Cabinet of the British Government to Samuel Gompers, November 10, 1917, box 1, folder 8, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.
1) Gender and the Management of Gender Relations

2) Formal Authority

3) Control of Scarce Resources

Nestor’s primary goal as a labor leader was higher wages and improved working conditions for women. The most prominent source of power that Nestor utilized to accomplish this goal was Gender and the Management of Gender Relations. From the beginnings of her career, gender and gender relations influenced Nestor’s practice of leadership. For example, Carpenter’s questionnaire to Nestor asking if her union might “unsex” women and make them “more masculine” indicates a distinct naiveté on Carpenter’s part regarding the role of women in organized labor. If, after all, the context of organized labor were masculine, then women would logically have to become more masculine to participate.

This assumption of marked difference between women and men belies a perception that men and women in the first half of the Twentieth Century did not understand each other. Nestor exploited this perception of ignorance in two ways. One was to lead women in the International Glove Workers to organize with one voice and to utilize labor strategies that men had indeed used to their own advantage against employers. Nestor was the leader of a successful strike in 1902 that ultimately led to a collective bargaining agreement with the Eisendrath Glove Company. This shows Nestor’s capacity to organize women workers to sustain a strike in order to improve wages and working conditions. As a woman, Nestor employed similar ‘masculine’ strategies to further her goals as a feminist labor leader. The other way in which Nestor
exploited prevailing notions of gender difference was to gain access to women of power. Although Nestor occasionally corresponded with men in organized labor, the preponderance of her correspondence is with noted Chicago women. Thus, while some evidence suggests that that as a labor leader that Nestor had access to powerful men, Nestor had access their wives and their financial resources through the network of women’s clubs. Given that women’s clubs were often seen as corrosive to prevailing views of male dominance in society, Nestor’s involvement with club women demonstrates how Nestor managed gender relations to engender public support for her work to improve wages and working conditions for women. Club women had access to wealth and political connections that Nestor used frequently to accomplish her goals. For example, during the Philadelphia strike, Nestor relied upon club women for bail money and also to be observers who could testify in court. Without the involvement of prominent Philadelphia women, thousands of striking female garment workers would not have achieved much.

Her involvement in the Women’s Trade Union League is perhaps the most striking example of how Nestor used gender and the management of gender relations to lead. The WTUL was an organization founded by prominent women with the explicit aim of improving wages and working conditions for women. As a woman labor leader in Chicago, Nestor quickly associated herself with the WTUL and soon became its president. The WTUL maintained a strident focus on women’s labor issues throughout Nestor’s tenure as president, believing that because women were uniquely affected by
industrialization, they needed an organization uniquely responsive to their needs as women.

Nestor also managed gender relations as executive director of the Women in Industry committee during the First World War. The War Department created the Women’s Advisory Committee on National Defense as a means to assess what contributions women could make to the national defense during war time as well as to “provide some medium of communication” between the War Department and women. By inference, the War Department in 1917 must not have had many women decision makers, nor strong relationships with women’s organizations. As executive director of the Women in Industry Committee, Nestor worked with the War Department to safeguard labor standards for women. Nestor was able to secure this appointment to the Women’s Advisory Committee and to serve as Executive Director of the Women in Industry Committee precisely because she could draw on her power—as a woman—to manage gender relations between women and a male-dominated War Department.

After the management of gender relations, Formal Authority is the next most accessed source of power for Nestor in her work as a labor leader. Although leaders practice in a variety of environments, as a labor leader Nestor seemed most likely to practice leadership in the context of a formally created position. Her first experience of leadership as a labor leader was as a founding officer of the International Glove Workers Union of America. Nestor was responsible for organizing women glove workers and for negotiating their first contract with the Eisendrath Glove Company. That position led to her association with the National Women’s Trade Union League, and from 1913 to 1948,
Nestor enjoyed considerable formal power as the president of that organization. Although prominent women founded the National Women’s Trade Union League and provided much of the resources necessary to accomplish the work of the NWTUL, most of the organizational, legislative, and policy work was accomplished through Nestor’s leadership. Finally, Nestor was a member of the Women’s Advisory Committee on National Defense during the First World War, and through that committee became the Executive Director of the Women in Industry Committee. Because she was the formal leader of the Women in Industry Committee, Nestor shaped the committee’s primary mission: to safeguard labor standards for women and prevent the war from being an excuse to give employers latitude to undo legislation meant to protect women workers. Nestor found power as a woman, but typically expressed that power within the context of a formal position.

Another source of power that Nestor utilized as a leader was the Control of Scarce Resources. Against powerful companies with little incentive to improve working conditions, and given prevailing notions of a woman’s value as a worker, Nestor realized that her primary source of influence over larger companies was controlling the supply of labor. When Nestor first became a striker at the Eisendrath Glove Company, charging employees for supplies and for the electricity used to power their machines was customary and an expected practice. The Eisendrath Glove Company had little incentive to change a practice when to do so would affect its profitability. By organizing women into their own union, Nestor was able to control the supply of women workers willing to make gloves in the factory. That first strike forced the Eisendrath Glove Company to
reassess the value of Nestor and her fellow women, as well as the men who had joined their strike which allowed Nestor to exert considerable power over a much larger, more powerful organization. Nestor was also able to control scarce resources when she marshaled the National Women’s Trade Union League to support striking Philadelphia garment workers. First, Nestor was able to lend striking women financial support through the NWTUL, giving the women the resources they needed to continue strike. Strikers who were arrested also needed cash to post bail, pay court fines, and manage attorney fees. Nestor was able to generate the necessary resources to assist the women, and thus accessed considerable power over both Philadelphia garment companies and the working women who relied on Nestor for support.

Second, Nestor understood that the success of the strike depended upon the ability of the striking workers to outlast the resources of the garment companies. By supporting the strikers, Nestor was also able to control the supply of scarce labor, ultimately enabling the striking workers to reach a settlement with their employers.

**Sources of Power by Relation to Each Other**

Perhaps the most interesting pattern that emerges in an analysis of Nestor’s use of various sources of power as a labor leader is how sources of power operated in relation to each other. One key relationship is between her use of Gender and Managing Gender Relations and Control of Boundaries. This relationship reveals how the use of one source of power often depends upon (and augments) another related power source.

Documents reveal that Nestor was a skilled expert at managing gender relations to resolve conflicts of interest in her favor, but less obvious is how Nestor used gender
relations to control boundaries. The first pattern of Nestor using gender relations to control boundaries is how Nestor negotiated boundaries between men and women as a labor leader. Another intriguing pattern is how Nestor used gender relations to control boundaries between club women and working women. Both patterns are evident in Nestor’s practice of leadership in the context of labor organizations.

Nestor was self-consciously a women’s labor leader who worked in a society that often strove to keep men and women separate, personally, politically, and professionally. But although her primary goal was to improve wages and working conditions for women, she recognized that her success depended on her ability to work closely with both men and women. The strike at the Eisendrath Glove Company started among men who worked as cutters, but the success of the strike depended upon Agnes women workers who stitched the cut leather out of the factory and into the union hall. By negotiating the boundary between men and women workers, Nestor was able to control the boundary on her terms, allowing her some measure of power in a male-dominated labor organization. Later, that influence allowed her to form the International Glove Workers Union of America as an independent local union of women workers.

Nestor also accessed power in controlling boundaries between club women and working women. Nestor was not a member of any woman’s organization apart from the WTUL and her International Glove Worker’s Union. She was not wealthy, had limited formal education, never married, and was not the daughter of a prominent family. However, Nestor was able to capture the interest of club women in social issues and to become the recognized expert on the conditions of working women and on the subject of
women’s trade unions. Women’s clubs interested in social change or in improving working conditions for women sought out Nestor’s expertise, frequently inviting her to their clubs to speak. As Nestor’s relationships with prominent Chicago women grew, she was able to secure appointments to national committees and even become president of the Women’s Trade Union League, a position previously held by Jane Addams. By building strong relationships with club women, Nestor could rely on their financial, political, and moral support for working women. Alongside a strong pattern of using gender to resolve conflicts in her favor, Nestor demonstrates skill in negotiating and controlling boundaries in her organizations and drawing on that skill as a source of power.

Absent Sources of Power

In subjecting the documentary evidence to an analysis of the sources of power that Agnes Nestor accessed in her career as a labor leader, themes emerge that suggest that Nestor favored the use of some power sources—such as gender and the management of gender relations, as well as the control of boundaries—yet accessed other sources of power infrequently or hardly at all.

One absent source of power is Control of Decision Processes in her practice of leadership. Quality decision-making is as essential attribute of a good leader, and without clear evidence that Nestor displayed control of decision processes, accounting for her success as a labor leader becomes highly problematic. Nevertheless, very little documentary evidence exists that suggest that Nestor controlled decision processes. One example of this comes from her very first strike at the Eisendrath Glove Company. Nestor is surprised that she is appointed to participate in the negotiating committee, and
although the committee managed to negotiate a suitable compromise with management, she exhibits little control over the negotiations herself. Beyond her capacity to control management’s technology and resources through the strike itself, Nestor did not display significant control over how the negotiations themselves would proceed.

The lack of evidence supporting Nestor’s control of decision processes suggests two hypotheses: first, Agnes Nestor was unaware that she could increase her power as a leader by controlling how decisions were made; second, issues in societal and organizational structure prevented her from controlling decision processes beyond the narrow scope of her union in Chicago. Nestor began her career as a labor leader from a young age, and likely learned much about leadership as she had more opportunities to practice her craft. Thus, the researcher must entertain the possibility that Nestor had not considered the implications of her lack of control of the processes related to decision-making. Perhaps, for example, Nestor regarded meeting agendas as mere lists to check off during meetings rather than as opportunities to shape a discussion. However, given Nestor’s extensive use of Gender and the Management of Gender Relations, the more plausible hypothesis is that societal and organizational structures affected her leadership environment so much that Control of Decision Processes as a source of power was not accessible.

Conclusion

Agnes Nestor had a long, celebrated career as a labor leader. Throughout her career, she accessed many sources of power in her practice of leadership, most notably
Gender and the Management of Gender Relations, Control of Boundaries, and to a lesser degree, Control of Scarce Resources. Notably absent, however, is evidence that she used control of decision making processes as a source of power in her career as a labor leader. Was Agnes Nestor unaware of this source of power? Were societal and organizational structures preventing her from shaping union decision processes? Would these same issues affect Nestor’s practice of leadership in other arenas, such as politician or social reformer? Although many of these questions are beyond the scope of this study, the researcher can conclude that, as a labor leader, Agnes Nestor utilized extensively the power sources to which she felt she had the most access: Gender and the Management of Gender Relations, Control of Boundaries, Formal Authority and occasionally, Control of Scarce Resources.
CHAPTER III
AGNES NESTOR—POLITICIAN

I have so many reasons for wanting to defeat Rep. Weber that I have given consideration to going into it.
—Agnes Nestor, Letter to Mr. Forstall, 1928

Introduction

During her public life, Agnes Nestor worked to resolve conflicts of interest between her own constituency and formal government institutions. Throughout her work as labor leader, politician, and social reformer, Nestor bore some degree of accountability to a constituency. Nevertheless, Nestor’s participation in formal political life was markedly different than her work as a labor leader or a social reformer. This chapter explores Agnes Nestor as a leader who mediated conflicts of interests between her own constituencies and formal government institutions on behalf of her constituencies. Nestor’s practice of leadership in the domain of politics occurred throughout her public life, yet Agnes Nestor as politician becomes most salient in three key episodes: first, Nestor’s work on the National Commission on Industrial Education; second, Nestor’s service to Woman’s Labor Commissions during the First World War; and third, Nestor’s campaign for the Illinois General Assembly in 1928.

National Commission on Industrial Education

Early in her public career, Agnes Nestor positioned herself as a stakeholder in workers’ education. Nestor’s advocacy work in industrial education began principally
within the labor movement, and soon took on a separate political timbre as Nestor received formal appointments to government committees to represent labor and women constituencies. Although Agnes Nestor herself never entered high school, Nestor did frequent advocacy work to increase access to education for women workers. Throughout 1909 and 1910, Nestor was a member of the American Federation of Labor’s Committee on Education. The Committee on Education was uniquely concerned with the public education of the working class, and was particularly concerned that the children of the working class were receiving “narrow and prescribed training in selected trades.\textsuperscript{1}” rather than comprehensive general education curriculum that students entering professional occupations received. According to the Special Committee on Industrial Education’s report, this separation of students based on career prospects resulted in two separate forms of education: one for wealthy youth who would likely enter professional occupations in medicine, business or law, and another curriculum for industrial workers.

In the professions specialists develop from the knowledge of all the elements of the science of the profession. Specialists in industry are those who know but one part of a trade and absolutely nothing of any other part of it. In the professions specialists are possessed of all the learning of their professions; in industry the specialists are bereft and denied the opportunity of learning commonest elementary rudiments of industry other than the same infinitesimal part performed by them perhaps thousands of times over each day.\textsuperscript{2}

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\textsuperscript{2}Ibid., 6.
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Reflecting current changes in industrial technology, workers were now responsible for smaller portions of each manufactured product. As a result, “specialist” workers needed less and less skill to carry out their daily labor, and therefore required less education. Agnes Nestor and her colleagues in labor were concerned that a privileged class was receiving a comprehensive liberal curriculum to prepare them fully to comprehend daily work and its meaning, while an already pressured working class received only enough education to fit one small component of an assembly line. Reflecting current changes in industrial technology, workers were now responsible for smaller portions of each manufactured product. As a result, ‘specialist’ workers needed less and less skill to carry out their daily labor, and therefore required less education. Concerned with the prevailing ideology of public education which tracked students along either professional or industrial future occupations, Agnes Nestor worked with the American Federation of Labor’s Special Committee on Industrial Education to promote what she called a “Unit System, a combination of vocational training and liberal education which might give the worker-to-be vocational training without denying him cultural background.”

Eventually, Nestor and the Special Committee on Industrial Education released a report with notable recommendations. The first goal was to create “at public expense, technical schools for the purpose of giving supplemental education to those who have entered the trades as apprentices.”

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3 Nestor, *Woman’s Labor Leader*, 144.

4 American Federation of Labor. *Industrial Education: Consisting of an Investigation and Report by a Competent Special Committee: Reports of Officers and
industrial labor force (and likely non-traditionally aged students) to augment their
skills as workers with a more comprehensive curriculum. Another key recommendation
was to create:

schools in connection with the public school system, at which pupils
between the ages of fourteen and sixteen may be taught the principles of
the trades, not necessarily in separate buildings, but in separate schools
adapted to this particular education, and by competent and trained
teachers.

The course of instruction in such a school should be English,
mathematics, physics, chemistry, elementary mechanics, and drawing […]
and a sound system of economics, including and emphasizing the
philosophy of collective bargaining.5

Nestor wanted to create a public school system where students preparing for industrial
careers received a comprehensive liberal curriculum alongside their peers with
professional career aspirations. Furthermore, industrial education was to include explicit
instruction in collective bargaining. Finally, such industrial education was to be at public
expense, for all learners, and to include workers already in the work force.

Nestor and the Special Committee on Industrial Education worked diligently to
create an ambitious reform of public education for workers and their children, and
eventually, the work of Agnes Nestor and the American Federation of Labor received
national prominence. In 1914, President Woodrow Wilson appointed Agnes Nestor to “a
commission consisting of nine whose duty it shall be to consider the subject of national
aid for vocational education and report their findings and recommendations not later than

Committees: Action of A.F. of L. Convention: the Attitude of Organized Labor and Others

5Ibid., 15.
June first, next.” In many respects, this National Commission on Industrial Education
had similar aims to the AFL’s Special Committee on Industrial Education. For example,
both commissions were to investigate the need for unique education programs for
industrial workers and their children and to make appropriate recommendations and goals
for implementation. One key difference, however, was that as a member of the National
Commission, Nestor was now representing her constituency in a formal government
institution. President Wilson’s original letter to Agnes Nestor naming the members of the
National Commission included:

Members of the Commission on Vocational Education designated by the
President February 17, 1914
Hon. Hoke Smith, of Georgia, United States Senate, Chairman
Hon. C. S. Page, of Vermont, United States Senate.
Hon. D.M. Hughes, of Georgia, House of Representatives.
Hon. S. D. Fess, of Ohio, House of Representatives
Mr. C.A. Prosser, Secretary of the National Society for the Promotion of
Industrial Education, 105 East 22nd Street, New York City.
Mr. John A. Lapp, Legislative Reference Librarian, Indianapolis, Indiana.
Mr. C.H. Winslow, Department of Labor, Washington, DC.
Miss Florence M. Marshall, Principal of the Manhattan Trade School for
Girls, 1Lexington Avenue, New York City
Formerly President of the International Glove Workers Union.7

Unlike the American Federation of Labor Special Committee on Industrial Education, a
committee of Nestor’s colleagues in labor, the National Commission included four
elected officials, one representative from the Department of Labor, and a legislative
librarian. Of the nine members of the National Commission, only three advocated for

6Woodrow Wilson to Agnes Nestor, February 17, 1914, box 1, folder 7, Agnes
Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

7Ibid.
industrial education as private citizens, and only one, Agnes Nestor, directly represented a constituency of workers, and of working women in particular. Nestor’s appointment to work on a commission with members of Congress and other figures of national prominence was noted by her colleagues, many of whom regarded Nestor’s position on the commission as an opportunity to represent the cause of labor and of working women in particular relative to education. Upon hearing of Nestor’s appointment, Mrs. Henry Faxan promptly wrote Nestor to “offer the faithful confidence of a friend and congratulations to the 9,000 girls in K.C. [Kansas City, Missouri] that they among others have such a champion.”

Mrs. Faxan was not the only woman to attribute to Nestor a duty to represent workers and women. Colleague and fellow unionist Josephine Casey wrote:

The longer I think about your appointment in the Voc. Ed. Committee the more it pleases me. You are just the one for the job-as if you were made to order they won’t be able to put one over on the Trades Unionists without your knowing it. Wilson must have hear that [Illegible] story. I thought all along he showed fair judgment in selecting people to assist him- such men as Louis Post and Frank Walsh of Kansas City. You may be sure it is recognition of your ability. The Prs. Of the U.S. is sometimes the College Pres. It cheers my soul to see that you who had to quit school so young, the poor little kid the machines nearly killed, in spite of everything, now coming along at the head of the procession. It is fine! [sic] Keep up the good work. May your light shine before all men (suffrage version)

8Mrs. Henry D. Faxan to Agnes Nestor, March 10, 1914, box 1, folder 7, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

9Josephine Casey to Agnes Nestor, March 3, 1914, box 1, folder 7, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.
Similarly, Harriet Reid quipped, “So Little Agnes, the Child-Wonder, the Girl Agitator and the Promoter, is to sit ‘round a table with Hoke Smith & Page and discuss vocational education! Good! If I were you, I’d get a yet larger bag (you’ll probably have to order one made!), take along the ‘answered’ & ‘unanswered’ portfolio, wear a dress with little buttons on it, and show the Commission at its very first meeting that you mean business!”

Nestor indeed took her appointment to the National Commission seriously. Even before leaving for Washington, DC, Nestor corresponded frequently with education leaders in Chicago. Responding to a letter of congratulations from William G. Bogan, then principal of Albert G. Lane Technical High School and President of the Vocational Education Society of the Middle West, Nestor writes that the scope of the commission “is work, as you know, that I am especially interested in and I will want to consult with all who are working for the best system of vocational training as I take up the work.”

Like Nestor, Bogan had considerable interest in promoting vocational education, and through correspondence and meetings built a professional relationship with Agnes Nestor that prior to her appointment to the National Commission was absent. Shortly before the committee took up its work, Bogan writes Nestor:

“Before you start for Washington I should like to have an opportunity to talk over with you some of the problems that your

10 Harriet Reid to Agnes Nestor, February 18, 1914, box 1, folder 7, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

11 Agnes Nestor to Mr. William J. Bogan, February 14, 1914 box 1, folder 7, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.
commission will have to face. As President of the Vocational Education Society of the Middle West I am greatly interested in seeing vocational education placed on a democratic basis in the United States. Mr. Wilson H. Henderson, Treasurer of the Vocational Education Association, and also Editor of the “Industrial Arts Magazine” would like to talk matters over with you. He has a fund of information which you should know about.”

This letter reveals Bogan’s hope that Nestor would represent Bogan’s position on vocational education, as well as Bogan’s desire to station the Vocational Education Society of the Middle West among Nestor’s constituency. For her part Nestor was “happy to meet with you [Bogan] and Mr. Henderson to talk over some of the problems that our Commission will have to face.” As a member of the National Commission on Vocational Education, Nestor not only increased her network of local community figures and leaders, but expanded the constituency that she represented in her work on industrial education nationally.

Similarly, three days after Nestor’s appointment, representatives from the National Society for the Promotion of Industrial Education worked to include Nestor in their network of industrial education advocates, informing Nestor, “Miss Isabel Ely Lord a representative of the National Society for the Promotion of Industrial Education will be at the Hotel Blackstone Chicago after four o’clock today and I wish her to meet you and talk with her about the industrial commission and this society [sic] interest in your kind

\footnote{William J. Bogan to Agnes Nestor, March 24, 1914, box 1, folder 7, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.}

\footnote{Agnes Nestor to William J. Bogan March 25, 1914, box 1, folder 7, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.}
of industrial education program.”14 Seeing Nestor as a person of potential influence, Lord and the National Society for Industrial Education sought out Nestor to advance mutual interests in industrial education.

Nestor’s appointment to the National Commission on Industrial Education also occasions the first correspondence from national politicians seeking to advance their interests alongside those of Nestor and her constituencies. Representative Phillip Campbell, member of a house committee concerning vocational education, writes to Nestor before she leaves for Washington, DC:

“If I am writing you, as a member of the committee on National Aid for Vocational Education, in behalf of the State Manual Training Normal School, of Pittsburg, Kansas. This is one of the largest manual training schools in the United States. Students from almost every State in the Union, and the school is splendidly equipped for vocational training. I most earnestly request that your committee will give this school the recognition it deserves when you take up this work.”15

The significance of Representative Campbell’s letter is that as a member of a national committee whose members include elected officials, Nestor becomes a person to be consulted in matters within the scope of her influence. Furthermore, other elected officials and national figures begin to consider that Nestor’s influence may extend beyond the labor movement.

Another key stakeholder in education was then Chicago Public Schools Superintendent, Ella Flagg Young. A month after receiving her appointment to the

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14Cleo Murtland to Agnes Nestor, telegram, February 20, 1914, box 1, folder 7, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

15Representative Phillip P. Campbell to Agnes Nestor, March 23, 1914 box 1, folder 7, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.
National Commission, Nestor arranged to meet with the Chicago school leader “to talk over the matter of vocational education”\textsuperscript{16} and to request a board resolution that Chicago high schools would “include in their curriculum a course in collective bargaining.”\textsuperscript{17} Nestor rarely admits to feeling at all impressed by anyone, yet remembers she “had a feeling of awe concerning her as I entered her office. Because I felt that she was such a busy person, I sat on the edge of my chair expecting to leave as soon as my brief mission was over. To my surprise, she seemed in no hurry and said that she would like very much to talk over some of her plans with me.”\textsuperscript{18} Nestor also noted, “Evidently our terms were not familiar to her, as she had no previous familiarity with labor.”\textsuperscript{19} Young’s perceived naiveté regarding the labor movement appears not to have hindered Nestor’s working relationship. Shortly after, Young wrote to Nestor, “On the twelfth of February a card reached me that gave me pleasure because of the excellent likeness of Lincoln and the quotation on labor. Will the sender of the card accept my tardy thanks?”\textsuperscript{20} Because of Nestor’s professional relationship with Ella Flagg Young, Nestor appears to have introduced the school leader to at least a small portion of the philosophy of the labor movement.

\textsuperscript{16}Agnes Nestor to Ella Flagg Young, March 3, 1914, box 1, folder 7, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

\textsuperscript{17}Nestor, \textit{Woman’s Labor Leader}, 145.

\textsuperscript{18}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{19}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{20}Ella Flagg Young to Agnes Nestor, postcard, April 8, 1915, box 1, folder 7, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.
Agnes Nestor and the National Commission on Vocational Education met for the first time later that Spring. Georgia Senator Hoke Smith, “anxious to have a meeting of the Commission […] called a meeting to be held in the rooms of the Senate Committee on Education and Labor, in the Capitol, at 10:30 A.M., on Thursday, April 2nd.”

Although members of the committee did not draw a salary, Nestor and the rest of the commission were privileged to an expense account that covered meals, lodging, and transportation between home and the nation’s capital.

The Commission on National Aid to Vocational Education wrote a lengthy, two volume report detailing its recommendations to President Woodrow Wilson regarding how and why the federal government could best support an integrated public system of training workers for industry. According to the report,

The commission decided at the outset to address itself to the following questions:
1. To what extent is there a need for vocational education in the United States?
2. Is there a need for national grants stimulating the States to give vocational education?
3. What kinds or forms of vocational educations should be stimulated by national grants?
4. How far can the Federal Government aid through expert knowledge vocational education in the various States? To what extent should the Federal Government aid the States through national grants for vocational education?

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21 Hoke Smith to Agnes Nestor March 17, 1914, box 1, folder 7, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

22 Wreidt, Secretary of the Commission on Vocational Education to Agnes Nestor May 16, 1914, box 1, folder 7, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.
5. Under what conditions should grants to the States for vocational education be made?²³

The National Commission on Vocational Education first met in April of 1914, and according to the Congressional Resolution that created the committee, Agnes and her fellow members were to have answers to these questions by June 1st of 1914. They began by assessing what the federal government was already doing to support vocational education, gathering data through questionnaires sent to officials in various government agencies. These agencies included the Department of the Interior, Department of Commerce, Department of Agriculture, the United States Navy, and the Army Corps of Engineers.²⁴ Accordingly, members “sought to learn from each of these departments what it had been doing through investigations and reports to aid vocational education in the country”²⁵ The commission also invited testimony from prominent individuals and national organizations in the field of vocational education. These included representatives of organizations with remarkably diverse aims. Among them were the General Federation of Women’s Clubs, the National Education Association, the National Woman’s Trade-Union League, and Frank McVey, president of the University of North


²⁴Ibid.

²⁵Ibid.
Dakota.\textsuperscript{26} Agnes’ work on the committee exposed her to leaders of national prominence in education, labor, and women’s issues. Many of these people, including Dr. John A. Lapp, would come back into Nestor’s future political life.

In addition to compiling lengthy questionnaires, the Commission on National Aid to Vocational Education also conducted public hearings. These public hearings reveal prevailing notions regarding workers, education, and women in the workplace. Furthermore, the dialogue between committee members and those called to testify reveal the often conflicting positions and definitions of vocational education. Most uniquely, the manner in which Nestor’s participation evolved during committee hearings documents her growing public voice. As one of two women serving on a committee of politically powerful men, Nestor allied with Florence Marshall, principal of the Manhattan Trade School for Girls, to represent the unique needs of women workers on the committee. “Miss Florence Marshall and I foresaw difficulties when we found out that some of the men wished to give girls more domestic science than opportunity to learn trades. We knew that most of the girls would have to become wage earners as well as homemakers. We, too, loved the home; but the girls needed also training which would equip them to earn a living.”\textsuperscript{27} Indeed, the Commission quickly faced a direct conflict between the members of the Commission who were men and the two members who were women. Although all members of the Commission were ostensibly working to promote greater access to vocational education, the majority of the commission believed that girls

\textsuperscript{26}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{27}Nestor, \textit{Woman’s Labor Leader}, 151.
and young women required a different kind of vocational education than boys and young men. One example of this conflict arises during the testimony of A. C. True from the Department of Agriculture which occurred on one of the first occasions that the Commission held a hearing. A man identified as Mr. Lane is testifying to the success of agricultural clubs in Ohio. Commission member and United States Representative J.D. Fess explains that the agricultural clubs grew “due very largely to a wideawake [sic] secretary of agriculture [who] started this sort of a movement, asking certain persons whether they would give a prize or to see that a prize is furnished for the one person in either a congressional district or in a county or in a township that would show the greatest product on a specified amount of ground.”

These agricultural clubs were gendered in that boys and girls completed different agricultural work in different clubs. As the Commission considered to what extent agricultural education ought to receive support under the category of vocational education, members engaged Mr. Lane’s testimony thoroughly:

Mr. LAPP. What are some of the subjects, for instance, that would be practical subjects for girl clubs?

Mr. LANE. Why, tomatoes or potatoes, or any kind of vegetables that might be found in a kitchen garden.

Miss MARSHALL. Do you think it could extend to other things besides the raising and canning of vegetables?

Mr. LANE. Why, I think so.

Miss MARSHALL. What, for instance?

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28Commission on National Aid to Vocational Education, 64.
Mr. LANE.  All kinds of sewing.

Miss MARSHALL.  I mean other than those things that have been so successful.

Mr. LANE.  They have not gone in to the matter of the contests in sewing and cooking, and things like that.

Miss MARSHALL.  Could it extend to chicken raising or flower growing?

Mr. LANE.  Why, certainly.  And, really it is in some places outside of the department.  That is, the State agricultural colleges have undertaken the work along that line, but not the department.  The department had confined its efforts more to tomato club work. 29

While Mr. Lane testified to the success of girls’ agricultural clubs, he testified that boys grew corn, and girls canned tomatoes.  Although Lane conceded that girls might be taught to raise other vegetables, Florence Marshall, pressed Lane to consider even more ways that girls could receive vocational instruction in agriculture that might have greater economic impact, such as raising chickens and flowers to sell.  Lane admitted that girls could possibly do such things, but at the present time, the agricultural clubs for girls are really for canning tomatoes.  The corn clubs for boys and tomato clubs for girls indicate a separate, gendered focus and purpose in agricultural and vocational education that the commission addresses repeatedly throughout its work.

Surprisingly, Nestor had no comment or question for the Department of Agriculture.  The first time that Nestor speaks in a public hearing is to ask Charles H. Verrill, chief editor of the Bureau of Labor Statistics a brief question on copies of a report regarding statistics on trade schools:

29Ibid., 65.
Miss NESTOR. Will those copies be free?

Mr. VERRILL. Oh, yes; reports are free.\textsuperscript{30}

However, Nestor’s participation increases as the hearing continues. Later, Verrill discusses the contents of the report and how data reflects the participation of men and women in trades.

Mr. VERRILL. […] All of the analyses of occupations and industries already referred to carefully discriminate between the opportunities for employment for men and for women.

Miss NESTOR. Would it point out new opportunities for both? I think there are a great many new opportunities for women in certain industries.

Mr. VERRILL. No; there is no special attention given to new opportunities. It is rather a study of things as they exist.

Miss MARSHALL. I think that question was meant to show the opportunity not only for entrance, but for advancement in these industries for women and men separately […] Take, for instance, the candy industry. We find more women employed than men, yet if we analyze the candy industry the men are holding all of the so-called higher occupations within the industry and the women are holding all the low-grade skilled occupations within that industry. For the purpose of industrial education that would be a very valuable analysis of the various industries.

Miss NESTOR. And to know, too, whether equal opportunities are afforded.\textsuperscript{31}

Until Marshall explains the broader context of Nestor’s question, Verrill appears to misunderstand what Nestor means by opportunities in a given industry. Marshall explains Nestor’s question to extend beyond the number of men and women employed in an industry, but rather to address empirically how women workers are represented in

\textsuperscript{30}Ibid., 95.

\textsuperscript{31}Ibid., 108.
industrial hierarchies and whether women have equal access to senior positions compared to men. At this hearing, Nestor allows Marshall to reframe Nestor’s original question and to press Verrill on precisely the data that the commission needs to address equity in vocational education for girls and boys. Nevertheless, Nestor’s concern for her constituency of women workers and their need for appropriate vocational education began to be recorded in her own words.

Later in the week, Nestor further increased her public presence on the committee and presided over a hearing. Nestor tailored her questioning to elicit testimony regarding the commission’s controversy over whether to support a version of vocational education for girls, training young women in skills traditionally required of women living at home or to support a robust industrial education for women working outside of their homes. At the hearing over which Nestor presided, Leonora O’Reilly of the National Woman’s Trade-Union League testified to the need for an education that prepared children for work. Nestor, however, was interested in discussing the preparation of girls for work and asks O’Reilly specifically:

Miss NESTOR: I think there is a great deal of confusion in regard to the girl training. We have had it brought in here by some of the speakers who have appeared before us in regard to this home economics, and I would like to have you, for the sake of the record here, tell us how you feel from the point of view of the worker on that question, whether it ought to go in as part of our training in general education or whether it ought to be termed that at all.

Representative HUGHES. That will have to be discussed before this Congress.

32Ibid., 181.
Miss NESTOR. We have had the woman outside tell us her interpretation of that. I would like to have you as a worker put your interpretation on it. You see, it is so often termed vocational. By home economics is generally understood some training for the home, as sewing, cooking, and all sorts of training for good home keeping.

Senator PAGE. Including hygiene, ventilation, art, first aid—

Miss NESTOR. It can be very broad.

Miss O’REILLY. Under no consideration would I think of that as vocational training.33

Nestor elicits testimony from O’Reilly that places the domestic science interests of men on the commission outside the realm of vocational education and instead into the general education that all children, boys and girls, could receive as part of their public education. Indeed, if Nestor is able to separate domestic science from vocational education while maintaining that women need vocational education apart from domestic science, she would be able to redefine what vocations are open to women. Senator Page, however, continues to press for domestic science training for girls, contrasting urban industry to rural farm work in Vermont, where “much more than half of all Vermont girls are taught to look upon the farm home as their future field.”34 Nestor continues to advocate for comprehensive vocational education beyond the home, “unless, of course, the girl on the farm that Senator Page speaks of is really looking forward to her work on the farm as a vocation.”35 Against Page’s belief that vocational education ought to

33Ibid., 201.

34Ibid., 202.

35Ibid., 203.
separate not only men and women but also women living in cities and women living in rural communities, Agnes argued that industry is changing the nature of work itself beyond those categories:

Miss NESTOR. I think there is a great deal of drudgery that has been considered distinctly woman’s work, such as scrubbing, washing, and the like, that requires a great deal of physical exertion. In some other countries and ages women do a considerable of what is termed drudgery work. Now, in our day and time, there are new opportunities for women. We feel very strongly that the women ought to be given equal opportunities with men. I think Miss O’Reilly will agree with me on that.”

Senator PAGE. May the Lord hasten the day when that will come. But it seems to me that there is no uplift in putting a woman into man’s work in the field, in the stable, or in the hide house.

Miss NESTOR. A great deal of our work has been taken out of the home and put into the factory and the mills and all that, and men have taken our work. For instance, at one time we did all the baking of our bread. Now nearly all the bakers are men. And the weaving of the cloth—the men have taken some of that. I do not think there have been enough opportunities really opened up for the women. They have not followed all of those trades. Some seem always to think of the women just doing the sewing and the cooking. That seems to be the though in the minds of so many people when you talk of woman’s work. There ought to be a lot of other opportunities open for women.

Senator PAGE. Will that not grow out of vocational education?

Miss NESTOR. That is my hope, Mr. Chairman […] I hope the commission will recognize that in their report. I should very much like to see that. We know that a great many particular trades have been distinctly women’s trades, and the women are being displaced by men. We know that in the making of straw hats the men are coming in. The men do not like to see us breaking into certain trades, but they are coming into ours.36

36Ibid., 204-5.
Nestor expressed hope that by providing comprehensive vocational education for both boys and girls, women would have greater opportunities in the workplace beginning with industries that have traditionally been dominated by women but now see an increase proportion of men in senior positions and women in entry-level positions. Throughout her work on the Commission on National Aid to Vocational Education, Nestor represented the interests of women workers on a commission with formal authority to investigate issues and to draft legislation pertaining to her constituency. Also, Nestor’s participation and advocacy for her constituency appeared to increase throughout the length of the commission’s work.

Evidence of the influence of Nestor’s advocacy for vocational education for girls is found in the final recommendations of the Commission. The commission recommended “That [the schools] should be designed to prepare boys and girls over 14 years of age for useful or profitable employment in agriculture and in the trades and industries.” Notably missing was any mention of creating schools to teach domestic science or home economics. Nestor’s vision of comprehensive vocational education for women workers and desire to address the needs of her constituency now had a national audience and influence over a formally appointed political body.

World War I Women’s Labor Commissions

Agnes Nestor’s position as politician is also evident during World War I. Amid the unprecedented strife of the First World War, women encountered, in some respects, expanded choices for women’s participation in American society. Burgeoning military

37 Ibid., 15.
recruitment removed from the labor force a substantial portion of men. This allowed women to create new opportunities for themselves outside of the home in positions previously open only to men. In 1917, Agnes Nestor was appointed to multiple (and often competing) committees whose aim was to organize women for defense work during the war. Nestor was acquainted with Newton Baker, then Secretary of War, since at least 1910, and later worked with Baker on a number of committees in the Department of Defense. Nestor belonged to the Labor Council, the Bureau of Registration and Information, the Women’s Advisory Committee of the Council of National Defense, and finally, the Women in Industry Committee. Different decision-makers authorized each of these committees for different purposes, and not all purposes were clear. Dr. Elizabeth Shaw, Chairman of the Women’s Advisory Committee of the Council of National Defense, wrote Newton Baker, then Secretary of War, asking him to explain just what the women were to do. Baker’s response follows:

38Newton Baker to Miss S. M. Franklin, December 6, 1910, box 1, folder 5, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

39Ida Glatt to Agnes Nestor, January 17, 1917, box 1, folder 8, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

40Elizabeth Martin, chairman of the Bureau of Registration and Information of the National League for Woman’s Service, to Agnes Nestor, April 30, 1917, box 1, folder 8, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

41Newton D. Baker, Secretary of War and Chairman of the Council of National Defense, to Agnes Nestor, May 7, 1917, box 1, folder 8, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

42Agnes Nestor, Chairman of Women in Industry Committee to the Women’s Committee of the Council of National Defense, August 23, 1917, box 1, folder 8, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.
The creation of the Advisory Committee on Woman’s Defense work was prompted by an appreciation on the part of the Council of the very valuable service that the women of the country can and are anxious to render in the national defense, and the desire to establish some common medium through which the Council might be brought into closest touch with them and into the fullest utilization of their service.⁴³

Although Baker addressed why he wanted to create a women’s committee to advise them, he did not define what the women were to do when they were meeting. As a member of the Women’s Advisory Committee, Nestor attended numerous meetings and received hundreds of pages of meeting minutes, most of which discussed questions that the women had about what they were doing or the purpose of the committee itself. Nestor often felt that “this Woman’s Committee did seem like a fifth wheel and not to fit into the regular machinery of the Council of National Defense,”⁴⁴ and Nestor saved few documents that suggest what the Woman’s Advisory Committee may have done outside of holding meetings. Apart from supporting a wide range of charitable activities through state and local branches, many of the Women’s Advisory Committee’s recommendations were not taken up by the Council on National Defense. In a letter from April of 1917, W.S. Gifford of the Council on National Defense writes to Dr. Anna Howard Shaw, chairman of the Committee on Woman’s Defense Work in response to several specific recommendations from the Women’s Advisory Committee:

> With reference to the suggestion that employment adjustment bureaus be maintained in connection with registration centers under the

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⁴³Newton D. Baker to Dr. Elizabeth Shaw of the Women’s Advisory Committee of the Council of National Defense, June 16, 1917, box 1, folder 8, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

direction of the proper federal and state departments, it was thought unwise for the committee on Women’s Defense Work to undertake this.

With reference to the suggestions that enrollment for training classes be conducted in connection with general registration centers, and that training classes be organized to fit women to take the places of men in general occupations and trades, it was thought the Women’s Committee might be helpful in that connection, and the Director was instructed to ask the Women’s Committee to outline to the Council the proposed method of accomplishing such training.

With reference to the suggestion that plans be adopted for the enlistment of women as non-commissioned officers for service in those departments of the Army and Navy in which they may be substituted for men, it was thought inadvisable to take such action.

[...]The Council approved the recommendations made with reference to food conservation and home economics, if carried out with the full cooperation of Mr. Hoover.45

Although formed to allow women a voice in shaping how women would support defense work during World War I, the Woman’s Advisory Committee often found that the Council of National Defense considered most useful recommendations related to contributions women were already making at home rather than how they could help in industry or in the military. In November of 1917, less than a year after Nestor joined the Woman’s Advisory committee, a committee member introduced a resolution generally outlining the many reasons why the Women’s Advisory Committee on National Defense should not exist:

WHEREAS governmental agencies have taken over the initiation, administration, and support of nearly all of the work outlined in the Woman’s Committee program [...] so that even advisory guidance for

45W.S. Gifford of Council of National Defense to Dr. Anna Howard Shaw, Chairman of Committee on Woman’s Defense Work July 6, 1917, box 1, folder 8, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.
such work is beyond the jurisdiction of the Woman’s Committee […] we respectfully beg to ask if the work of the Advisory Woman’s Committee is not now at an end.46

Although Nestor enjoyed working with many of the women in the Women’s Advisory Committee, and participated in meetings enthusiastically, she concentrated most of her time working with the Women in Industry Committee, for which she served as Executive Director. When asked to clarify how the Women in Industry Committee supported the national defense, Nestor defined her work as Executive Director of the Women in Industry Committee:

The Department of Women in Industry obviously cannot offer to every woman in the community opportunities for daily service in the same way as they can be offered in, for example, the field of home economics. The work of the Department of Women in Industry is necessarily to a great extent of a more specialized character. Its most general work is concerned with the upholding of labor standards, and every woman who cares to have a share in this work can do so by watching for violations of her state labor laws, or for other bad conditions and reporting them to her local Department of Women in Industry (or, where no local department exists, to the Department of Women in Industry, Woman’s Committee, Washington) being sure that in helping to prevent the breaking down of standards she is rendering service to her country. Those who are particularly interested or informed with regard to women in industry should get in touch with their local departments and co-operate with them in the various branches of their local work. Working women and others who possess first-hand knowledge of conditions can be especially valuable to these departments and it is hoped they will not hesitate to offer their co-operation “concerned with the upholding of labor standards.”47

46Resolution Presented by Mrs. McCormick of the Woman’s Committee appointed last April by the Secretary of War, November 28, 1917, box 1, folder 8, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

47Agnes Nestor, Memorandum as Executive Chairman of Department of Women in Industry, [ca 1917], box 1, folder 8, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.
There is no evidence in Nestor’s archived material that there were ever active local
departments of Women in Industry, or that Nestor, the Women’s Trade Union League, or
the International Glove Workers Union of America ever used local branches of the
Department of Women in Industry to petition governments to uphold labor standards.
Instead, Nestor used the national Women in Industry Committee as a pressure group to
ensure that neither the government nor manufacturers used the war effort as a pretense to
relax labor laws and standards.

One strategy employed by the Department of Women in Industry was to gather
data. In one survey created by the Department of Women in Industry, Nestor and the
Committee surveyed employers throughout Chicago, explicitly seeking information
regarding working conditions for women:

1. How many women are employed?
2. How many are on Government Work??
3. Is the work piece of time work?
4. What wages are paid?
5. How much overtime?
6. What wages are paid to beginners?
7. Are women employed for night work? How much?
8. Are children between the ages of 14 and 16 employed? How many?
9. How many married women with children under school age are
employed?
10. Are all workers given one day’s rest in seven?
11. Is the rate of pay equal for men and women?
12. Is any part of the Government contract sub-let?
   a. What is the rate paid per garment?
   b. Nationality of workers?
   c. Kind of garments
   d. Sanitary conditions?
   e. Name of contractor and address?
13. What standards prevail as to sanitation, lighting, and fire protection?
14. Do you have a fire-drill?
15. What is a working day—how many hours? 

Despite the political and social climate during the First World War in the United States, Nestor continued questioning employers and collecting data as to their commitment to a healthy workplace and equitable pay. Furthermore, this is the only document where Nestor articulates any specific concern for the welfare of non-white workers.

Nestor’s advocacy work during the First World War corresponds to her choice to represent women workers on formally authorized government committees. As a member of the various women’s committees, Agnes worked to pressure the government to maintain hard-won labor protections and to expand the role of women wishing to serve the United States outside of traditional domestic roles.

**Campaign for the Illinois General Assembly**

As politician, Agnes Nestor represented her constituency among formal government institutions. In her campaign for the Illinois General Assembly in 1928, Agnes Nestor not only sought to represent a constituency of women workers and organized labor, but the entire Sixth Senatorial District of Illinois as a Democratic Candidate for State Representative. The first narrative concerns her motivations for running and the consequences of her campaign both to Nestor and to her supporters. The second prominent narrative emerging from Nestor’s run for office are the processes and strategies in the campaign and the political organization that Nestor built and led.

48Report of Department of Woman and Children in Industry Committee on Standards, September 15, 1917, box 1, folder 8, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.
The first narrative that arises from the campaign stems from Nestor’s motivations for entering the race. If elected, Nestor could potentially use her formal position to effect change in labor legislation affecting workers throughout Illinois. However, Nestor’s campaign literature and correspondence reveal little about Nestor’s state campaign message beyond a desire to beat Jim Weber. Agnes Nestor’s motivations for entering the race reveal a parallel narrative that unfolded alongside the campaign.

Dr. John Lapp, with whom Nestor served on the National Commission on Vocational Education, convened the first campaign meeting. Minutes from that meeting reveal some of the personal motivations Nestor had for entering the race:

Miss Nestor gave as her reasons for running, the positive value of being inside to push legislation and the unfitness of Weber, the present incumbent, to hold office. To illustrate the latter point, she described Weber’s attitude toward eight hour measures in the last two sessions. Three years ago, when his vote would have carried the bill, he said that he had to go back to Chicago to sell his road-house. When riding down in the elevator, after having been absent when the bill came up, he told Miss Nestor that he couldn’t vote for that bill because he had just paid $6,000 for a laundry and wouldn’t make any money on an eight-hour day.49

As a social reformer, a separate leadership context for Nestor, Nestor advocated and personally lobbied the Illinois Legislature for legislation limiting the hours of work for women and especially worked to include laundry workers in that legislation. Weber, the incumbent, worked equally hard to defeat that legislation, and according to Nestor, did so to keep his own laundry business competitive. Nestor also addressed concern about organizational support within the Democratic party:

49Minutes from a meeting at Agnes Nestor’s home, February 13, 1928, Chicago, box 6, folder 2, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.
When questioned about Democratic organization support, Miss Nestor said she had interviewed Dever, but of course, he had not much help to give, and that Brennan was in the hospital and his wife in Bermuda. She said, however, that Weber was personally very unpopular, and that unless definite instructions to the contrary were handed out, many organization people would work against him.50

Three weeks into the campaign, Nestor evaluates her prospects in the primary, believing

There is an excellent chance because I am the only one running against Weber and he has the worst record of almost anyone in the Legislature. He only stands for ‘BEER’ and that is his one platform all the time. He is not reliable and even the men and young fellows through the district have no use for him and want to help me defeat him.51

This personal letter indicates personal animosity towards Weber and an opposition to Weber’s position on alcohol motivated Nestor to run for Weber’s seat. At another February campaign meeting, Nestor describes a meeting with Mr. Schroeder, an agent from then Republican Governor Lennington Small’s office:

[Nestor] reported filing her petition in person in Springfield, and added an aftermath, Mr. Schroeder called at Miss Nestor’s home and said that the governor had sent him to tell her that Weber had promised to vote for the eight hour bill next time, and that she needn’t run. He said that the governor was counting on the Democratic votes Weber controlled being used for him in the Republican primary.52

Nestor claims that an agent from the Illinois’ Governor’s office asked her specifically to drop out of the race in exchange for Weber’s support on work-hour legislation in the following legislative session. Although these meeting minutes record the incident

50Ibid.
51Agnes Nestor to Margaret Dreier Robins, Chicago, February 22, 1928, box 6, folder 2, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.
52Minutes from campaign meeting in Chicago, February 21, 1928, box 6, folder 2, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.
entirely from Nestor’s perspective, the document indicates that even with a promise from the Governor Small that Weber would support her legislation in the next session, Nestor campaigned against Weber to retaliate for Weber’s role in defeating the work-hour limit statutes for which Nestor had lobbied for years. As a candidate, Nestor portrayed herself as the obvious choice of labor and of women because Nestor supported work hour limits for women and did not support relaxing laws regarding alcohol. Beyond the mere chance of becoming a member of the Illinois General Assembly, the 6th Senatorial District primary election was, for Nestor, an opportunity to threaten an incumbent who hostile to the interests of women workers. Nestor used her platform as candidate for the Illinois General Assembly to represent the views of women and of labor as an official candidate for a formal governmental body.

The second narrative emerging from the campaign lies in the processes and strategies used to build the political organization needed to mount a campaign. Nestor was contemplating her run early in January of 1928. Nestor wrote to John Walker, President of the Illinois Federation of Labor to announce that “I want to be ready in case I decide to be a candidate for the House from the Sixth Senatorial district. Will you have Miss Morris get a set of petitions for me from the office of the Secretary of State as I want to keep my name out of it until I am ready to announce it if I make that decision.”

By February, Nestor resolved to run for office and corresponded with people she considered politically active and valuable connections in what was then Illinois’ Sixth

53 Agnes Nestor to John Walker, President of the Illinois State Federation of Labor, January 27, 1928, box 6, folder 2, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.
Senatorial District. Writing to John M. Forstall, Agnes writes, “Some of my friends are urging me to be a candidate for the Illinois Legislature. Of course I would run on the democratic [sic] ticket if I should decide to make race and as I am in your district I am eager to have your judgement [sic] on this. I love [sic] in Ravenswood which is about in the center of the District but I have many connections in the South end of the district because I lived down there so long.”

Forstall introduced Nestor to a man named Mr. Carter in hopes that Carter would attend a meeting to consider Nestor’s candidacy in the Democratic primary. Nestor understood that as “a Republican [Carter was] not likely to be free to come out for me in the primary.” She nevertheless asked, “If, however you would like to give us some advice, knowing Evanston so well and about running a campaign, I will be glad to have you come.”

Nestor reached out to women in her district as well. Writing to her friend Irene Treacy, Nestor announced

that I am to be a candidate for Representative to the Illinois Legislature from the 6th District. I will run on the Democratic ticket and of course, you know Evanston is in my district. I do not know where you both stand politically but if you are free to support me I would like you and Philip to come to a little group meeting at my home Monday evening, the 13th, called by Dr. John A. Lapp. Dr. Lapp is very eager to get an organization under way and we will discuss this at that time. There seems a very good chance to win the nomination in the primary.”

54 Agnes Nestor to Mr. Forstall, February 1, 1928, box 6, folder 2, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

55 Ibid.

56 Agnes Nestor to Mr. Carter, February 10, 1928, box 6, folder 2, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

57 Agnes Nestor to Irene Treacy, February 8, 1928, box 6, folder 2, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.
With little overt support from establishment Democrats, Nestor built an organization around her contacts in the community, especially in Evanston where her contacts in organized labor were less useful. One strategy Nestor employed was door-to-door canvassing in the district. Mary Anderson advised Nestor “I heard from Agnes Peterson that you are doing active canvassing. What you need with you is a woman who is an excellent organizer and knows the influential people in the district. I am sure that many would rally to you if they could be reached, but there is so much work connected with that.”\(^{58}\)

Unsure of precisely where her support lay, yet confident in her chances of successfully challenging the incumbent Weber, Nestor mobilized multiple organizations and personal contacts to enlist support for her candidacy from the labor movement. One such labor organization was the Ladies Auxiliary of the Brotherhood of Railroad Trainmen. Mary Miller, Legislative Director of the organization, wrote letters asking other women’s organizations to “help file up the vote for Miss Nestor.”\(^{59}\) Nestor asked colleague and long-time friend in the labor movement, Victor Olander, to network with labor leaders living in the district, believing “a letter from you to each one will be very

\(^{58}\)Mary Anderson to Agnes Nestor, DC, February 17, 1928, box 6, folder 2, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

\(^{59}\)Mary Miller, Chairman of the Illinois Legislative Board of the Ladies Auxiliary of the Brotherhood of Railroad Trainmen, to Eva Wemple, February, 1928, box 6, folder 2 Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.
helpful and I would like them to have it before I communicate with them."60 The most explicit statement of Nestor’s campaign strategy is a copy of a form letter distributed to potential supporters in the district. “The most effective campaigning we can do is the personal work in the district. Talk to your friends and neighbors and ask them to sign the enclosed cards so that I may know those who are interested in my campaign and who will support me in the primary.”61 Nestor’s strategy in leading this political organization relied on her contacts’ direct personal invitation to their expanded networks to become involved in the campaign. Even as the primary date nears, Nestor still asks supporters to “write notes to your friends […] I would invite them but it may save time for you to do it and anyway it would mean more to get a note from you.”62

Nestor also recruited volunteers to communicate her message into parts of the district unfamiliar to her, namely Evanston. Working to engage the Evanston community in the campaign, Nestor thanks Arthur Locke “for filling so many petitions for me in Evanston. I went to Springfield Friday night and filed my petitions in person on Saturday so I am now officially a candidate and will appreciate all the assistance that your group

60 Agnes Nestor to Victor Olander, February 27, 1928, box 6, folder 2, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

61 Agnes Nestor, February 29, 1928, box 6, folder 2, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

62 Agnes Nestor to Mrs. Fisher, March 5, 1928 box 6, folder 2, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.
can give me in Evanston.”63 Nestor cultivated another Evanston connection through the Federation of Women High School Teachers, Beulah Berolzheimer, whose brother lived in Evanston. Hoping that Berolzheimer’s brother can help distribute campaign literature, Nestor writes “All of Evanston is in my district so your brother can be helpful out there and I am very glad to know we can call on him. I have a very fine group in Evanston. I am enclosing a few cards, which you may send to your brother, and if you will tell me just where to reach him and give me his full name, I will be glad to communicate directly with him.”64 Nestor also recruited well known Chicago stakeholders and social reformers to attend campaign events. Jane Addams responded to one invitation, saying “I shall be glad to attend the meeting and make a few ‘broken remarks’ although I will be much most interested in listening to the speaker of the evening.”65

Another campaign strategy was to obtain endorsements from Chicago organizations. The first organization from which Nestor sought endorsement was the Chicago Wage Earner’s Association. Unfortunately, a scheduling issue prevented her from attending prearranged meetings with primary candidates at the Chicago Wage Earner’s offices. Nestor explained that “The days you set aside to meet candidates on

63 Agnes Nestor to Arthur Locke, February 22, 1928, box 6, folder 2, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

64 Agnes Nestor to Beulah Berolzheimer, President of the Federation of Women High School Teachers, box 6, folder 2, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

65 Jane Addams to Agnes Nestor, February 27, 1928, box 6, folder 2, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.
March 8th and 9th so as to get better acquainted, I could not get down either days. One day I had a trade agreement conference and the next day I had a meeting. Of course you know me very well and my trade union record over twenty-five years speaks for me. I presume your only purpose on seeing candidates is to know their attitude on labor bills. There is to be only one candidate nominated in the 6th Senatorial district so, of course, I want that one endorsement.  

Unfortunately, the Chicago Wage Earners League did not forgive Nestor’s absence. Despite Nestor’s long history with the labor movement in Chicago, the Chicago Wage Earners League withheld their endorsement of Agnes Nestor without ever telling her directly. In fact, Nestor learned that she had been passed over for a critical endorsement when, “At the Chicago Federation of Labor meeting on Saturday […] I just learned this morning that he told Mary Dempsey that all the other candidates went to the Wage Earners’ League with their hats in their hands looking for endorsements, and that I did not seem to think it worthwhile to go in and ask for it. Just so you may have this matter perfectly straight, I am enclosing herewith a copy of the letter which I sent jointly to Mr. Kelly and Mr. Jacob.”

Inexperienced with the protocol and etiquette surrounding obtaining campaign endorsements, Nestor did not receive the endorsement of the Chicago Wage Earner’s League. She did, however, receive the

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66 Agnes Nestor to Mr. Michael J. Kelly, President, and Mr. James B. Jacob, Secretary, of the Cook County Wage-Earners’ League, March 12, 1928, box 6, folder 2, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

67 Agnes Nestor to Victor Olander, Chicago, March 21, 1928, box 6, folder 2, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.
endorsement of the Illinois Federation of Labor through the affiliated International Glove Worker’s Union of America. Nestor also courted support from the Chicago Teachers Federation, who often wrote letters of support to colleagues in Nestor’s district:

An unusual opportunity is presented to the teachers in the Sixth Senatorial District at this primary election on April 10 because we have Miss Agnes Nestor a candidate for State Representative on the Democratic Ticket. We need Agnes Nestor in the Legislature. She can be very helpful to the teachers because she has had a wide experience in legislative work and has been active in the field of education too.

Throughout Nestor’s campaign for state representative, Nestor relied primarily on personal calls to action through networks of friends and colleagues to involve people in her campaign. In addition to asking her network for votes, Nestor asked contacts to recruit more members to foster the exponential growth of a small community of friends into a genuine and growing political organization.

In the end, Nestor lost her bid for the Illinois General Assembly by a margin of 12,834 to 5,424 votes, but did manage to secure approximately one third of all the votes cast in the Democratic primary without the benefit of the established Democratic Party


69 Agnes Nestor to Miss Mary M. Abbe, President of The Chicago Teachers’ Federation, [ca 1928], box 3, folder 3, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

70 Margaret A. Haley, Business Representative of the Chicago Teachers’ Federation, March 31, 1928, box 6, folder 3, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

71 “Primary Results,” Chicago Tribune, April 12, 1928, 8.
organization or any prior experience running for political office. One third of voters in this election voted for a woman who spent most of her youth as a glove maker and possessed little personal wealth or formal education, recognizing something in her candidacy that made Nestor their choice against the status quo.

Nestor never mentioned her campaign for State Representative in her autobiography, and little reference to her race occurs outside campaign documents. However, Nestor did save one letter from a supporter, Ethel Colson, encouraging Nestor to continue her fight:

You do not know me, but I have followed your career for some years with appreciative interest, and I cannot refrain from telling you how greatly I admired the brave fight you made in the recent political contest, as well as your stand on various important questions, and how sorry I am that you were not presently victorious.

Better luck next time!

And, meanwhile, it is pleasant to realize that every such stand, and every such fight brings nearer the good conditions for which we all hunger, and that no-one merely human can measure the good accruing from efforts that, on the surface, seem to fail.72

Nestor never ran for public office again.

As politician, Agnes Nestor represented the conditions for which her constituency hungered to formal government institutions. These institutions included federal commissions to investigate access to vocational education, national committees to mobilize women workers for war service during the First World War, and ultimately the Illinois General Assembly as a candidate in the Democratic primary of 1928 in the Sixth

72Ethel M. Colson Brazelton to Agnes Nestor, April 16, 1928, box 6, folder 3, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.
Senatorial District. The conflicts of interests mediated in Agnes Nestor’s practice of leadership as a politician required a different skill set and different sources of power as evidenced in the analysis that follows.

**Analysis**

Gareth Morgan defines power as the “medium through which conflicts of interest are ultimately resolved.”\(^{73}\) Within the above narrative, it is evident that Nestor drew from several sources of power to effect political change. The sources of power that emerge can be categorized into fourteen distinct methods in which leaders can increase their currency in their organizations and their external environments (see Appendix B for complete analysis in chart form). The words and actions that are evidence of sources of power Nestor used as a politician are illustrated below:

**Words and Actions of Agnes Nestor**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Formal Authority</th>
<th>Authority one holds that is associated with the position one holds in an organization.</th>
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</table>

**Words**

The Department of Women in Industry obviously cannot offer to every woman in the community opportunities for daily service in the same way as they can be offered in, for example, the field of home economics. The work of the Department of Women in Industry is necessarily to a great extent of a more specialized character. Its most general work is concerned with the upholding of labor standards, and every woman who cares to have a share in this work can do so by watching for violations of her state labor laws, or for other bad conditions and reporting them to her local Department of Women in Industry (or, where no local department exists, to the Department of Women in Industry, Woman’s Committee, Washington,) being sure that in helping to prevent the breaking down of standards she is rendering service to her country. Those who are particularly interested or informed with regard to women in industry should get in touch with their local departments and co-operate with them in the various branches of their local work.

\(^{73}\)Morgan, *Images of Organization*, 162.
Working women and others who possess first-hand knowledge of conditions can be especially valuable to these departments and it is hoped they will not hesitate to offer their co-operation “concerned with the upholding of labor standards.”74

**Actions**

They began by assessing what the federal government was already doing to support vocational education, gathering data through questionnaires sent to officials in various government agencies. These agencies included the Department of the Interior, Department of Commerce, Department of Agriculture, the United States Navy, and the Army Corps of Engineers.75

Later in the week, Nestor increases her presence even more and actually presides over a hearing.76

Some of my friends are urging me to be a candidate for the Illinois Legislature. Of course I would run on the democratic [sic] ticket if I should decide to make race and as I am in your district I am eager to have your judgement [sic] on this.77

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Control of Scarc \ Resources</th>
<th>Ability to control the resources an organization uses to accomplish its work, or conversely, the ability to reduce an organizations’ dependency on external resources.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Words**

*No specific words noted.*

**Actions**

Nestor and the rest of the commission were privileged to an expense account that covered meals, lodging, and transportation between home and the nation’s capital.78

74Agnes Nestor, Memorandum as Executive Chairman of Department of Women in Industry, [ca 1917], box 1, folder 8, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

75Ibid.

76Commission on National Aid to Vocational Education, 181.

77Agnes Nestor to Mr. Forstall, February 1, 1928, box 6, folder 2, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.
Use of organizational structure, rules, and regulations | Ability to invoke laws, policies, and procedures to one’s advantage.

**Words**

*No specific words noted.*

**Actions**

Miss NESTOR: I think there is a great deal of confusion in regard to the girl training. We have had it brought in here by some of the speakers who have appeared before us in regard to this home economics, and I would like to have you, for the sake of the record here, tell us how you feel from the point of view of the worker on that question, whether it ought to go in as part of our training in general education or whether it ought to be termed that at all.

Representative HUGHES. That will have to be discussed before this Congress.

Miss NESTOR. We have had the woman outside tell us her interpretation of that. I would like to have you as a worker put your interpretation on it. You see, it is so often termed vocational. By home economics is generally understood some training for the home, as sewing, cooking, and all sorts of training for good home keeping.

| Control of decision processes | Influence over decision premises (control of agenda and strategies that force or guide attention to our point of view) decision processes (how, when, and where decisions are made, and who gets to make them), and decision issues and objectives (control of reports and information upon which decisions will be made, and rhetorical skill in arguing for perspectives). |

**Words**

Nestor continues to advocate for comprehensive vocational education beyond the home “unless, of course, the girl on the farm that Senator Page speaks of is really looking forward to her work on the farm as a vocation.”

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78 Wreidt, Secretary of the Commission on Vocational Education to Agnes Nestor May 16, 1914, box 1, folder 7, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

79 Commission on National Aid to Vocational Education, 203.
**Actions**

Miss NESTOR: I think there is a great deal of confusion in regard to the girl training. We have had it brought in here by some of the speakers who have appeared before us in regard to this home economics, and I would like to have you, for the sake of the record here, tell us how you feel from the point of view of the worker on that question, whether it ought to go in as part of our training in general education or whether it ought to be termed that at all.

Representative HUGHES. That will have to be discussed before this Congress.

Miss NESTOR. We have had the woman outside tell us her interpretation of that. I would like to have you as a worker put your interpretation on it. You see, it is so often termed vocational. By home economics is generally understood some training for the home, as sewing, cooking, and all sorts of training for good home keeping.

Senator PAGE. Including hygiene, ventilation, art, first aid—

Miss NESTOR. It can be very broad.

Miss O’REILLY. Under no consideration would I think of that as vocational training.80

| Control of knowledge and information | Possessing the right information at the right time, having exclusive access to data, or talent in organizing, synthesizing, and applying data. |

**Words**

There is an excellent chance because I am the only one running against Weber and he has the worst record of almost anyone in the Legislature. He only stands for “BEER” and that is his one platform all the time. He is not reliable and even the men and young fellows through the district have no use for him and want to help me defeat him.”

“[Nestor] reported filing her petition in person in Springfield, and added an aftermath, Mr. Schroeder called at Miss Nestor’s home and said that the governor had sent him to tell her that Weber had promised to vote for the eight hour bill next time, and that she

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80Commission on National Aid to Vocational Education, 201.

81Agnes Nestor to Margaret Dreier Robins, Chicago, February 22, 1928, box 6, folder 2, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.
needn’t run. He said that the governor was counting on the Democratic votes Weber controlled being used for him in the Republican primary.82

**Actions**

[This] “is work, as you know, that I am especially interested in and I will want to consult with all who are working for the best system of vocational training as I take up the work.”83

“include in their curriculum a course in collective bargaining.”84

Miss NESTOR. Would it point out new opportunities for both? I think there are a great many new opportunities for women in certain industries.

Mr. VERRILL. No; there is no special attention given to new opportunities. It is rather a study of things as they exist.

Miss MARSHALL. I think that question was meant to show the opportunity not only for entrance, but for advancement in these industries for women and men separately […] Take, for instance, the candy industry. We find more women employed than men, yet if we analyze the candy industry the men are holding all of the so-called higher occupations within the industry and the women are holding all the low-grade skilled occupations within that industry. For the purpose of industrial education that would be a very valuable analysis of the various industries.

Miss NESTOR. And to know, too, whether equal opportunities are afforded.85

In one survey created by the Department of Women in Industry, Nestor and the Committee surveyed employers throughout Chicago, explicitly seeking information regarding working conditions for women:86

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82 Minutes from campaign meeting in Chicago, February 21, 1928, box 6, folder 2, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

83 Agnes Nestor to Mr. William J. Bogan, February 14, 1914 box 1, folder 7, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

84 Nestor, *Woman’s Labor Leader*, 145.

85 Commission on National Aid to Vocational Education, 108.
Control of boundaries
Influence over transactions occurring at junctures between different elements within an organization.

**Words**
No specific words noted.

**Actions**
No specific actions noted.

| Ability to cope with uncertainty | Describes how well a leader copes with unpredictable events both in the external and internal organizational landscape. |

**Words**
No specific words noted.

**Actions**
No specific actions noted.

| Control of technology | Control over technology that converts organizational inputs into outputs allows leader to determine the pace and quality of the organization’s work. |

**Words**
No specific words noted.

**Actions**
No specific actions noted.

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86 Report of Department of Woman and Children in Industry Committee on Standards, September 15, 1917, box 1, folder 8, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.
Leaders can systematically build and cultivate power through interpersonal alliances and networks, incorporating whenever possible the help and influence of those who have common interests. The currency in these alliances is one of mutual dependency and exchange.

Words

Some of my friends are urging me to be a candidate for the Illinois Legislature. Of course I would run on the democratic [sic] ticket if I should decide to make race and as I am in your district I am eager to have your judgement [sic] on this. I love [sic] in Ravenswood which is about in the center of the District but I have many connections in the South end of the district because I lived down there so long.87

Nestor understands that Carter is “a Republican so feel that you are not likely to be free to come out for me in the primary. […] If, however you would like to give us some advice, knowing Evanston so well and about running a campaign, I will be glad to have you come.”88

“a letter from you to each one will be very helpful and I would like them to have it before I communicate with them.”89

“The most effective campaigning we can do is the personal work in the district. Talk to your friends and neighbors and ask them to sign the enclosed cards so that I may know those who are interested in my campaign and who will support me in the primary.”90

“write notes to your friends […] I would invite them but it may save time for you to do it and anyway it would mean more to get a note from you.”91

87Agnes Nestor to Mr. Forstall, February 1, 1928, box 6, folder 2, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

88Agnes Nestor to Mr. Carter, February 10, 1928, box 6, folder 2, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

89Agnes Nestor to Victor Olander, February 27, 1928, box 6, folder 2, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

90Agnes Nestor, February 29, 1928, box 6, folder 2, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.
“At the Chicago Federation of Labor meeting on Saturday [...] I just learned this morning that he told Mary Dempsey that all the other candidates went to the Wage Earners’ League with their hats in their hands looking for endorsements, and that I did not seem to think it worthwhile to go in and ask for it. Just so you may have this matter perfectly straight, I am enclosing herewith a copy of the letter which I sent jointly to Mr. Kelly and Mr. Jacob.”92

**Actions**

“happy to meet with you [Bogan] and Mr. Henderson to talk over some of the problems that our Commission will have to face.”93

Nestor arranged to meet with the Chicago school leader “to talk over the matter of vocational education”94

Writing to her friend Irene Treacy, Nestor announces “that I am to be a candidate for Representative to the Illinois Legislature from the 6th District. I will run on the Democratic ticket and of course, you know Evanston is in my district. I do not know where you both stand politically but if you are free to support me I would like you and Philip to come to a little group meeting at my home Monday evening, the 13th, called by Dr. John A. Lapp. Dr. Lapp is very eager to get an organization under way and we will discuss this at that time. There seems a very good chance to win the nomination in the primary.”95

Nestor thanks Arthur Locke “for filling so many petitions for me in Evanston. I went to Springfield Friday night and filed my petitions in person on Saturday so I am now

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91 Agnes Nestor to Mrs. Fisher, March 5, 1928 box 6, folder 2, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

92 Agnes Nestor to Victor Olander, Chicago, March 21, 1928, box 6, folder 2, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

93 Agnes Nestor to William J. Bogan March 25, 1914, box 1, folder 7, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

94 Agnes Nestor to Ella Flagg Young, March 3, 1914, box 1, folder 7, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

95 Agnes Nestor to Irene, February 8, 1928, box 6, folder 2, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.
officially a candidate and will appreciate all the assistance that your group can give me in Evanston.96

“All of Evanston is in my district so your brother can be helpful out there and I am very glad to know we can call on him. I have a very fine group in Evanston. I am enclosing a few cards, which you may send to your brother, and if you will tell me just where to reach him and give me his full name, I will be glad to communicate directly with him.”97

| Control of counterorganizations | Counterorganizations exist to balance the power of an existing power structure. Unions, consumer groups, and social movements are examples of organizations that can wield considerable countervailing power and effect considerable organizational and environmental change. |

**Words**

“All Unit System, a combination of vocational training and liberal education which might give the worker-to-be vocational training without denying him cultural background.”98

**Actions**

*No specific actions noted.*

| Symbolism and the management of meaning | Ability to shape the organization’s story, to call to mind certain images, symbols, and expressions that guide work and decision making a certain way, and influence over the way followers interpret their place in the organization. |

**Words**

*No specific words noted.*

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96 Agnes Nestor to Arthur Locke, February 22, 1928, box 6, folder 2, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

97 Agnes Nestor to Beulah Berolzheimer, President of the Federation of Women High School Teachers, box 6, folder 2, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

98 Nestor, *Woman’s Labor Leader*, 144.
Actions

No specific actions noted.

| Gender and the management of gender relations | Leaders can manipulate prevailing views and stereotypes on the role of men and women at work to increase their influence over organizations and their environment. |

Words

“Miss Florence Marshall and I foresaw difficulties when we found out that some of the men wished to give girls more domestic science than opportunity to learn trades. We knew that most of the girls would have to become wage earners as well as homemakers. We, too, loved the home; but the girls needed also training which would equip them to earn a living.”

Miss NESTOR. I think there is a great deal of drudgery that has been considered distinctly woman’s work, such as scrubbing, washing, and the like, that requires a great deal of physical exertion. In some other countries and ages women do a considerable of what is termed drudgery work. Now, in our day and time, there are new opportunities for women. We feel very strongly that the women ought to be given equal opportunities with men. I think Miss O’Reilly will agree with me on that.”

Senator PAGE. May the Lord hasten the day when that will come. But it seems to me that there is no uplift in putting a woman into man’s work in the field, in the stable, or in the hide house.

Miss NESTOR. A great deal of our work has been taken out of the home and put into the factory and the mills and all that, and men have taken our work. For instance, at one time we did all the baking of our bread. Now nearly all the bakers are men. And the weaving of the cloth—the men have taken some of that. I do not think there have been enough opportunities really opened up for the women. They have not followed all of those trades. Some seem always to think of the women just doing the sewing and the cooking. That seems to be the though in the minds of so many people when you talk of woman’s work. There ought to be a lot of other opportunities open for women.

Senator PAGE. Will that not grow out of vocational education?

Miss NESTOR. That is my hope, Mr. Chairman […] I hope the commission will recognize that in their report. I should very much like to see that. We know that a great many particular trades have been distinctly women’s trades, and the women are being

99Ibid., 151.
displaced by men. We know that in the making of straw hats the men are coming in. The men do not like to see us breaking into certain trades, but we are coming into ours.  

**Actions**

*No specific actions noted.*

| Structural factors that define the stage of action | Ability to access sources of powers given structural realities that affect the internal and external environment in which leadership is practiced. |

**Words**

“This Woman’s Committee did seem like a fifth wheel and not to fit into the regular machinery of the Council of National Defense,”

**Actions**

*No specific actions noted.*

| The power one already has | The presence of power attracts others who want to feed off a leader’s influence, lending the power holder uninvited support. Similarly, the experience of success becomes a transforming force as one victory leads to another. |

**Words**

*No specific words noted.*

**Actions**

*No specific actions noted.*

**Words and Actions of Others**

| Formal Authority | Authority one holds that is associated with the position one holds in an organization. |

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100 Commission on National Aid to Vocational Education, 204-5.

“I am writing you, as a member of the committee on National Aid for Vocational Education, in behalf of the State Manual Training Normal School, of Pittsburg, Kansas. This is one of the largest manual training schools in the United States. Students from almost every State in the Union, and the school is splendidly equipped for vocational training. I most earnestly request that your committee will give this school the recognition it deserves when you take up this work.”

In 1914, President Woodrow Wilson appointed Agnes Nestor to “a commission consisting of nine whose duty it shall be to consider the subject of national aid for vocational education and report their findings and recommendations not later than June first, next.”

Nestor was acquainted with Newton Baker, then Secretary of War, since at least 1910, and later worked with Baker on a number of committees in the Department of Defense. Nestor belonged to the Labor Council, the Bureau of Registration and Information,

102Representative Phillip P. Campbell to Agnes Nestor, March 23, 1914 box 1, folder 7, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

103Woodrow Wilson to Agnes Nestor, February 17, 1914, box 1, folder 7, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

104Newton Baker to Miss S. M. Franklin, December 6, 1910, box 1, folder 5, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

105Ida Glatt to Agnes Nestor, January 17, 1917, box 1, folder 8, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

106Elizabeth Martin, chairman of the Bureau of Registration and Information of the National League for Woman’s Service, to Agnes Nestor, April 30, 1917, box 1, folder 8, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.
the Women’s Advisory Committee of the Council of National Defense,\textsuperscript{107} and finally, the Women in Industry Committee.\textsuperscript{108}

| Control of Scarce Resources | Ability to control the resources an organization uses to accomplish its work, or conversely, the ability to reduce an organizations’ dependency on external resources. |

**Words**

*No specific words noted.*

**Actions**

*No specific actions noted.*

| Use of organizational structure, rules, and regulations | Ability to invoke laws, policies, and procedures to one’s advantage. |

**Words**

*No specific words noted.*

**Actions**

*No specific actions noted.*

| Control of decision processes | Influence over decision premises (control of agenda and strategies that force or guide attention to our point of view) decision processes (how, when, and where decisions are made, and who gets to make them), and decision issues and objectives (control of reports and information upon which decisions will be made, and rhetorical skill in arguing for perspectives). |

\textsuperscript{107}Newton D. Baker, Secretary of War and Chairman of the Council of National Defense, to Agnes Nestor, May 7, 1917, box 1, folder 8, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

\textsuperscript{108}Agnes Nestor, Chairman of Women in Industry Committee to the Women’s Committee of the Council of National Defense, August 23, 1917, box 1, folder 8, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.
The commission recommended “That [the schools] should be designed to prepare boys and girls over 14 years of age for useful or profitable employment in agriculture and in the trades and industries,”\textsuperscript{109} without any mention of creating schools to teach domestic science or home economics.

**Actions**

According to the report, the commission decided at the outset to address itself to the following questions:

1. To what extent is there a need for vocational education in the United States?
2. Is there a need for national grants stimulating the States to give vocational education?
3. What kinds or forms of vocational educations should be stimulated by national grants?
4. How far can the Federal Government aid through expert knowledge vocational education in the various States? To what extent should the Federal Government aid the States through national grants for vocational education?
5. Under what conditions should grants to the States for vocational education be made?\textsuperscript{110}

| Control of knowledge and information | Possessing the right information at the right time, having exclusive access to data, or talent in organizing, synthesizing, and applying data. |

**Words**

*No specific words noted.*

**Actions**

*No specific actions noted.*

| Control of boundaries | Influence over transactions occurring at junctures between different elements within an organization. |

\textsuperscript{109}Commission on National Aid to Vocational Education, 15.

\textsuperscript{110}Ibid.
**Words**

*No specific words noted.*

**Actions**

*No specific actions noted.*

| Ability to cope with uncertainty | Describes how well a leader copes with unpredictable events both in the external and internal organizational landscape. |

**Words**

*No specific words noted.*

**Actions**

*No specific actions noted.*

| Control of boundaries | Influence over transactions occurring at junctures between different elements within an organization. |

**Words**

*No specific words noted.*

**Actions**

*No specific actions noted.*

| Ability to cope with uncertainty | Describes how well a leader copes with unpredictable events both in the external and internal organizational landscape. |
Control of technology allows the leader to determine the pace and quality of the organization’s work.

**Words**

*No specific words noted.*

**Actions**

*No specific actions noted.*

| Interpersonal alliances, networks, and control of “informal organization” | Leaders can systematically build and cultivate power through interpersonal alliances and networks, incorporating whenever possible the help and influence of those who have common interests. The currency in these alliances is one of mutual dependency and exchange. |

**Words**

“I heard from Agnes Peterson that you are doing active canvassing. What you need with you is a woman who is an excellent organizer and knows the influential people in the district. I am sure that many would rally to you if they could be reached, but there is so much work connected with that.”

**Actions**

“Before you start for Washington I should like to have an opportunity to talk over with you some of the problems that your commission will have to face. As President of the Vocational Education Society of the Middle West I am greatly interested in seeing vocational education placed on a democratic basis in the United States. Mr. Wilson H. Henderson, Treasurer of the Vocational Education Association, and also Editor of the ‘Industrial Arts Magazine’ would like to talk matters over with you. He has a fund of information which you should know about.”

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111Mary Anderson to Agnes Nestor, DC, February 17, 1928, box 6, folder 2, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

112William J. Bogan to Agnes Nestor, March 24, 1914, box 1, folder 7, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.
“Miss Isabel Ely Lord a representative of the National Society for the Promotion of Industrial Education will be at the Hotel Blackstone Chicago after four o’clock today and I wish her to meet you and talk with her about the industrial commission and this society [sic] interest in your kind of industrial education program.”

Mary Miller, Legislative Director of the organization, wrote letters asking other women’s organizations to “help file up the vote for Miss Nestor.”

An unusual opportunity is presented to the teachers in the Sixth Senatorial District at this primary election on April 10 because we have Miss Agnes Nestor a candidate for State Representative on the Democratic Ticket. We need Agnes Nestor in the Legislature. She can be very helpful to the teachers because she has had a wide experience in legislative work and has been active in the field of education too.

| Control of counterorganizations | Counterorganizations exist to balance the power of an existing power structure. Unions, consumer groups, and social movements are examples of organizations that can wield considerable countervailing power and effect considerable organizational and environmental change. |

**Words**

*No specific words noted.*

**Actions**

*No specific actions noted.*

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113 Cleo Murtland to Agnes Nestor, telegram, February 20, 1914, box 1, folder 7, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

114 Mary Miller, Chairman of the Illinois Legislative Board of the Ladies Auxiliary of the Brotherhood of Railroad Trainmen, to Eva Wemple, February, 1928, box 6, folder 2 Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

115 Margaret A. Haley, Business Representative of the Chicago Teachers’ Federation, March 31, 1928, box 6, folder 3, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.
Symbolism and the management of meaning

Ability to shape the organization’s story, to call to mind certain images, symbols, and expressions that guide work and decision making a certain way, and influence over the way followers interpret their place in the organization.

Words

“So Little Agnes, the Child-Wonder, the Girl Agitator and the Promoter, is to sit ‘round a table with Hoke Smith & Page and discuss vocational education! Good! If I were you, I’d get a yet larger bag (you’ll probably have to order one made!), take along the “answered” & “unanswered” portfolio, wear a dress with little buttons on it, and show the Commission at its very first meeting that you mean business!”116

Actions

No specific actions noted.

Gender and the management of gender relations

Leaders can manipulate prevailing views and stereotypes on the role of men and women at work to increase their influence over organizations and their environment.

Words

The longer I think about your appointment in the Voc. Ed. Committee the more it pleases me. You are just the one for the job—as if you were made to order they won’t be able to put one over on the Trades Unionists without your knowing it. Wilson must have heard that [Illegible] story. I thought all along he showed fair judgment in selecting people to assist him—such men as Louis Post and Frank Walsh of Kansas City. You may be sure it is recognition of your ability. The Prs. Of the U.S. is sometimes the College Pres. It cheers my soul to see that you who had to quit school so young, the poor little kid the machines nearly killed, in spite of everything, now coming along at the head of the procession It is fine! [sic] Keep up the good work. May your light shine before all men (suffrage version)117

The creation of the Advisory Committee on Woman’s Defense work was prompted by an appreciation on the part of the Council of the very valuable service that the women of the

116Harriet Reid to Agnes Nestor, February 18, 1914, box 1, folder 7, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

117Josephine Casey to Agnes Nestor, March 3, 1914, box 1, folder 7, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.
country can and are anxious to render in the national defense, and the desire to establish some common medium through which the Council might be brought into closest touch with them and into the fullest utilization of their service. \(^{118}\)

**Actions**

*No specific actions noted.*

| Structural factors that define the stage of action | Ability to access sources of powers given structural realities that affect the internal and external environment in which leadership is practiced. |

**Words**

*No specific words noted.*

**Actions**

*No specific actions noted.*

| The power one already has | The presence of power attracts others who want to feed off a leader’s influence, lending the power holder uninvited support. Similarly, the experience of success becomes a transforming force as one victory leads to another. |

**Words**

Mrs. Henry Faxan promptly wrote Nestor to “offer the faithful confidence of a friend and congratulations to the 9,000 girls in K.C. that they among others have such a champion.” \(^{119}\)

The longer I think about your appointment in the Voc.Ed. Committee the more it pleases me. You are just the one for the job—as if you were made to order they won’t be able to put one over on the Trades Unionists without your knowing it. Wilson must have hear that [Illegible] story. I thought all along he showed fair judgment in selecting people to _______

\(^{118}\)Newton D. Baker to Dr. Elizabeth Shaw of the Women’s Advisory Committee of the Council of National Defense, June 16, 1917, box 1, folder 8, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

\(^{119}\)Mrs. Henry D. Faxan to Agnes Nestor, March 10, 1914, box 1, folder 7, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.
assist him—such men as Louis Post and Frank Walsh of Kansas City. You may be sure it is recognition of your ability. The Prs. Of the U.S. is sometimes the College Pres. It cheers my soul to see that you who had to quit school so young, the poor little kid the machines nearly killed, in spite of everything, now coming along at the head of the procession. It is fine! [sic] Keep up the good work. May your light shine before all men (suffrage version)\textsuperscript{120}

You do not know me, but I have followed your career for some years with appreciative interest, and I cannot refrain from telling you how greatly I admired the brave fight you made in the recent political contest, as well as your stand on various important questions, and how sorry I am that you were not presently victorious.

Better luck next time!

And, meanwhile, it is pleasant to realize that every such stand, and every such fight brings nearer the good conditions for which we all hunger, and that no-one merely human can measure the good accruing from efforts that, on the surface, seem to fail.\textsuperscript{121}

**Actions**

“I shall be glad to attend the meeting and make a few “broken remarks” although I will be much most interested in listening to the speaker of the evening.”\textsuperscript{122}

**Discussion of Analysis**

As a politician, Agnes Nestor drew upon a variety of sources to effect change as she represented constituencies in formal government positions or as a candidate for formal government bodies. When examining the sources of power Nestor accessed in her practice of leadership as a politician, striking patterns emerge related to frequency of use,

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{120}Josephine Casey to Agnes Nestor, March 3, 1914, box 1, folder 7, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.
\item \textsuperscript{121}Ethel M. Colson Brazelton to Agnes Nestor, April 16, 1928, box 6, folder 3, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.
\item \textsuperscript{122}Jane Addams to Agnes Nestor, February 27, 1928, box 6, folder 2, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.
\end{itemize}
sources of power in relation to each other, and also sources of power absent from Nestor’s practice of leadership.

**Sources of Power by Frequency of Use**

When examining the sources of power that Agnes Nestor accessed as a politician to effect change, the first pattern that emerges is in the frequency of use. As Nestor worked to mediate conflict between the interests of her constituency and the interests of the formal government bodies on which she served or sought to serve, Nestor accessed different sources of power and with different frequencies than when she practiced leadership as a labor leader or social reformer. In order of prominence, the sources of power Agnes Nestor accessed as a politician were:

1) **Formal Authority**

2) **Interpersonal Alliances, Networks, and Control of “Informal Organization.”**

3) **Control of Knowledge and Information**

When documents included in the narrative of Agnes Nestor’s career as a politician we analyzed for evidence of Agnes’ use of various sources of power, the two most frequently accessed sources of power were **Interpersonal Alliances, Networks, and Control of “Informal Organization”** and **Formal Authority**. The third source of power, **Control of Knowledge and Information**, was used approximately half as often as the two leading sources of power. However, regarding **Control of Knowledge and Information**, a unique pattern emerges in that this source of power is evidenced exclusively through Nestor’s own words, where the other sources of power appear to have balanced evidence
among all the words and actions of Agnes Nestor and the others with whom Nestor worked and corresponded.

As a politician, Agnes Nestor represented her constituency to formal governmental bodies on which she served and wished to serve. Not surprisingly, formal authority looms large as a source of power that Nestor would use as a member of a formal body. Nestor used her formal authority differently depending on the formal role in the organization to which she belonged. As a member of the National Commission on Industrial Education, her role in the organization was to gather information and make recommendations. Nestor used this formal authority to create reports, to gather evidence from witnesses and government agencies, and to make specific recommendations to the United States Congress and to President Woodrow Wilson. These reports and recommendations ultimately influenced policy as to the Federal Government’s proper role in stimulating vocational education. Had Nestor not claimed a formal role on this committee, Nestor would have been free to conduct as much research and to write as many letters regarding industrial education for women workers as she desired. But, by participating on the committee in a formally recognized capacity, Nestor effected change in industrial education in a manner only open to people formally recognized as members of the National Commission on Industrial Education. During her service on Women’s Committees during the First World War, Nestor also used formal authority to represent the interests of her constituency. While chair of the Women in Industry Committee and a member in numerous other women’s committees, Nestor used formal authority as a national platform from which to address wartime working conditions for women and to
work for greater opportunities for women to enter the workforce. Having a formal position on the committee allowed Nestor a forum for addressing issues of equity for women workers on the national level. As a candidate for office, Nestor was the formally recognized leader of her campaign organization. Nestor’s campaign for state representative to the Illinois General Assembly only occurred because Nestor chose to create and lead a political organization dedicated to her candidacy. Indeed, Nestor’s use of formal authority as a candidate differs from her use of formal authority as a member of formal government institutions in that as a candidate, Nestor established her formal role in her organization. As a member of formal government institutions, she received her formal authority from someone else empowered to grant it. Nestor claimed her formal authority as candidate and leader of her campaign through her sheer desire to enter the Democratic primary and to defeat the incumbent Representative Weber. As a result, on her first and only attempt at running for public office, Nestor claimed roughly one third of all votes cast in her race.

Nestor’s use of formal authority, whether received from appointment or through her own volition, allowed her access to universally recognized forums for addressing the issues of her constituency. By working within relevant formal power structures, Nestor was able to effect change in ways not possible had she chosen to work exclusively on the margins of her environment.

However, as politician, Nestor accessed Interpersonal Alliances, Networks, and Control of “Informal Organization even more frequently than formal authority. Nestor’s appointment to the National Commission on Industrial Education brought her into contact
with prominent political and societal figures in Chicago and nationwide. Soon after news of Nestor’s appointment broke, Chicago educators, politicians, and leaders of vocational organizations sought Nestor out to avail themselves of her influence on the Commission. Later, as a candidate, Nestor used her interpersonal alliances and networks as her primary campaign strategy. Because the goal of a successful political campaign is to motivate a large base of constituents to action, Nestor’s decision to rely on Interpersonal Alliances, Networks, and Control of “Informal Organization” as a power source for her campaign was a calculated decision to mobilize and recruit large numbers of supporters within her district. Nestor used her network to canvass homes, write letters, raise funds, and ultimately to vote for her in sizeable numbers on election day. Nestor omits any mention of her candidacy from her autobiography, and never addresses her loss to incumbent Representative Weber. Nevertheless, she mounted a formidable primary challenge against a candidate with considerable establishment support simply by mobilizing her network of supporters and accessing their resources as though they were her own.

Although not appearing as frequently as the two most frequently accessed sources of power, Nestor did make frequent use of Control of Knowledge and Information. Nestor accessed this source of power during her tenure on the National Commission for Industrial Education as well as during her campaign for state representative. On the National Commission for Industrial Education, Nestor questioned witnesses during committee hearings. Many of her questions were to elicit testimony favorable to her constituency. For example, in asking Mr. Verrill during a committee hearing whether a
report regarding the number of men and women contains data as to how many women have positions of formal authority, Nestor highlights the lack of needed data and reframes what Verrill believes the report to communicate. Instead of communicating that women and men participate in balanced numbers in many industries, the report now communicates that the Department of Labor does not know whether women have equal opportunities for advancement as do men. During her campaign for state representative, Nestor routinely reports disparaging anecdotes regarding her opponent. This indicates a desire on Nestor’s part to control how others view her opponent, and in turn how others view her own candidacy for state representative. Most interestingly, although Control of Knowledge and Information is accessed frequently in Nestor’s practice of leadership as a politician, the primary evidence for her use of this source of power comes exclusively from Nestor’s own words and actions. This could reveal an active desire on Nestor’s part to control knowledge and information, or possibly a recognition of the utility of controlling, accessing, and understanding the knowledge and information relevant to the conflicts of interests she wished to mediate as a politician.

**Sources of Power by Relation to Each Other**

In Nestor’s practice of leadership as a politician, Formal Authority was one of the primary sources of power through which Nestor was able to effect change. Also interesting, however, is how Formal Authority granted Nestor access to other sources of power. One relationship among sources of power is between Formal Authority and Control of Decision Processes. Another intriguing relationship is between Formal Authority and Gender and the Management of Gender Relations.
Formal authority refers to authority granted through the position held in an organization. Control of decision processes occurs when a leader is able to control the premises, processes, issues, and objectives surrounding decisions. Through her position as a member of the National Commission on Industrial Education, Nestor received authority to gather information and work in conference with her fellow commission members to draft recommendations to Congress and President Woodrow Wilson regarding vocational education in the United States. On several occasions, Nestor challenged the premise of what may be considered vocational education. For example, in statements to the Commission, Nestor excluded farm work and housekeeping from being vocations for which women and girls required education. On another occasion, Representative Hughes, a member of the Commission, attempted to curtail testimony that would position home economics entirely outside of the realm of vocational education. Nestor’s formal authority as a member of the Commission allowed for opportunities to define the premises of decisions as a leader rather than as an outside commentator. However, Nestor at times felt a distinct inability to control decision making processes in her appointment to labor commissions during the First World War. Nestor belonged to the Advisory Committee on National Defense, but quickly discovered that the committee would not be able to implement any of their recommendations. Nestor did not control meeting agendas, and did not have much influence over the men on the Council of National Defense who created the Committee. In her capacity as Executive Director of the Council of Women in Industry, Nestor was able to create a loosely organized group to monitor working conditions in factories making products for the armed forces, but she
did so by separating from decision makers rather than by influencing the decisions that were made.

Nestor’s formal authority on the Council of Women in Industry also allowed Nestor to access *Gender and the Management of Gender Relations* as a source of power. Nestor served as one of two women on a committee dominated by men. The men on the Committee held to a prevailing ideology of the vocation of women that would, by definition, prescribe training in domestic skills and talent for women and industrial skills and talents for men. Through Nestor’s formal position on the committee, Nestor was able directly to challenge stereotypes of the role of women in the workplace in a national forum.

**Absent Sources of Power**

Research into Nestor’s practice of leadership as a politician revealed that although Nestor accessed a variety of sources of power, no evidence emerged that she accessed the following:

1) **Control of Boundaries**

2) **Ability to Cope with Uncertainty**

3) **Control of Technology**

**Control of Boundaries** refers to power leader’s exercise when they are able to control transactions occurring at junctures of different elements within an organization.

For the purposes of this chapter, a politician is a leader who represents a constituency within and towards a formal government institution. Nestor’s service on national committees and her campaign for public office qualify as distinct episodes in her public
life in which Nestor was practicing leadership as a politician. In politics, diverse constituencies would typically create numerous junctures through which Nestor could seek to control boundaries. For example, on the National Commission for Industrial Education, Nestor had meetings with educators and advocacy organizations regarding their views on industrial education. Little evidence exists to suggest that Nestor sought to increase her influence on the National Commission by increasing her relationships with these adjunct entities while she was serving on the Commission. Similarly, Nestor served on several Women’s Committees during the First World War. These Women’s Committees interfaced routinely with the Department of War, yet there is no evidence that Nestor used this juncture to increase her power. Finally, when Nestor was asked by a representative of the Governor’s office to recuse herself from the Democratic primary race for state representative, Nestor had an enormous opportunity to manipulate the juncture between her campaign, Weber’s campaign, and the interests of the Governor’s office to achieve her goal of work hour limits for women. Nevertheless, she either remained unaware of the opportunity or chose not to pursue it.

Furthermore, Agnes Nestor did not appear to access Ability to Cope with Uncertainty as a source of power. This could be because the nature of Nestor’s work as a politician was clearly proscribed. For example, on the National Commission, Nestor represented women workers and labor on the issue of industrial education, an issue she and the American Federation of Labor had already researched extensively. As a member of various Women’s Committees during the First World War, Nestor often acknowledged that others were uncertain, but that she herself was to watch against the degradation of
working conditions for women during work time and to help women explore new
opportunities in the workplace. Finally, as a candidate, Nestor appeared to focus on what
was essentially a binary choice: either win the race or lose the race. She accessed many
sources of power (most notably Interpersonal Alliances and Control of “Informal
Organization”) to do her best to win, but despite this being her first attempt to win
election to public office, she had been elected to numerous offices numerous times in the
International Glove Workers Union of America and the Women’s Trade Union League.
The concept of winning votes was not new to Nestor, and although Nestor publicly
expressed confidence in her campaign, all indications were that her chances of success
were slim. Also, the fact that she did not include the race in her autobiography implies
not only that Nestor was unprepared for any outcome other than a victory, but that she
did not view the experience of running for office as an opportunity to increase her power
to effect change as a politician. Most importantly, her primary goal in entering the race at
all appears to be personal antipathy for her opponent, in which case uncertainty over the
outcome matters even less, so long as Nestor successfully manages to force her opponent
to fend off a primary challenge. In that regard, for Nestor, the outcome of her campaign
was likely never in doubt.

Conclusion

As a politician, Agnes Nestor discovered a separate context in which she could
lead and effect change. In a political context dominated by men, Agnes Nestor worked to
resolve conflicts of interest between her constituency and other interests pursued by those
serving on government bodies. Beginning with her work on the National Commission on
Vocational Education, continuing in her work on Women’s Committees during the First World War, and finally in her campaign for the Illinois General Assembly, Nestor drew on Interpersonal Alliances, Networks, and Control of “Informal Organization” and Formal Authority to increase the space afforded to women in the workplace and in political life.
CHAPTER IV
AGES NESTOR—SOCIAL REFORMER

“If women are to be taken before the police courts we should have women sitting in those courts.”

Introduction

A social reformer resolves conflicts of interest between dominant and marginalized social groups. During her public life, Agnes Nestor worked as a social reformer to resolve conflicts of interests between dominant groups of Americans and women who experienced American life at the margins, particularly women who worked for wages. In Nestor’s public life as a social reformer, three core strategies emerge that create three unique contexts for Nestor to access power and resolve conflict as a social reformer: first, Agnes Nestor sought to effect social change through securing the right of women to vote; second, Nestor sought to effect social change through limiting the working hours of women; third, Nestor sought to effect social change through working to defeat the Equal Rights Amendment to the Constitution of the United States. This chapter examines the sources of power (if any) Agnes Nestor accessed as a social reformer in each of three strategies employed throughout her public life.

“The Working Girl’s Need of Suffrage”

Agnes Nestor worked as a social reformer to mediate conflicts of interests in favor of marginalized groups, particularly women workers. One strategy Nestor utilized
to effect change as a social reformer was to secure for women the right to vote, a right universally denied to American women until 1920. The first documented instance of Agnes Nestor working towards universal suffrage was in fall of 1905, when the State Federation of Women’s Clubs was “counting on you to speak”\(^1\) at a Federation meeting regarding the right of women to vote. Later, Grace Nicholes requested that Nestor speak to the Chicago Woman’s Club regarding women’s suffrage:

Anna told me that you would speak for us on suffrage at the Chicago Woman’s Club, Wednesday Morning, December 16. I am so glad that you can come. The general topic is to be ‘What is Woman’s Great Limitation?’ I would like to have you talk about ten minutes on how you think the ballot would help the girls in the Industrial World.\(^2\)

Throughout 1909, Nestor continued to work publicly to secure the right of women to vote, mostly within the network of the Women’s Trade Union League and with other prominent Chicago social reformers such as Jane Addams, Margaret Drier Robins, and Anna Nicholes.\(^3\) That year, Women’s Trade Union League member Mary Spaulding Lee invited Nestor to come to Springfield to participate in a “Suffrage Hearing”\(^4\) as “a member of the delegation on the Suffrage Special going to Springfield for the Suffrage

\(^1\) Anna E. Nicholes to Agnes Nestor, postcard, September 27, 1905, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

\(^2\) Grace Nicholes to Agnes Nestor, December 3, 1908, box 1, folder 3, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

\(^3\) “Speakers and Delegates Appointed to Represent Various Chicago Clubs at the Suffrage Hearing in Springfield,” leaflet, [ca 1909], box 1, folder 4, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

\(^4\) Mary Spaulding Lee to Agnes Nestor, Postcard, January 18, 1909, box 1 folder 4, Agnes Nestor Papers Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.
The twenty women on the Suffrage Express travelled to Springfield under the slogan, “Men, who love the Freedom which your Fathers won for You, Pay your Debt by Winning Freedom for your Daughters.” Nestor remembers, “As arranged, the train stopped at various towns en route, and the various delegates spoke to groups at the stations. Because it was an industrial town, I was selected to speak at Joliet.” Nestor and fellow activists for women’s suffrage traveled to Springfield to lobby the Illinois General Assembly for the right of women to vote in local city elections. While support for the right of women to vote had been increasing enough to allow a delegation of prominent women to travel publicly to lobby Springfield for change, the Chicago Tribune reported:

Woman suffragists early next week will move on the legislators in Springfield assembled. Miss Lillian Henderson of Norway has been chosen to tell why foreigners should vote. Miss Agnes Nestor, organizer of trade unions, will tell the lawmakers and others why the waitresses, manicurists, and the hairdressers should vote for the mayor. Mrs. Eugene M. Bacon, former President of the Federation of Women’s Clubs of Illinois, will tell of the need felt among church members to vote. Twenty speakers will go to Springfield on the special train on Monday.”

Given their coverage of Nestor’s leadership within the International Gloveworkers’ Union of America, the editorial board and correspondents of the Chicago Daily Tribune

5Nestor, *Women’s Labor Leader*, 118.

6Catharine W. McCulloch to Agnes Nestor, Postcard, [ca 1909], box 1, folder 4, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

7Nestor, *Women’s Labor Leader*, 118.

were aware that Nestor never worked as a manicurist, waitress, or a hairdresser.

Nevertheless, Nestor believed not only that manicurists, glove makers, and typists ought to vote for their mayor, but that working women in particular could secure better wages and working conditions as powerfully by voting as through collective bargaining. In a lengthy editorial, Nestor outlined her position, believing

Of all the groups of women asking for the ballot the working girl needs it and can benefit more by its power and use than any other group. She needs it for every reason that the working man needs it and no one would want to imagine him being deprived of it in our day. To us it is not a question of equal rights but a question of equal needs.9

Nestor’s attitude towards suffrage differed from other contemporary suffragists in that Nestor’s advocacy did not typically address issues of fairness related to the inclusion of women in the electorate. Rather, Nestor’s perspective on suffrage centered more on the need for working women to participate in the electorate. This subtle difference permeates Nestor’s argument for social change via the vote. According to Nestor, “We need the ballot to improve our conditions of labor, to secure proper laws for health and safety of women workers, not only through legislation but in matter of organization.”10 Because much of what Nestor sought to change in the lives of women workers ultimately required a legislative solution, Nestor frequently links the struggle for wages and higher working conditions to the enfranchisement of women:

The attitude of the lawmaker and the public official toward women is not intended to be that of indifference or neglect toward the interests of women. Their attitude is a natural consequence resulting from the feeling


10Ibid.
these men owe to those who have placed them in office. Public officials have just gotten into the habit of overlooking women’s needs when women are not able to voice them for themselves.\(^{11}\)

Public officials are responsible to their entire constituency, both men and women, and yet at this point, were elected exclusively by men. According to Nestor, lack of accountability to women on the part of those entrusted to shape policies that affected women greatly hindered her efforts toward social reform. Although Nestor believed that women were as entitled to vote as men, she also believed that the right to vote was as necessary to improving the working conditions for working women as it was to organize women into labor unions. Believing “It is true that ‘As ye sow, so shall ye reap,’ so also will it be true that ‘As you vote so shall you benefit.’”\(^{12}\)

**The Fight for the Shorter Working Day**

Although Agnes Nestor participated in the women’s suffrage movement in Illinois, her primary work as social reformer laid in lobbying for legislation limiting the hours of work for women. Nestor’s public life began in 1902 when she and fellow labor leaders organized the International Glove Workers Union of America. At that time, Nestor typically worked ten hours per day and six days per week,\(^{13}\) twenty hours more labor than the contemporary forty hour standard. Furthermore, employers could require employees to work overtime and were free to set shift length and time without any statutory limits.

\(^{11}\)Ibid.

\(^{12}\)Ibid.

From the beginning of Nestor’s involvement with the Women’s Trade Union League of America, special legislation limiting the hours of work for women was as much a priority as attaining the right of women to vote.

The Supreme Court of the United States at the time was a barrier to reformers’ efforts to limit the work hours of women by statute. Based on a precedent set in Lochner v. New York, laws limiting the hours that women could work in factories or other places of work infringed upon employers’ right to conduct business as they pleased. Delivering the majority opinion in this case, Justice Rufus Peckam wrote, “The statute necessarily interferes with the right of contract between the employer and employes [sic], concerning the number of hours in which the latter may labor in the bakery of the employer.” This interpretation of a worker’s right to sell labor undercut efforts to establish uniform hours of work and leisure, and aligned the Supreme Court against reformers seeking to limit working hours. Responding to the Lochner decision in particular, the Women’s Trade Union League of Chicago opened a meeting to the press to discuss their position regarding a woman’s freedom of contract. Mrs. Raymond Robins, close friend of Agnes Nestor, is quoted outlining the League’s position on “freedom of contract” theory:

It seems strange and like a wanton perversion of justice that so many attempts by women to secure legislation as to hours, protection from machinery, and other working conditions, have been defeated by the courts on the grounds that such laws would interfere with the individual woman’s right to dictate the terms of her employment? What equality is

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15 Ibid.
there between her and the factory manager? The law will step in to safeguard property rights. Why can’t the law interfere to safeguard a woman’s health? It is all the capital she has.  

Focusing on the health of women workers, however, was not only a Women’s Trade Union League position and talking point, but also a strategy. Faced with a string of judicial defeats at the state, local, and national level, activists recognized that legislation that simply limited work hours for women would not stand judicial scrutiny. Instead, activists explicitly linked long work hours for women to negative health outcomes. This strategy had its first test in 1903, when Oregon enacted a statute that prevented women who worked outside of the home from working more than ten hours in a row. When a laundry owner from Oregon named Muller was later arrested for requiring an employee to work thirteen hours, he appealed his conviction in light of the Supreme Court of the United States ruling in Lochner. The Oregon Supreme Court, however, in State v. Muller, upheld the law as a health measure meant to protect women. The Oregon Supreme Court affirmed the state legislature’s intent to afford women special protections under the law because, according to its majority opinion, factory, retail, and service work affected the health of women in ways that men did not experience. Although limited to the state of Oregon, this ruling was widely seen as a victory for reformers such as Agnes


17State v. Muller, 48 Ore. 252; 85 P. 855, (1906).

18Ibid.

19Ibid.
Nestor who sought to improve working conditions for female laborers. Later, the United States Supreme Court bolstered the Muller decision in Bunting vs. Oregon, narrowly affirming that the Oregon Law was not meant to limit the productivity of factories or other employers but to advance the health of women. Bunting was an especially notable case in that justices relied heavily upon sociological evidence of fatigue and work stress found in the Brandeis Brief. The Brandeis Brief presented hundreds of pages of data outlining the uniquely damaging effects of long work hours for women workers:

> Long hours of labor are dangerous for women primarily because of their special physical organization. In structure and function women are differentiated from men. Besides these anatomical and physiological differences, physicians are agreed that women are fundamentally weaker than men in all that makes for endurance: in muscular strength, in nervous energy, in the powers of persistent attention and application. Overwork, therefore, which strains endurance to the utmost, is more disastrous to the health of women than of men, and entails upon them more lasting injury.

Because the Oregon statute capped the workday for any woman in a factory to ten hours per day on the grounds that longer work hours posed health hazards for women, so the Court reasoned that government had a legitimate interest in regulating hours of employment. Because the Supreme Court upheld the Oregon ten-hour law, Nestor and the Women’s Trade Union League could approach their lobbying efforts from a new perspective that, given a Judiciary relatively hostile to labor interests, was at least

\[20\text{Bunting v. Oregon, 243 U.S. 426; 37 S. Ct. 435; 61 L. Ed. 830, (1917).}

\[21\text{Louis Dembitz Brandeis, and Curt Muller. } \textit{Curt Muller, Plaintiff in Error V. State of Oregon. Brief for Defendant in Error. Louis D. Brandeis, Counsel for State of Oregon.} \text{ 1908.} \]
constitutionally defensible. Nestor remembers, “Now at long last, to us who were working for the rights of working women in Illinois and elsewhere, it looked as though the long fight for the shorter working day for women could be won!” Nestor possessed at least one copy of the Brandeis Brief, and drafted her central message around the brief’s central tenets.

In their efforts at social transformation, Nestor and her network of reformers maintained a concerted effort to educate those in power as well as to incite outrage. At a rally on September 27, 1908 sponsored by organized women workers, five hundred women attended to support legislation limiting the work hours of women to eight hours in a day. Rally attendees “resolved to start a national ‘talking campaign’ in the interest of the eight hour day for women in industry. And what is more, the women will keep on talking until legislators become so tired they will be forced to grant the demand from sheer exhaustion.” At the rally “Miss Agnes Nestor, organizer for the Women’s Trade Union league, spoke of the difficulties encountered in organizing women and urged the

22Nestor, Women’s Labor Leader, 88.

23William Hard to Agnes Nestor, July 21, 1908, box 1, folder 3, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

demand for the eight hour day.”

While working on lobbying strategy, Nestor and fellow activists repeatedly countered employer complaints of lowered production and lost wages with images of women hunched over worktables in dark rooms. In an editorial cartoon from the Chicago Daily News, Luther Bradley’s cartoon entitled “Sacred Motherhood,” depicts a tortured woman bearing an expression of visceral pain bent over a sewing machine. Creating the rhetorical link between employers and women’s health offered not only a strategy for drafting a bill that could withstand judicial scrutiny. Indeed, linking employers to perceived abusive business practices towards women became a favored strategy of Nestor and the Women’s Trade Union League. As more news stories appeared in the Chicago Tribune describing the plight of women in sweatshops, people in power became more receptive to the notion that women needed protection.

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Figure 1. Sacred Motherhood

In 1909, Agnes Nestor travelled with Jane Addams, Margaret Dreier Robins, and Anna Nichols to lobby both for women’s suffrage and an eight hour workday.\textsuperscript{27}

Although Nestor did support efforts to secure for women the right to vote, she was principally in Springfield to secure passage of a bill limiting the hours for all women working in factories, restaurants, or laundries to eight hours in a day. Nestor learned to lobby legislators on the job in Springfield, discovering:

“I would not take $10,000 for my experience at Springfield,” said Miss Nestor the other day. “I learned a lot that I did not know before about the way laws are made. When I went to Springfield, I was enthusiastic over the prospect of fighting the question out on its merits with bona fide arguments. But I soon learned that the legislature is a peculiar machine. You put a bill into it and then wait in anguish and

\textsuperscript{27}Ella S. Stewart and Catharine W. McCulloch to Agnes Nestor, [ca 1909], Illinois Equal Suffrage Association, box 1, folder 4, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.
despair for it to come out. And you may not recognize it as your own when it does finally make its appearance."\textsuperscript{28}

Indeed, the original bill that Nestor and the Women’s Trade Union League originally drafted was an eight-hour bill that applied to women in factories, restaurants, and laundries. And, at the start of the legislative process, Nestor surprised even the professional lobbyists and attorneys hired by the manufacturer’s associations to oppose her bill. Mr. J. S. Kline, attorney for the Manufacturer’s Association, testified “that the efficiency of women, ‘now recognized as being 25 per cent below that of men,’ would be decreased to 50 per cent”\textsuperscript{29} if work hour limits were applied to women. Nestor responded sharply, and described the enervating effects of continuous work at machines:

“I know because I have worked at them,” she said. “I have worked nine years at a machine in a glove factory. Work has been specialized, and it has been speeded up until women cannot work these long hours and keep their health. In three or four years their strength gives way. We have met these excuses of the manufacturers before. When we wanted a half holiday we could not have it because it would disturb trade conditions, but we organized and our employers finally conceded that we had a right to it. We have not noticed any disturbance in trade conditions.”\textsuperscript{30}


\textsuperscript{30}Ibid.
As the legislative process unfolded, Nestor discovered that the legislature would not pass such a measure. Mr. Joseph LeBosky, an attorney working with Nestor, wrote Nestor “I notice by the ‘Socialist’ this evening that the Employers Association expect to meet in a body before the Senate Committee on Wednesday at one o’clock, to protest against the eight hour bill. Strong measures ought to be taken at once to offset this attack. I am afraid that from the nature of the appeal reprinted in the ‘Socialist’, that the Employers Association honestly believe the bill to be unconstitutional. It should be amended before it passes if it can.” The specific amendments that the Employers Association were seeking would require that Nestor agree “to exclude the hotel and restaurant workers from the protection of the proposed law, and to accept a ten- instead of an eight-hour working day.” Nestor and her delegation included Lulu Holly, a laundry worker, and Elizabeth Maloney and Anna Willard, both waitresses. Nestor was an experienced negotiator, but evidence of conflict over what was worth giving up and for what she ought to make a principled stand appears in her autobiography:

   It was not so difficult to give up for the time our dream of the eight-hour day, for we saw that it could not at one stroke be gained. But the other seemed a heartbreaking concession. It meant leaving out our loyal fellow workers who had fought by our side so valiantly, waiting on tables right up to the last minute before train times, and resuming their duties immediately upon their returns from Springfield.33

31Jacob C. Le Bosky, Lawyer to Agnes Nestor, April 19, 1909, box 1, folder 4, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

32Nestor, Women’s Labor Leader, 96.

33Ibid.
Preferring to pass at least some work hour limits to none at all, Nestor “called a mass meeting in Chicago and explained the probable impossibility of having a broad eight hour bill passed. They asked permission to push the ten hour Oregon law simply for the purpose of getting the principle of limitation on the Illinois books.” Nestor returned to Springfield and assented to the compromise. The Senate passed her bill, and subsequently sent the bill to the House, where it was passed and ultimately signed by then Governor Deneen. The Tribune reported: “‘The workingwomen of Illinois have won a great victory in obtaining from the legislature a law limiting the hours of work to ten,’ said Miss Agnes Nestor, secretary of the Glove Workers’ union. ‘It established the principle of limitation and that is what we wanted.’”

Nestor’s leadership in guiding the ten-hour bill to Governor Deneen’s desk was at once celebrated and chided. Shortly after the legislative session ended, Chicago labor leaders spoke to the Chicago Tribune regarding this legislation. President John Fitzpatrick, President of the Chicago federation of Labor, “was inclined to belittle the value of the bill limiting the time of women in mechanical establishments and laundries to ten hour[s]. He declared the measure a weak compromise, insisting that the women sponsors for the measure should have stuck to their original demand for an eight hour

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35Ibid.
Fitzpatrick does not address whether such a stand might have lead to a
defeated bill entirely, or if defeat on principle is preferable to measured compromise, but
he is clear that “The Chicago Federation of Labor did not indorse [sic] the compromise
proposition.” A contrasting portrayal of Nestor’s work appears in the Chicago
Tribune’s “Four Girl Lobbyists Who Ran a Legislature” on July 25, 1909, nearly two full
months after the ten hour law was passed. Beneath the title of a full-page article in the
Sunday edition, is a spacious illustration of four women (Agnes Nestor, Lulu Holly,
Elizabeth Maloney, and Anna Willard) pulling strings attached to men in suits seated in a
large legislative hall. After describing Nestor’s legislative victory in great detail, the
article finishes with a testimonial:

“These four young women waged one of the most effective
educational campaigns I have ever heard of in a legislative body,” said
Representative Chiperfield. “They were tirelessly and persistently on the
job. They never lost an opportunity to make an argument or win a
supporter. Many who were opposed to their bill at first capitulated
entirely, while some who were indifferent were converted into militant
missionaries. They were the champion lobbyists of the session.”

Agnes Nestor’s leadership successfully guided work hour limitations through a
legislature despite what Nestor could have regarded as overwhelming opposition from

36“Labor Bills Boon to Women: Long Hours in Factories Cease with Ten-Hour

37Ibid.

38“Four Girl Lobbyists Who Ran a Legislature.” Chicago Daily Tribune (1872-

39Ibid.
manufacturing groups. Nestor faced tremendous pressures from dominant
stakeholders who opposed work-hour limits, forcing Nestor to compromise on many key
positions. Most notably, instead of an eight-hour day, women would work for ten hours,
and only if they worked in factories. Despite these compromises, Josephine Casey
reminded Nestor of what she had accomplished:

> It was very pretty of you to send us a copy of the Bill. It seems to us it is a very good one. It is much better to have more occupations included even at the sacrifice of a few hours in the week to some. Last year while working in the factory, I could appreciate the value of limiting the hours of evil. I can’t bear even now to think of the aches in my shoulders & it is a satisfaction to know that the girls who are still at the job can go home at a certain hour. I want as many of the girls as possible to be spared the torture of braving when they are tired, the for lady say in a sweet impersonal tone, “Another hour overtime tonight girls.” This is why I don’t think your bill is such a compromise.  

However, after the new law went into effect, Nestor and “the Women’s Trade Union
League were not at all satisfied with the Illinois Ten-Hour Day Law of 1909.
Consequently, the 1911 session of the Illinois Legislature found us again at Springfield.”
From a strong legislative foundation in the 1909 ten-hour law, Nestor continued to wage
battles for yet more stringent work hour limitations and to amend the legislation to
include women in more occupations:

> Women workers in mechanical establishments, factories, and laundries are protected under the present law. The amendment includes women employes [sic] of telephone and telegraph companies, express and transportation companies, mercantile establishments, and park attendants. Miss Agnes Nestor of the Glove Workers’ union, Miss Anna Willard and

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40Josephine Casey to Agnes Nestor, April 26, 1911, box 1, folder 5, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.
Miss Elizabeth Maloney of the Waitresses’ union, will go to Springfield tomorrow to have the bill introduced.”

Although groups representing dominant organizations of employers and manufacturers worked hard to oppose further expansion of work hour limits for women, Nestor enjoyed both organizational and financial backing from the Women’s Trade Union League, whose receipts indicate that they reimbursed Nestor for time spent lobbying at “Nine Dollars for 3 days time in legislative work.”

Furthermore, the Women’s Trade Union League conducted extensive fundraising in support of lobbying efforts: “A benefit performance for the legislative committee will be given at the Whitney Theater on Feb 20. ‘Don’t Lie to Your Wife’ is the title of the play.” Additional support came from “More than 100 women, representing the alumnae of eleven colleges” who at a meeting announced “A fund of $1,000 was pledged for the campaign for the proposed amendment.”

The financial support of the Women’s Trade Union League and of other women’s organizations meant that Nestor, Willard, and Maloney could continue their efforts toward a shorter work day and still manage personal expenses. As such, the three women scheduled meetings with representatives and senators from the Illinois General

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42Elizabeth Maloney to Agnes Nestor, Receipt for $9.00, February 25, 1911, box 1, folder 5, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.


Assembly, and worked to communicate their position to elected officials amid a much larger and often more connected crowd of opposition lobbyists representing employers and industry associations. Meanwhile, prominent allies such as Jane Addams made public appearances to speak on behalf of the bill: "‘It is the dull fatigue in long hours of work,’ said Miss Jane Addams, ‘that is apt to break down the physical and nervous organization of women, and I hope all will do what we can to aid this work.’"

In February of 1911, Nestor first introduced the amended version of the ten-hour law in the Illinois Senate, which at the time was relatively open to measures seen as protecting women. However, Nestor and her allies fought much harder to guide expanded work-hour protections for women through the Illinois House of Representatives. Because “The opposition we were meeting now represented not only the manufacturers, but also the large merchants and the utility operators,” women workers who wanted shorter working days were in conflict not only with the status quo, but differentiated conflicts particular to each industry. “Everyone had been coming to me and asking would we take this amendment and that, and I had said no to everyone. Our friends would come to us and say seriously: ‘Well, you’re going to lose your measure.’ I’d say, ‘I don’t think so, and, besides, we’d rather lose it than to have any joker in it at all’ […] They had me sit on the floor of the Senate and help advise them about

45Ibid.

46Ibid.

amendments. What I always advised was no amendment at all. Then in the house we
had the most awful time to get them to take it up at all. They tried to shelve it by not
taking it up. And, of course, if a bill isn’t taken up out of order it isn’t often taken up at
all.”48 For Nestor, maintaining the original language of the bill was vitally important to
the effect of the legislation. Nestor recalls:

The opposition’s first move was to make a motion that the bill be amended
to read, “That no female be employed over ten hours in any one day
except for a 90-day period during each year.” What a law that would
have made! Shades of the Christmas rush at the Five-and-Ten!49

Allowing a 90-day exception for unlimited overtime would essentially change nothing for
women working in highly seasonal businesses, a compromise Nestor was unwilling to
allow. Similarly, the opposition put forward a “motion that SECTION 5, that part of the
bill which would force the employer to keep a time book of hours worked by female
employees, be deleted from the bill.”50 Without the requirement that employers maintain
accurate records of time worked, women would have no recourse under the law should
they be required to work more than ten hours in a day, and the ten-hour law would then
be unenforceable. This also was unacceptable.

Finally, Nestor’s opponents moved “for an amendment cutting out the ten-hour
day limitation and substituting instead a sixty-hour week limitation. Such a change

48Mary Isabel Brush, “Most Sweeping Woman Labor Law the Work of Two
(accessed September 4, 2011).

49Nestor, Women’s Labor Leader, 102.

50Ibid.
would have taken the heart out of the bill and killed its whole purpose."

Unfortunately, this amendment passed the house by one vote. "Would you believe it, after all our declining any amendment, they passed it by one vote. Imagine that, and our feelings, if you can, another girl and myself, sitting up there in the gallery, to hear our measure be annihilated like that. We already had a ten hour law governing three occupations and this new measure killed even the poor little one already in effect." Instead of limiting the daily working hours for women, the Illinois House of Representatives passed a labor bill that repealed the current daily ten-hour limit and replaced it with a weekly sixty-hour limit that opened to door to new litigation in the courts. This was not a bill that Nestor could support.

However, the amended House bill still needed to win approval by the Senate before passing. In its current form, Nestor’s bill was now markedly different than the bill originally approved by the Senate. Nestor hoped that the Senate would refuse to agree to the House amendments and force a vote on the bill as originally written.

It didn’t get back to the Senate for amending until after 11 o’clock on the final night, and then only with assistance. There are lots of places where a bill can get stuck, and this one stumped its toe in the clerk’s office. We got the Senate to send for it, however, and after it once got into their hands, they were only a few minutes in striking out the amendment. The bill had no accident on its return trip to the house.

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51Ibid., 103.


53Ibid.
Forced to vote on the bill with the original statutory work-hour limitations, the
“woman’s ten hour bill, in the exact wording desired by Agnes Nestor and the organized
laboring women of Chicago, is up to the governor. The bill as amended in the senate,
striking out the Shurtleff amendment, won in the house by a vote of 88 to 55.”
Agnes Nestor, in partnership with fellow working women and the Woman’s Trade Union
League, successfully expanded work hour limitations for women to include nearly all
occupations where women could be employed.

Friends were quick to note the positive effects of the new labor law, which on at
least one occasion benefited both men and women. Harriet Ried writes,

> Although gone from this Capital City, you are not forgotten, by
> your friends or by the merchants, the latter remembering you when they
> endeavor to adjust hours so that they will not be subject to fine. The first
day of July fell on Saturday, which made all the clerks aware that a new
law was in effect. I hear that one man clerk as he went home at ten
o’clock that night said: “First time in years I’ve been home this early on
Saturday night. I’m glad I work with women clerks.” Instead of having to
rush madly back on Saturday night, two of the girls at the boarding house
saunter in and say nonchalantly that they have two hours for supper!

Other women, however, noted unintended consequences of broad legislation limiting the
hours of work for women while not extended the same labor protections to men. A
woman named K.A. Holmes wrote to Nestor, cautioning her that structural differences in
certain types of work mean that work-hour limits for women effectively prevent some
women from working at all:

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55Harriet Reed to Agnes Nestor, July 12, 1911, box 1, folder 5, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.
I would like to call your attention to the working hours of women railway telegraphers and station agents.

We are engaged in the same occupation as men, work the same number of hours for the same pay, have the same rights. In short, it is “Equal pay for equal work” in our trade. In those states where the woman’s 48 hour law and 54 hour law are in effect, we are barred from working, unless we are exempted from these laws. Please understand we are not advocating longer working hours, but we are asking to be exempted from these laws until such time as the women and men alike can have the 48 hours or 54 hours per week law. […] You will understand our work is different from factory work and some other woman’s occupations where it can be arranged for the women to work shorter hours than what the men do. In our trade, we all work the same number of hours, men and women alike. We are in favor of the 8 hour law for all, men and women alike and no other way.56

Because women working as clerks in railway stations were already doing precisely the same work as men working in railway stations, Holmes argues that if work day limits were applied to their industry, employers would have powerful disincentives to hire women at all. Nestor, however, was unpersuaded by Holmes’ letter, responding,

The law in the several states limiting the hours of women’s work have been passed as health measures and while you claim your work is different from factory work we know there is a strain in your work and while different from the strain of factory work it is possibly equally as great.

At this time we are trying to extend whatever protection we can to women workers and we trust that the women already protected by laws limiting their working hours to eight or nine hours a day will appreciate it sufficiently to try to keep this protection.57

56 Mrs. K.A. Holmes to Women’s Industrial Commission, October 6, 1917, box 1, folder 8, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

57 Agnes Nestor to Mrs. K.A. Holmes, November 12, 1917, box 1, folder 8, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.
Choosing not even to address the issue of whether women in Mrs. Holmes’ office might be replaced by men for whom no limit on hours of work yet exists, Nestor informs Holmes that the work of a railway clerk is likely more draining than Holmes realizes and that she should appreciate whatever help Nestor and her allies are able to provide.

Holmes writes Nestor yet again, saying,

In reply to your letter of November 12th regarding the working hours for women employed as railroad telegraphers. I [sic] do not seem to be able to make our grievance clear to you.

The women railroad telegraphers working on this division are employed on the Missouri division of the Rock Island Ry. Co. but we are not working in the state of Missouri. As you know Missouri has a law limiting the working hours of women to 54 hours per week, six days a week. But the men’s working hours are not limited that way. Now stations employing three operators working eight hours a day which would be 56 hours per week on account women can only work 54 hours a week a man would be employed instead of a woman because the woman could not put in the required number of hours.58

Nestor’s campaign to limit work hours for women in Illinois affected labor legislation in states across the Midwest. This work proceeded under the assumption that all women benefited from legislation targeted at reducing the daily hours of work and that every occupation carried the same risk of fatigue and health complications. Holmes’ letters reveal that work hour limitations did affect some women negatively, yet Nestor’s response indicates a preference for homogeneity in women’s labor laws rather than a targeted approach by industry.

58K. A. Holmes to Agnes Nestor, November 15, 1917, box 1, folder 8, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.
Moving forward, Nestor’s leadership in the campaign for expanded ten-hour protections for women workers did not end when the amended bill was put into law. Nestor was also concerned with how Illinois would implement and enforce the new law, particularly with a new plan to regulate the hours of work through a special commission. Nestor expressed her interest in the commission directly to Herschel H. Jones, fellow social reformer:

“We are very much interested at this time in the commission to be appointed by the Governor, authorized by a bill passed at the last session, to investigate the conditions of labor of women workers with special reference to the hours of labor. The commission is to be composed of seven members and they are directed to report to the Governor by December 1918. You can understand how important that piece of work will be.”

Governor Deneen and the Illinois General Assembly was considering “giving an Industrial Commission the power to establish hours of labor for women in the different occupations and in most cases to extend as well as reduce the hours in the state statute, the theory of this plan being that there are degrees of strain in the various occupations; that a different limitation of hours may be required in certain employments and that a commission is in a better position to gather this information and to classify the occupations than the legislature.” Nestor, however, reviews the results of similar plan in other states, and avers that “while this power to regulate hours has been vested in the

59 Agnes Nestor to Herschel H. Jones, October 26, 1917, box 1, folder 8, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

commission [in Wisconsin] for four years, in no instance have the hours been reduced in a single occupation.” Fearing that a similar plan to substitute legislative oversight of work hour limitations with the oversight of a smaller commission, Nestor argues that “This commission plan leaves rulings open to review by the court which means that there may be constant litigation through the courts because rulings made, if they give real relief to the workers, are bound to be attacked by the employers […] There is too great a danger in delegating this legislative power to a commission.”61 Finally, Nestor concludes that “there should be a maximum legal day of eight hours for women in the industries now carefully worked and classified in the statutes, and other industries added if necessary. Let us work to retain statutory limitation and to secure the eight hour day to safeguard the thousands of working women and the future welfare of our race.”62 Nestor remained keenly interested in maintaining legislation uniquely targeting women for work hour limitations well beyond her legislative victory in 1911.

Agnes Nestor continued to speak regarding legislation affecting the hours of employment, continuously advocating for shorter working hours for women until her goal of an eight-hour day was finally accomplished in 1937. As in much of Nestor’s work, Nestor belies some ambivalence toward her success. In Nestor’s autobiography, Nestor remembers “The victory did not seem as thrilling as that of the passage of the Women’s Ten-Hour-Day Law more than twenty-five years before. We had been so young, then, and in between there had been so many defeats. Also, so many of us who had begun the

61Ibid.

62Ibid.
fight were gone." However, in the midst of her weariness which appears to have grown as she aged, Nestor saved this letter from a woman who understood what an eight hour day could have meant:

Dear Madam,

Just a few words from an ardent admirer of yours for the fight you have waged for so many years for the welfare of women. I have never had the pleasure of seeing or hearing you but I have watched and waited all these long years for the gallant and humane fight for the welfare of women.

It is just a little difficult for me to say and express what my heart feels.

I am 72 years old and for 28 almost 29 years was employed in one of the loop dept. houses. Am now incapacitated and no longer able to work and after those years of faithful service there was nothing in store for me only to stay home by physicians orders.

I sincerely hope all the Dept. Stores will live up the law because they surely take all the energy and strength from their help and do not appreciate the service of loyal employees.

Hope you will be blessed with health and strength for many long and happy years to come and I sincerely hope all your efforts will be crowned with success.

Hoping I have not trespassed on your valuable time and pray that God will bless you and your gallant humane fights. I beg to remain,

Respectfully,

Mrs. Alice Hickey

63Nestor, Woman’s Labor Leader, 277.

64Alice Hickey to Agnes Nestor, June 17, 1937, box 3, folder 8, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.
Defeating the Equal Rights Amendment

In 1923, the National Woman’s Party proposed an Amendment to the Constitution of the United States meant to guarantee equal rights for men and for women. The text of the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) was “Men and women shall have equal rights throughout the United States and every place subject to its jurisdiction.” As a social reformer, Agnes Nestor worked to resolve conflicts of interest between marginalized women and male-dominated societal norms, and thus, vehemently opposed the ERA.

Justifying her opposition to the Equal Rights Amendment, Nestor believed “if this amendment were to be passed, it would nullify all separate laws for women and at one stroke wipe out all the gains of a century of heartbreaking effort.” The reason why Nestor believed that the ERA threatened a lifetime of work securing better hours and working conditions for women was because “we had got passed bills limiting the working hours for women on the grounds of protection of health of the mothers and potential mothers of the race.” Nestor had worked tirelessly to ensure that woman would have different rights than men, particularly regarding their hours and working conditions. From Nestor’s perspective as a social reformer who wanted women to hold a unique place in the law, she believed that the Illinois Ten-Hour Law would no longer

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66 Nestor, *Woman’s Labor Leader*, 236.

67 Ibid., 237.
stand against a constitutional amendment that guaranteed women and men complete equality before the law.

When the Equal Rights Amendment came to a hearing before the Illinois Senate in 1924, Nestor and allies appeared to testify before the committee. Nestor “suggested that possibly members of the National Women’s Party had no personal knowledge of what it means to work ten or twelve hours a day in a factory, and for that reason, were not so anxious to prevent any disarrangement of the present laws relating to women workers—laws which had been obtained in the interest of women after great effort.”

According to Nestor, the conditions that the ERA was meant to ameliorate would actually be exacerbated. In a message to President Calvin Coolidge, Nestor, with other women of the American Federation of Labor, writes

“We regard [women’s labor legislation] not as discrimination towards women, but means toward an equal industrial footing for women and men. Generally speaking, the women-employing industries are the industries in which the longest hours prevail. The destruction of all legal limitations upon hours of work for women would have the effect of lengthening women’s hours of labor, without affecting the hours of men, thereby increasing the present inequality between the hours of women and those of men. Furthermore, to take the position that there should be no labor laws for women which do not apply also to men is to say, in effect, that women’s conditions of employment shall not be improved by law until Legislatures are ready to enact similar laws for men—a time which, when current economic facts are faced, is clearly far in the future.”

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Nestor regarded special protective legislation for women as a means towards achieving equality in the workplace. And, although supportive of laws limiting the hours of work for men, Nestor also believed that an eight- or ten-hour work day for men was not yet a possibility. Indeed, the National Women’s Trade Union League, of which Agnes Nestor was now the President, published in 1944 a circular titled “The Dangers of the Equal Rights Amendment” which stated,

“[The Equal Rights Amendment] deals with abstract rights and not real rights. Legal equality between the sexes is not possible because men and women are not identical and their interests therefore cannot be equal,” and that, “IT IS MISLEADING AND THEREFORE DANGEROUS. It masquerades as a progressive measure, whereas it is really detrimental to the interests of women and the social order. For instance it would eliminate all existing State legislations, enacted especially in the interests of women.”\(^{70}\)

Against the threat of a constitutional amendment that she believed would undo decades of advocacy, Nestor remained a powerful and outspoken opponent to the Equal Rights Amendment throughout her career as a social reformer. By working to defeat the Equal Rights Amendment, Agnes Nestor sought to effect social change by ensuring that hard-won protective legislation for women would remain in force throughout Illinois and all states working to improve the work hours and working conditions of women.

\(^{70}\)National Women’s Trade Union League of America, “The Dangers of the Equal Rights Amendment,” February, 1944, box 4, folder 5, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.
Analysis

Gareth Morgan defines power as the “medium through which conflicts of interest are ultimately resolved” \(^{71}\). Within the above narrative, it is evident that Nestor drew from several sources of power to effect social change. The sources of power that emerge can be categorized into fourteen distinct methods in which leaders can increase their currency in their organizations and their external environments (see Appendix C for complete analysis in chart form). The words and actions that are evidence of sources of power Nestor used as a social reformer are illustrated below:

Words and Actions of Agnes Nestor

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Formal Authority</th>
<th>Authority one holds that is associated with the position one holds in an organization.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Words

We are very much interested at this time in the commission to be appointed by the Governor, authorized by a bill passed at the last session, to investigate the conditions of labor of women workers with special reference to the hours of labor. The commission is to be composed of seven members and they are directed to report to the Governor by December 1918. You can understand how important that piece of work will be. \(^{72}\)

Actions

Miss Nestor reported for the Committee on Industrial Legislation. The annual meeting will be held this month. So far the chief work done by committee members has been

\(^{71}\)Morgan, *Images of Organization*, 162.

\(^{72}\)Agnes Nestor to Herschel H. Jones, October 26, 1917, box 1, folder 8, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.
debating the question of amending the 8 hour law. The committee has voted to oppose all amendments to the law.  

| Control of Scarce Resources | Ability to control the resources an organization uses to accomplish its work, or conversely, the ability to reduce an organization’s dependency on external resources. |

**Words**

No specific words noted.

**Actions**

No specific actions noted.

| Use of organizational structure, rules, and regulations | Ability to invoke laws, policies, and procedures to one’s advantage. |

**Words**

No specific words noted.

**Actions**

However, the amended House bill still needed to win approval by the Senate before passing. In its current form, Nestor’s bill was now markedly different than the bill originally approved by the Senate. Nestor hoped that the Senate would refuse to agree to the House amendments and force a vote on the bill as originally written. “It didn’t get back to the Senate for amending until after 11 o’clock on the final night, and then only with assistance. There are lots of places where a bill can get stuck, and this one stumped its toe in the clerk’s office. We got the Senate to send for it, however, and after it once got into their hands, they were only a few minutes in striking out the amendment. The bill had no accident on its return trip to the house.”

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written, the “woman’s ten hour bill, in the exact wording desired by Agnes Nestor and the organized laboring women of Chicago, is up to the governor. The bill as amended in the senate, striking out the Shurtleff amendment, won in the house by a vote of 88 to 55.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Control of decision processes</th>
<th>Influence over decision premises (control of agenda and strategies that force or guide attention to our point of view) decision processes (how, when, and where decisions are made, and who gets to make them), and decision issues and objectives (control of reports and information upon which decisions will be made, and rhetorical skill in arguing for perspectives).</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Words**

No specific words noted.

**Actions**

No specific words noted.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Control of knowledge and information</th>
<th>Possessing the right information at the right time, having exclusive access to data, or talent in organizing, synthesizing, and applying data.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Words**

**General Need**

Of all the groups of women asking for the ballot the working girls needs it and can benefit more by its power and use than any other group. She needs it for every reason that the working man needs it and no one would want to imagine him being deprived of it in our day. To us it is not a question of equal rights but a question of equal needs.

We need the ballot to improve our conditions of labor, to secure proper laws for health and safety of women workers, not only through legislation but in matter of organization.

**Health**

So much of our time is spent in our places of work that special attention must be given to the conditions there. Our places should be well lighted and ventilated. Crowding workshops should be prohibited. Seats should be provided and their use permitted at

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intervals, when work allows, in stores, restaurants, and other places where standing is required.

Long hours of labor sap the strength and vitality of the workers, and the poison of fatigue is a danger to our health.

Long hours are usually accompanied by low wages. Low wages deprive the workers of the means of proper food, clothing, housing, educations and recreation. Low wages deprive one of all that gives the joy and fullness of life.

**Safety**
All hazardous and dangerous machinery in factories and workshops should be properly guarded.

Fire laws not enforces, inspections neglected or inadequate provisions for proper inspections, lack of fire laws for the prevention of fires and safety in case of faire, and fire trap places of work all spell hazard and disaster. The catastrophe where so many young lives were lost in the Newark factory fire and the memorable Triangle fire in New York shirt wais factory are all fresh in our minds. And still conditions may be such that a similar disaster can happen in your city now.

Fire traps must be abolished, barred and blockaded passageways must be cleared, fire drills must be practiced, adequate fire escape must be provided, dark stairs must be lighted and made safe for exits, and every protection afforded the worker for his safety in case of fire.

**Legislation**
This is all in the hands of our lawmakers to provide for in the way of legislations, inspection and enforcement.

What is the law in your State limiting the hours of work? How many inspectors and how many of the inspectors are women?

These are matters to look into and inform yourself about.

[...]

**Organization**
You may question how the power of the vote would help our organizations to obtain the proven changes of work when we have the strength of united efforts for collective [action] to secure the desired conditions.

In reply to this let me say that even when it is necessary to resort to a strike to win our just demands we have other forces than the employer to fight. The police has been used
on the side of the employer against the worker and the Courts are resorted to for
injunctions and restraining orders against peaceful picketing—the method of informing
persons of the issue in dispute.

Such practices result in attorney fees and court expenses and take our funds from relief
work and oftentimes we have to go through the disagreeableness of trials resulting from
unjust arrests.

In our Mississippi Valley States, excepting Illinois, the women have no voice in the
selection of the officials who control the appointment of the men in charge of these
departments of the city administration.

**Use and Benefit**
To take active part in any movement tends to release the mind and broaden the view of
people. It gives opportunity for expression and encourages initiative.

We should all face our industrial as well as our civic problems. When called into action,
all women can meet their responsibilities in a much more intelligent and forceful way if
they are armed with the ballot. A new spirit for work and an added sense of power to
bring about justice will come to every woman through full enfranchisement.

**The Vote**
The attitude of the lawmaker and the public official toward women is not intended to be
that of indifference or neglect toward the interests of women. Their attitude is a natural
consequence resulting from the feeling these men owe to those who have placed them in
office. Public officials have just gotten into the habit of overlooking women’s needs
when women are not able to voice them for themselves.

For working women there will come the dawn of a brighter day when full suffrage is
granted to them. It is true that “As ye sow, so shall ye reap,” so all will it be true that “As
you vote so shall you benefit.”

Beginning in 1913 a new plan for the administration and regulation of hours of labor for
women has been adopted in Wisconsin, Oregon and Kansas and is now being advocated
by certain groups in Illinois and possibly in other states, too. It is what is termed
“flexible,” giving an Industrial Commission the power to establish hours of labor for
women in the different occupations and in most cases to extend as well as reduce the
hours in the state statute, the theory of this plan being that there are degrees of strain in the
various occupations; that a different limitation of hours may be required in certain
employments and that a commission is in a better position to gather this information and
to classify the occupations than the legislature. Inasmuch as this new method had been in

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effect in at least two states for four years and in one state for two years, it is interesting to review the results so far obtained.

[...] While this power to regulate hours has been vested in the Wisconsin commission for four years, in no instance have the hours been reduced in a single occupation. They are still investigating the need of shorter hours and early this year received a petition to shorten hours.

The Oregon legislature passed an Act in 1913 declaring it unlawful to employ women and minors in any occupation for unreasonably long hours or under surroundings or conditions detrimental to the health or morals, but it provided that the commission might declare for any occupation standards not exceeding the ten-hour statutory limit. In this respect that it set a maximum, it differed from the Wisconsin law.

[...] In Kansas, in 1915, the Industrial Welfare Commission was created for the purpose of establishing such standards of wages, hours and conditions of labor as might be held reasonable and not detrimental to health and welfare.

[...] As studies were made and excessive hours and overstrain noted, they were added to the list. Mercantile establishments were first limited in the early eighties. So the limitation of hours by statute has been carefully worked out, and these laws, passed in the different states, have been tested in not only the State courts, but in the United States supreme court and held to be reasonable and necessary. Their decisions were based on the volumes of testimony of experts, compiled from all parts of the world, showing the dangers of fatigue.

[...] this commission plan leaves rulings open to review by the court which means that there may be constant litigation through the courts because rulings made, if they give real relief to the workers, are bound to be attacked by the employers [...] There is too great a danger in delegating this legislative power to a commission. It should be reserved by the legislature.

[...] There should be a maximum legal day of eight hours for women in the industries now carefully worked and classified in the statutes, and other industries added if necessary.
Let us work to retain statutory limitation and to secure the eight-hour day to safeguard the thousands of working women and the future welfare of our race.77

Dear Mr. Bard:-

By this time you no doubt know that the so-called relaxation bills to amend the Women’s 8 Hour Law to allow a 10 hour day and a 54 hour week for a period of 10 weeks and also amending the 6 Day Week Law to allow a 7 day week, passed the House and Senate in Illinois.

[…]

We have been quoting from the report signed by you for the Navy Department and by representatives of the War Department, Maritime Commission, Public Health Service, War Manpower Commission, War Production Board, Commerce Department and Labor Department, entitled “Recommendation on Hours of Work for Maximum Production,” issued about a year ago, where you urged the 6 day week, the 8 hour day and the 48 hour week as approximately the best working schedule for sustained efficiency and urged that plants now employing industrial workers longer than 48 hours a week should carefully analyze their present situation with respect to output and time lost because of absenteeism, accident, illness, and fatigue. […] We had presumed that these were still the standards as advocated by the Navy Department.

[…]

I would appreciate any further information that you can give me regarding the present policy of your Department on the question of labor standards and would like to know whether you intended your telegram to pass the bills relaxing our labor laws.

Very truly yours,

Agnes Nestor78


78 Agnes Nestor to Mr. Ralph A. Bard, Assistant Secretary, Navy Department, DC, June 9, 1943, box 4, folder 4, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.
What will be the place of women wage earners in the Post-War industries and what special problems will they face? This is a question we are concerned about at this time.

[…]  

How many women expect to remain in industry out of this large working force? This is difficult to answer but from surveys made and cut-backs thus far it is presumed about 80 per cent may remain.  

[…]  

There will be new fields of employment for women that will absorb some women and give them an opportunity for employment. Women have learned new skills and will want to use them and in many industries they will be marketable after the war so we look to much shifting in employment from the old time jobs held before the war to newer jobs, particularly by women who have been in war work and experienced the better jobs. There will be opportunities in the electrical, chemical and plastic and many newly developed industries for which women are particularly suited and in which many of them are skilled. These industries will continue and expand and here the employment of women is probable. 

[…]  

The issue of equal pay for equal work is not a new one but has come sharply to the fore during the war when so many women were replacing men and the difference in wage rates for the same work became more evident. 

**Actions**

**General Need**

Of all the groups of women asking for the ballot the working girls needs it and can benefit more by its power and use than any other group. She needs it for every reason that the working man needs it and no one would want to imagine him being deprived of it in our day. To us it is not a question of equal rights but a question of equal needs. 

We need the ballot to improve our conditions of labor, to secure proper laws for health and safety of women workers, not only through legislation but in matter of organization.

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79 Draft of article by Agnes Nestor “Place of Women Wage Earners in Post-War Industry” [ca 1943], box 4, folder 4, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.
Health
So much of our time is spent in our places of work that special attention must be given to the conditions there. Our places should be well lighted and ventilated. Crowding workshops should be prohibited. Seats should be provided and their use permitted at intervals, when work allows, in stores, restaurants, and other places where standing is required.

Long hours of labor sap the strength and vitality of the workers, and the poison of fatigue is a danger to our health.

Long hours are usually accompanied by low wages. Low wages deprive the workers of the means of proper food, clothing, housing, educations and recreation. Low wages deprive one of all that gives the joy and fullness of life.

Safety
All hazardous and dangerous machinery in factories and workshops should be properly guarded.

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Fire traps must be abolished, barred and blockaded passageways must be cleared, fire drills must be practiced, adequate fire escape must be provided, dark stairs must be lighted and made safe for exits, and every protection afforded the worker for his safety in case of fire.

Legislation
This is all in the hands of our lawmakers to provide for in the way of legislations, inspection and enforcement.

What is the law in your State limiting the hours of work? How many inspectors and how many of the inspectors are women?

These are matters to look into and inform yourself about.

[...]
Organization
You may question how the power of the vote would help our organizations to obtain the proven changes of work when we have the strength of united efforts for collective [action] to secure the desired conditions.

In reply to this let me say that even when it is necessary to resort to a strike to win our just demands we have other forces than the employer to fight. The police has been used on the side of the employer against the worker and the Courts are resorted to for injunctions and restraining orders against peaceful picketing—the method of informing persons of the issue in dispute.

Such practices result in attorney fees and court expenses and take our funds from relief work and oftentimes we have to go through the disagreeableness of trials resulting from unjust arrests.

In our Mississippi Valley States, excepting Illinois, the women have no voice in the selection of the officials who control the appointment of the men in charge of these departments of the city administration.

Use and Benefit
To take active part in any movement tends to release the mind and broaden the view of people. It gives opportunity for expression and encourages initiative.

We should all face our industrial as well as our civic problems. When called into action, all women can meet their responsibilities in a much more intelligent and forceful way if they are armed with the ballot. A new spirit for work and an added sense of power to bring about justice will come to every woman through full enfranchisement.

The Vote
The attitude of the lawmaker and the public official toward women is not intended to be that of indifference or neglect toward the interests of women. Their attitude is a natural consequence resulting from the feeling these men owe to those who have placed them in office. Public officials have just gotten into the habit of overlooking women’s needs when women are not able to voice them for themselves.

For working women there will come the dawn of a brighter day when full suffrage is granted to them. It is true that “As ye sow, so shall ye reap,” so all will it be true that “As you vote so shall you benefit.”

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by certain groups in Illinois and possibly in other states, too. It is what is termed “flexible,” giving an Industrial Commission the power to establish hours of labor for women in the different occupations and in most cases to extend as well as reduce the hours in the state statue, the theory of this plan being that there are degrees of strain in the various occupations; that a different limitation of hours may be required in certain employments and that a commission is in a better position to gather this information and to classify the occupations than the legislature. Inasmuch as this new method had been in effect in at least two states for four years and in one state for two years, it is interesting to review the results so far obtained.

[...]  

While this power to regulate hours has been vested in the [Wisconsin] commission for four years, in no instance have the hours been reduced in a single occupation. They are still investigating the need of shorter hours and early this year received a petition to shorten hours.

The Oregon legislature passed an Act in 1913 declaring it unlawful to employ women and minors in any occupation for unreasonably long hours or under surroundings or conditions detrimental to the health or morals, but it provided that the commission might declare for any occupation standards not exceeding the ten-hour statutory limit. In this respect that it set a maximum, it differed from the Wisconsin law.

[...]  

In Kansas, in 1915, the Industrial Welfare Commission was created for the purpose of establishing such standards of wages, hours and conditions of labor as might be held reasonable and not detrimental to health and welfare.

[...]  

As studies were made and excessive hours and overstrain noted, they were added to the list. Mercantile establishments were first limited in the early eighties. So the limitation of hours by statute has been carefully worked out, and these laws, passed in the different states, have been tested in not only the State courts, but in the United States supreme court and held to be reasonable and necessary. Their decisions were based on the volumes of testimony of experts, compiled from all parts of the world, showing the dangers of fatigue.

[...]  

this commission plan leaves rulings open to review by the court which means that there may be constant litigation through the courts because rulings made, if they give real relief to the workers, are bound to be attacked by the employers [...]There is too great a danger
in delegating this legislative power to a commission. It should be reserved by the legislature.

[…]

There should be a maximum legal day of eight hours for women in the industries now carefully worked and classified in the statutes, and other industries added if necessary. Let us work to retain statutory limitation and to secure the eight-hour day to safeguard the thousands of working women and the future welfare of our race.81

Dear Mr. Bard:-

By this time you no doubt know that the so-called relaxation bills to amend the Women’s 8 Hour Law to allow a 10 hour day and a 54 hour week for a period of 10 weeks and also amending the 6 Day Week Law to allow a 7 day week, passed the House and Senate in Illinois.

[…]

We have been quoting from the report signed by you for the Navy Department and by representatives of the War Department, Maritime Commission, Public Health Service, War Manpower Commission, War Production Board, Commerce Department and Labor Department, entitled “Recommendation on Hours of Work for Maximum Production,” issued about a year ago, where you urged the 6 day week, the 8 hour day and the 48 hour week as approximately the best working schedule for sustained efficiency and urged that plants now employing industrial workers longer than 48 hours a week should carefully analyze their present situation with respect to output and time lost because of absenteeism, accident, illness, and fatigue. […] We had presumed that these were still the standards as advocated by the Navy Department.

[…]

I would appreciate any further information that you can give me regarding the present policy of your Department on the question of labor standards and would like to know whether you intended your telegram to pass the bills relaxing our labor laws.

Very truly yours,

Agnes Nestor\textsuperscript{82}

What will be the place of women wage earners in the Post-War industries and what special problems will they face? This is a question we are concerned about at this time.

[...]

How many women expect to remain in industry out of this large working force? This is difficult to answer but from surveys made and cut-backs thus far it is presumed about 80 per cent may remain.

[...]

There will be new fields of employment for women that will absorb some women and give them an opportunity for employment. Women have learned new skills and will want to use them and in many industries they will be marketable after the war so we look to much shifting in employment from the old time jobs held before the war to newer jobs, particularly by women who have been in war work and experienced the better jobs. There will be opportunities in the electrical, chemical and plastic and many newly developed industries for which women are particularly suited and in which many of them are skilled. These industries will continue and expand and here the employment of women is probable.

[...]

The issue of equal pay for equal work is not a new one but has come sharply to the fore during the war when so many women were replacing men and the difference in wage rates for the same work became more evident.\textsuperscript{83}

| Control of boundaries | Influence over transactions occurring at junctures between different elements within an organization. |

\textsuperscript{82}Agnes Nestor to Mr. Ralph A. Bard, Assistant Secretary, Navy Department, DC, June 9, 1943, box 4, folder 4, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

\textsuperscript{83}Draft of article by Agnes Nestor “Place of Women Wage Earners in Post-War Industry” [ca 1943], box 4, folder 4, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.
Words

Your letter addressed to the Woman’s Industrial Commission, Washington was received by the Woman’s Committee and referred to me for reply.

You complain of having a regulation of hours for women in States claiming that in those States where the Woman’s forty-eight hour law and the fifty-four hour law are in effect you are barred from working unless exempted from these laws.

Your letter puzzles me somewhat as you write as if you were talking for all women in your particular line of work, but do not say by what authority you speak for them or in what way you represent them.

The law in the several states limiting the hours of women’s work have been passes as health measures and while you claim your work is different from factory work we know there is a strain in your work and while different from the strain of factory work it is possibly equally as great.

At this time we are trying to extend whatever protection we can to women workers and we trust that the women already protected by laws limiting their working hours to eight or nine hours a day will appreciate it sufficiently to try to keep this protection.

Since the United States Supreme Court sustained the Oregon Ten Hour Law for men last spring and since the passage of the Adamson Law by Congress there has been considerable agitation in some states for eight-hour laws for men too. Until such a time as this can be extended to men, I advise, as one interested in the welfare and protection of working women, that we keep the shorter hours.84

Actions

No specific actions noted.

| Ability to cope with uncertainty | Describes how well a leader copes with unpredictable events both in the external and internal organizational landscape. |

Words

No specific words noted.

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84 Agnes Nestor to Mrs. K.A. Holmes, November 12, 1917, box 1, folder 8, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.
Actions

No specific actions noted.

| Control of technology | Control over technology that converts organizational inputs into outputs allows leader to determine the pace and quality of the organization’s work. |

Words

No specific words noted.

Actions

No specific actions noted.

| Interpersonal alliances, networks, and control of “informal organization” | Leaders can systematically build and cultivate power through interpersonal alliances and networks, incorporating whenever possible the help and influence of those who have common interests. The currency in these alliances is one of mutual dependency and exchange. |

Words

No specific words noted.

Actions

“Speakers and Delegates Appointed to Represent Various Chicago Clubs at the Suffrage Hearing in Springfield,” leaflet, [ca 1909], box 1, folder 4, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

Lists Agnes Nestor, Jane Addams, Mrs. Margaret Drier Robins, Anna E. Nicholes.

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85”Speakers and Delegates Appointed to Represent Various Chicago Clubs at the Suffrage Hearing in Springfield,” leaflet, [ca 1909], box 1, folder 4, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.
Control of counterorganizations

Counterorganizations exist to balance the power of an existing power structure. Unions, consumer groups, and social movements are examples of organizations that can wield considerable countervailing power and effect considerable organizational and environmental change.

Words

No specific words noted.

Actions

Because “The opposition we were meeting now represented not only the manufacturers, but also the large merchants and the utility operators,” women workers who wanted shorter working days were in conflict not only with the status quo, but differentiated conflicts particular to each industry. “Everyone had been coming to me and asking would we take this amendment and that, and I had said no to everyone. Our friends would come to us and say seriously: ‘Well, you’re going to lose your measure.’ I’d say, ‘I don’t think so, and, besides, we’d rather lose it than to have any joker in it at all’ […] They had me sit on the floor of the Senate and help advise them about amendments. What I always advised was no amendment at all. Then in the house we had the most awful time to get them to take it up at all. They tried to shelve it by not taking it up. And, of course, if a bill isn’t taken up out of order it isn’t often taken up at all.”

Symbolism and the management of meaning

Ability to shape the organization’s story, to call to mind certain images, symbols, and expressions that guide work and decision making a certain way, and influence over the way followers interpret their place in the organization.

Words

No specific words noted.

86 Anna E. Nicholes to Agnes Nestor, postcard, September 27, 1905, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

87 Nestor, Women’s Labor Leader, 102.

**Actions**

No specific actions noted.

| Gender and the management of gender relations | Leaders can manipulate prevailing views and stereotypes on the role of men and women at work to increase their influence over organizations and their environment. |

**Words**

Nestor remembers, “As arranged, the train stopped at various towns en route, and the various delegates spoke to groups at the stations. Because it was an industrial town, I was selected to speak at Joliet.”

We are very much interested at this time in the commission to be appointed by the Governor, authorized by a bill passed at the last session, to investigate the conditions of labor of women workers with special reference to the hours of labor. The commission is to be composed of seven members and they are directed to report to the Governor by December 1918. You can understand how important that piece of work will be.

**General Need**

Of all the groups of women asking for the ballot the working girls needs it and can benefit more by its power and use than any other group. She needs it for every reason that the working man needs it and no one would want to imagine him being deprived of it in our day. To us it is not a question of equal rights but a question of equal needs.

We need the ballot to improve our conditions of labor, to secure proper laws for health and safety of women workers, not only through legislation but in matter of organization.

**Health**

So much of our time is spent in our places of work that special attention must be given to the conditions there. Our places should be well lighted and ventilated. Crowding workshops should be prohibited. Seats should be provided and their use permitted at intervals, when work allows, in stores, restaurants, and other places where standing is required.

Long hours of labor sap the strength and vitality of the workers, and the poison of fatigue is a danger to our health.

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89 Nestor, *Women’s Labor Leader*, 118.

90 Agnes Nestor to Herschel H. Jones, October 26, 1917, box 1, folder 8, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.
Long hours are usually accompanied by low wages. Low wages deprive the workers of the means of proper food, clothing, housing, educations and recreation. Low wages deprive one of all that gives the joy and fullness of life.

**Safety**
All hazardous and dangerous machinery in factories and workshops should be properly guarded.

Fire laws not enforced, inspections neglected or inadequate provisions for proper inspections, lack of fire laws for the prevention of fires and safety in case of fire, and fire trap places of work all spell hazard and disaster. The catastrophe where so many young lives were lost in the Newark factory fire and the memorable Triangle fire in New York shirt wais factory are all fresh in our minds. And still conditions may be such that a similar disaster can happen in your city now.

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94Draft of article by Agnes Nestor “Place of Women Wage Earners in Post-War Industry” [ca 1943], box 4, folder 4, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.
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“Speakers and Delegates Appointed to Represent Various Chicago Clubs at the Suffrage Hearing in Springfield,” leaflet, [ca 1909], box 1, folder 4, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

Lists Agnes Nestor, Jane Addams, Mrs. Margaret Drier Robins, Anna E. Nicholes96

The first documented instance of Agnes Nestor working towards universal suffrage was In fall of 1905, the State Federation of Women’s clubs was “counting on you to speak”97 at a Federation Meeting regarding the right of women to vote.

Miss Nestor reported for the Committee on Industrial Legislation. The annual meeting will be held this month. So far the chief work done by committee members has been debating the question of amending the 8 hour law. The committee has voted to oppose all amendments to the law.98

95 Agnes Nestor to Mrs. K.A. Holmes, November 12, 1917, box 1, folder 8, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

96 “Speakers and Delegates Appointed to Represent Various Chicago Clubs at the Suffrage Hearing in Springfield,” leaflet, [ca 1909], box 1, folder 4, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Structural factors that define the stage of action</th>
<th>Ability to access sources of powers given structural realities that affect the internal and external environment in which leadership is practiced.</th>
</tr>
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</table>

**Words**

No specific words noted.

**Actions**

No specific actions noted.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The power one already has</th>
<th>The presence of power attracts others who want to feed off a leader’s influence, lending the power holder uninvited support. Similarly, the experience of success becomes a transforming force as one victory leads to another.</th>
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**Words**

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**Actions**

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100 Anna E. Nicholes to Agnes Nestor, postcard, September 27, 1905, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.
Words and Actions of Others

| Formal Authority | Authority one holds that is associated with the position one holds in an organization. |

Words

We will have a Board Meeting at Hull House, Friday 6:30 PM Nov 24. Taking dinner together in the Coffee Home. Can you arrange to be there as early as possible? Trusting this is a convenient night,

[signed]101

As it was impossible to secure the use of the room at the School of Civics for Friday Afternoon, the next meeting of the conference for the limitation of hours of work for women will be held at the City Club, Tuesday, at 2:30 P.M.102

“Well, you are a trump! How did you ever manage to do that piece of work, to get your bill out of the legislature, when everybody thought it was lost. I can not tell you how glad I am and how deeply I rejoice with you and how much I know it is going to mean to the women of your State.

I think you ought to come to us and teach us how to do things so that we can follow your example.

My very warmest congratulations and appreciation for your very able work and splendid victory.

I cannot tell you how glad I shall be to see you again in Boston, how much I shall have to hear and how eager I am to have your story not only off the strike but of your legislative fight and your wisdom on some of our difficult problems.103

101 Anna E. Nicholes to Agnes Nestor, postcard, November 23, 1905, box 1, folder 1, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

102 S.P. Beckinridge to Agnes Nestor, March 18, 1909, box 1, folder 4, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

103 Mary E. Dreier to Agnes Nestor, May 23, 1911, box 1, folder 5, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.
**Actions**

Rec’d of Legislative Committee of the Women’s Trade Union League Nine Dollars for 3 days time in legislative work.\(^{104}\)

Lists “Miss Agnes Nestor, President” as the “Toastmistress”

Montage of photographs of NWTUL presidents. Below each photograph, captions read as follows:

JANE ADDAMS: Called the First Meeting to Order
MARY E. MCDOWELL: First President, 1904, 1907
MRS. RAYMOND ROBINS: Second President 1907-1913
Agnes NESTOR: Third President, 1913-1939\(^{105}\)

| Control of Scarce Resources | Ability to control the resources an organization uses to accomplish its work, or conversely, the ability to reduce an organizations’ dependency on external resources. |

**Words**

No specific words noted.

**Actions**

“Margaret asks me to enclose this check and to say that it is for you Miss Maloney and anyone else that it is thought best to bring down for the fight tomorrow.

“Mrs. Robins is well and sends regards to all at the office.”\(^{106}\)

Rec’d of Legislative Committee of the Women’s Trade Union League Nine Dollars for 3 days time in legislative work.\(^{107}\)

\(^{104}\)Elizabeth Maloney to Agnes Nestor, Receipt for $9.00, February 25, 1911, box 1, folder 5, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

\(^{105}\)Program of the Thirty-Fifth Anniversary of the National Women’s Trade Union League, February 4, 1939, box 4, folder 1, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

\(^{106}\)Raymond Robins to Agnes Nestor, April 26, 1909, box 1, folder 4, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.
“A benefit performance for the legislative committee will be given at the Whitney theater on Feb 20. “Don’t Lie to Your Wife” is the title of the play.”108

Additional support came from “More than 100 women, representing the alumnae of eleven colleges” who at a meeting announced “A fund of $1,000 was pledged for the campaign for the proposed amendment.”109

| Use of organizational structure, rules, and regulations | Ability to invoke laws, policies, and procedures to one’s advantage. |

**Words**

No specific words noted.

**Actions**

A Bill

for an Act to regulate and limit the hours of employment of females in any mechanical establishment or factory or laundry in order to safeguard the health of such employes [sic], to provide for its enforcement and a penalty for its violation.

Section 1. *Be it enacted by the People of the State of Illinois represented in the General Assembly:* That no female shall be employed […] more than ten hours during any one day.

Provides for a fine of $25- $100 for each offense.110

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107 Elizabeth Maloney to Agnes Nestor, Receipt for $9.00, February 25, 1911, box 1, folder 5, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.


110 Illinois General Assembly, Senate Bill No. 497 (Springfield, 1909), box 1, folder 4, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.
Control of decision processes

Influence over decision premises (control of agenda and strategies that force or guide attention to our point of view) decision processes (how, when, and where decisions are made, and who gets to make them), and decision issues and objectives (control of reports and information upon which decisions will be made, and rhetorical skill in arguing for perspectives).

<table>
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| “I notice by the “Socialist” this evening that the Employers Association expect to meet in a body before the Senate Committee on Wednesday at one o’clock, to protest against the eight hour bill. Strong measures ought to be taken at once to offset this attack.”

“I am afraid that from the nature of the appeal reprinted in the “Socialist”, that the Employers Association honestly believe the bill to be unconstitutional. It should be amended before it passes if it can.”

It was very pretty of you to send us a copy of the Bill. It seems to us it is a very good one. It is much better to have more occupations included even at the sacrifice of a few hours in the week to some. Last year while working in the factory, I could appreciate the value of limiting the hours of evil. I can’t bear even now to think of the aches in my shoulders & it is a satisfaction to know that the girls who are still at the job can go home at a certain hour. I want as many of the girls as possible to be spared the torture of braving when they are tired, the forlady say in a sweet impersonal tone, “Another hour overtime tonight girls.” This is why I don’t think your bill is such a compromise & why I hope it will pass the House.”

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<tr>
<th>Actions</th>
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<tr>
<td>No specific actions noted.</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Control of knowledge and information</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Possessing the right information at the right time, having exclusive access to data, or talent in organizing, synthesizing, and applying data.</td>
</tr>
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111 Jacob C. Le Bosky, Lawyer to Agnes Nestor, April 19, 1909, box 1, folder 4, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

112 Josephine Casey to Agnes Nestor, April 26, 1911, box 1, folder 5, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.
Anna told me that you would speak for us on suffrage at the Chicago Woman’s Club, Wednesday Morning, December 16. I am so glad that you can come. The general topic is to be “What is Woman’s Great Limitation?”

I would like to have you talk about ten minutes on how you think the ballot would help the girls in the Industrial World.¹¹³

“Miss Nestor, Please be ready to speak from train 3 minutes at Joliet + send me, 135 Adams St Monday, a synopsis of your speech so I can duplicate for papers”¹¹⁴

Reverse side bears printed message: “Men, who love the Freedom which your Fathers won for You, Pay your Debt by Winning Freedom for your Daughters.”

Although gone from this Capital City, you are not forgotten, by your friends or by the merchants, the latter remembering you when they endeavor to adjust hours so that they will not be subject to fine. The first day of July fell on Saturday, which made all the clerks aware that a new law was in effect. I hear that one man clerk as he went home at ten o’clock that night said: “First time in years I’ve been home this early on Saturday night. I’m glad I work with women clerks.” Instead of having to rush madly back on Saturday night, two of the girls at the boarding house saunter in and say nonchalantly that they have two hours for supper! Minnie Lord, from Indianapolis, says that her native town of Peoria was madly excited July 1ˢᵗ, arranging shifts. You recall that interesting talked from Peoria who spoke of marvelous wages and ideal conditions, carriages, etc.? He declared the ten hour law would never affect them, yet I fancy he was one of the excited ones when July 1st arrived.

You have been recommended to me by Miss Mary McDowell to take her place at our Woman’s Club at Henry Booth House next Monday afternoon. She was to speak to us on “Laws concerning Women in Illinois”. We have sent out cards and hope for a big meeting. It is a great disappointment not to have Miss McDowell, but I have heard you and I know that you can give us just what we ought to know about the new bill which you had so much to do with securing. Hence I am very anxious to have our women hear you.¹¹⁵

¹¹³Grace Nicholes to Agnes Nestor, December 3, 1908, box 1, folder 3, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

¹¹⁴Catharine W. McCulloch to Agnes Nestor, Postcard, [ca 1909], box 1, folder 4, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

¹¹⁵Mary Healey to Agnes Nestor, November 24, 1909, box 1, folder 4, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.
“I rejoice with you in the Supreme Court decision, and feel that you were an important factor in the ordeal. Work is the best thing in life, but work for a reasonable number of hours and for fair and living wages.”

Letterhead: Immigrants’ Protective League

“Mrs. Robins has probably told you that she thought you would present the ten hour situation to the Social Service Club on Monday Evening-March 20-and so we have announced you on the program. We are going to have the various bills which are now pending in the Legislature that social workers are interested in or should be interested in presented. This means six speakers so we will have to limit each one to 15 minutes. The Club meets in the International Harvester Bldg. Michigan Ave. & Harrison- and begins with a dinner at 6:30. We would like to have you be the guest of the Club on that Evening for dinner.

We would like to have you talk to the Chicago Woman’s club May 4th, 1911, 2:30 P.M. as our club has followed the ten hour fight they are well up with it, so we will ask you to choose your own subject.

Dear Madam,

Just a few words from an ardent admirer of yours for the fight your have waged for so many years for the welfare of women. I have never had the pleasure of seeing or hearing you but I have watched and waited all these long years for the gallant and humane fight for the welfare of women.

It is just a little difficult for me to say and express what my heart feels.

I am 72 years old and for 28 almost 29 years was employed in one of the loop dept. houses. Am now incapacitated and no longer able to work and after those years of faithful service there was nothing in store for me only to stay home by physicians orders.

I sincerely hope all the Dept. Stores will live up the law because they surely take all the energy and strength from their help and do not appreciate the service of loyal employees.

116Mary Durham to Agnes Nestor, April 26, 1910, box 1, folder 5, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

117Grace Abbot to Agnes Nestor, March 16, 1911, box 1, folder 5, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

118Mrs. A. J. Link to Agnes Nestor, July 25, 1910 box 1, folder 5, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.
Hope you will be blessed with health and strength for many long and happy years to come and I sincerely hope all your efforts will be crowned with success.

Hoping I have not trespassed on your valuable time and pray that God will bless you and your gallant humane fights. I beg to remain,

Respectfully,

Mrs. Alice Hickey 119

My dear Miss Nestor:

As you know, I was delighted with the talk you gave my class of girls on April 13 and this is simply confirmation on paper (for your files).

I wish it were possible to have such realistic talks from more speakers for students to gain so much vital insight for their future reporting and editing.

Many thanks again, and best wishes for the speedy completion of your book. 120

**Actions**

I am sending you two books in which perhaps you will interested [sic].

One is Louis Brandeis’s brief which won a favorable decision from the United States Supreme Court on the subject of the ten-hour law for women in Oregon.

The other is the Illinois report on women in factories.

You may have seen both these books but in case you haven’t I think you will enjoy looking them over. 121

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119 Alice Hickey to Agnes Nestor, June 17, 1937, box 3, folder 8, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

120 Lucy Rogers Hawkins, Medill School of Journalism, May 6, 1946, box 4, folder 6, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

121 William Hard to Agnes Nestor, July 21, 1908, box 1, folder 3, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.
“I have been explaining to Station girls about the 10 hour law – one worked until 9 o’clock six weeks before Xmas – the other from 6 a.m. – 6 p.m. in a Bakery – but I presume our law would not cover her care.”

“We are planning a leaflet on the 10 Hour Law – a very simple statement telling who and what are protected by this law.”

Legislations Section:

In the fall of 1916, the Legislative Committee sent a letter to each candidate for nomination to the legislature asking him to state his position in regard to the women’s eight hour bill. Many replies were received and these were tabulated and printed. In several instances these were used in the campaign that followed. Members of the Legislative committee appeared before each of the political parties of the state when they were drawing up their platforms and asked that an eight hour day for women be included in their platform. The Democrats included an eight hour day for both men and women and the Republican went on record as being in favor of shorter hours for women.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Control of boundaries</th>
<th>Influence over transactions occurring at junctures between different elements within an organization.</th>
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**Words**

No specific words noted.

**Actions**

No specific actions noted.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ability to cope with uncertainty</th>
<th>Describes how well a leader copes with unpredictable events both in the external and internal organizational landscape.</th>
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</thead>
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122 Anna Nicholes to Agnes Nestor, December 26, 1909 box 1, folder 4, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

123 Mary Drier Robins to Agnes Nestor, May 8, 1910, box 1, folder 5, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

124 Annual Report of the WTUL of Chicago, June 16, 1917, box 1, folder 8, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.
Control of technology

Control over technology that converts organizational inputs into outputs allows leader to determine the pace and quality of the organization’s work.

Interpersonal alliances, networks, and control of “informal organization”

Leaders can systematically build and cultivate power through interpersonal alliances and networks, incorporating whenever possible the help and influence of those who have common interests. The currency in these alliances is one of mutual dependency and exchange.

Lays out itinerary beginning Chicago on April 13th for a hearing on woman’s suffrage to take place at 3pm on Wednesday April 14th. 125

“The enclosed circular explains the arrangements Mrs. McCulloch’s Committee has made for a public hearing at Springfield on the afternoon of April thirteenth. We are planning for fifteen or twenty speakers who will present various aspects of the need of the municipal franchise for women.

“We hope very much you will consent to be one of them, giving a three minute talk.” 126

125 Ella S. Stewart and Catharine W. McCulloch to Agnes Nestor, [ca 1909], Illinois Equal Suffrage Association, box 1, folder 4, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.
You have been recommended to me by Miss Mary McDowell to take her place at our Woman’s Club at Henry Booth House next Monday afternoon. She was to speak to us on “Laws concerning Women in Illinois.” We have sent out cards and hope for a big meeting. It is a great disappointment not to have Miss McDowell, but I have heard you and I know that you can give us just what we ought to know about the new bill which you had so much to do with securing. Hence I am very anxious to have our women hear you.127

We would like to have you talk to the Chicago Woman’s club May 4th, 1911, 2:30 P.M. as our club has followed the ten hour fight they are well up with it, so we will ask you to choose your own subject.128

Chicago, IL

Addams writing as Chairman of The Child Welfare Exhibit

Recently in New York City a Child Welfare Exhibit was held, the purpose of which was to educate the community in the betterment of conditions for children.

This Exhibit is to be moved to Chicago, supplemented by local material, and displayed in the Coliseum from the 11th to the 26th of ay. The expense of the entire exhibit has been most generously assumed by Mrs. Cyrus H. McCormick, Jr.

A group of representative citizens have been requested to lend their names as a General Committee. Will you kindly allow us the use of your name?129

General Secretary of The Child Welfare Exhibit

Repeats previous request to allow C.W. Exhibit to use Nestor’s name.130

126Jane Addams to Agnes Nestor, March 29, 1909, box 1, folder 4, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

127Mary Healey to Agnes Nestor, November 24, 1909, box 1, folder 4, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

128Mrs. A. J. Link to Agnes Nestor, July 25, 1910, box 1, folder 5, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

129Jane Addams to Agnes Nestor, March 23, 1911, box 1, folder 5, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.
Actions

Never mind the papers, forget them entirely, whether they praise or blame. Keep your conscience clear, and your mind and heart free from bitterness and nothing can harm you long. Can’t you meet me Sunday at the N.W. R.R. depot 9:30am. Bring your sister and a simple lunch and spend the day on the Lakeshore at Kenilworth? I have the tickets.131

The enclosed circular sets forth the purpose of an Industrial Exhibit which will be held in Chicago next March. A series of conferences on allied subjects will be held in connection with the exhibit. These will be under the direction of a committee of twenty-five of which Mrs. Raymond Robins is chairman.

May we ask your co-operation as a member of this committee? We will so reduce the number of committee meetings that they will take as little of your time as possible. Kindly send your reply on the enclosed post-card.132

“In response to your kind acceptance to take part in the hearing at Springfield, the Committee has put your name in the enclosed list of speakers.”133

George W. Coleman, “Invitation to Fourth Annual Sagamore Sociological Conference,” [ca 1910], box 1, folder 5, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.134

Meanwhile, prominent allies such as Jane Addams made public appearances to speak on behalf of the bill: “‘It is the dull fatigue in long hours of work,’ said Miss Jane Addams,

130 Thomas W. Allinson, to Agnes Nestor, April 11, 1911, box 1, folder 5, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

131 Mary E. McDowell to Agnes Nestor, postcard, June 15, 1906, box 1, folder 3, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

132 Jane Addams to Agnes Nestor, January 24, 1907, box 1, folder 3, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

133 Jane Addams to Agnes Nestor, April 9, 1909, box 1, folder 4, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

134 George W. Coleman, “Invitation to Fourth Annual Sagamore Sociological Conference,” [ca 1910], box 1, folder 5, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.
‘that is apt to break down the physical and nervous organization of women, and I hope all will do what we can to aid this work.’\textsuperscript{135}

| Control of counterorganizations | Counterorganizations exist to balance the power of an existing power structure. Unions, consumer groups, and social movements are examples of organizations that can wield considerable countervailing power and effect considerable organizational and environmental change. |

**Words**

“I notice by the “Socialist” this evening that the Employers Association expect to meet in a body before the Senate Committee on Wednesday at one o’clock, to protest against the eight hour bill. Strong measures ought to be taken at once to offset this attack.

“I am afraid that from the nature of the appeal reprinted in the “Socialist”, that the Employers Association honestly believe the bill to be unconstitutional. It should be amended before it passes if it can.” \textsuperscript{136}

It deals with abstract rights and not real rights. Legal equality between the sexes is not possible because men and women are not identical and their interests therefore can not be equal.

[…]

**IT IS MISLEADING AND THEREFORE DANGEROUS**

It masquerades as a progressive measure, whereas it is really detrimental to the interests of women and the social order. For instance it would eliminate all existing State legislations, enacted especially in the interests of women.\textsuperscript{137}


\textsuperscript{136}Jacob C. Le Bosky, Lawyer to Agnes Nestor, April 19, 1909, box 1, folder 4, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

\textsuperscript{137}National Women’s Trade Union League of America, “The Dangers of the Equal Rights Amendment,” February, 1944, box 4, folder 5, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.
Actions

No specific actions noted.

| Symbolism and the management of meaning | Ability to shape the organization’s story, to call to mind certain images, symbols, and expressions that guide work and decision making a certain way, and influence over the way followers interpret their place in the organization. |

Words

Reverse side bears printed message: “Men, who love the Freedom which your Fathers won for You, Pay your Debt by Winning Freedom for your Daughters.”

Actions

Figure 2. Luther Bradley cartoon published to incite outrage over conditions of working women

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138 Catharine W. McCulloch to Agnes Nestor, Postcard, [ca 1909], box 1, folder 4, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.
Gender and the management of gender relations

Leaders can manipulate prevailing views and stereotypes on the role of men and women at work to increase their influence over organizations and their environment.

Words

You remember that you spoke so well for us at the Reform Department of the Chicago Women’s Club that they wanted the whole club to hear it. They gave us Wednesday afternoon, February 17, at two o’clock. Can you be with us then and give substantially the same talk?\textsuperscript{140}

As it was impossible to secure the use of the room at the School of Civics for Friday Afternoon, the next meeting of the conference for the limitation of hours of work for women will be held at the City Club, Tuesday, at 2:30 P.M.\textsuperscript{141}

Actions

A Bill

for an Act to regulate and limit the hours of employment of females in any mechanical establishment or factory or laundry in order to safeguard the health of such employes [sic], to provide for its enforcement and a penalty for its violation.

Section 1. \textit{Be it enacted by the People of the State of Illinois represented in the General Assembly}: That no female shall be employed […] more than ten hours during any one day.

Provides for a fine of $25- $100 for each offense.\textsuperscript{142}


\textsuperscript{140} Grace Nicholes to Agnes Nestor, February 3, 1909, box 1, folder 4, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

\textsuperscript{141} S.P. Beckinridge to Agnes Nestor, March 18, 1909, box 1, folder 4, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

\textsuperscript{142} Illinois General Assembly, Senate Bill No. 497 (Springfield, 1909), box 1, folder 4, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.
Figure 3. Luther Bradley cartoon published to incite outrage over conditions of working women.

| Structural factors that define the stage of action | Ability to access sources of powers given structural realities that affect the internal and external environment in which leadership is practiced. |

**Words**

No specific words noted.

**Actions**

No specific actions noted.

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The presence of power attracts others who want to feed off a leader’s influence, lending the power holder uninvited support. Similarly, the experience of success becomes a transforming force as one victory leads to another.

**Discussion of Analysis**

As a social reformer, Agnes Nestor drew upon a variety of sources to effect change as she represented constituencies in formal government positions or as a candidate for formal government bodies. When examining the sources of power Nestor accessed in her practice of leadership as a politician, striking patterns emerge related to frequency of use, sources of power in relation to each other, and finally sources of power absent from Nestor’s practice of leadership as a social reformer.

**Sources of Power by Frequency of Use**

When examining the sources of power that Agnes Nestor accessed as a social reformer to effect change, the first pattern that emerges is in the frequency of use. As Nestor worked to mediate conflict between the interests of dominant and marginalized social groups, Nestor accessed different sources of power and with different frequencies than when she practiced leadership as a labor leader or social reformer. In order of prominence, the sources of power Agnes Nestor accessed as a social reformer were:

1. **Control of Knowledge and Information**
2. **Gender and the Management of Gender Relations**
3) Interpersonal Alliances, Networks, and Control of “Informal Organization”

When documents related to Agnes Nestor’s practice of leadership as a social reformer were analyzed for evidence of sources of power, the most frequently appearing sources of power were Control of Knowledge and Information, Gender and the Management of Gender Relations, and Interpersonal Alliances, Networks, and Control of “Informal Organization.”

As a social reformer, Agnes Nestor mediated conflicts of interest between dominant and marginalized societal groups. Nestor’s primary goals as a social reformer were to secure for women the right to vote, to limit by statute the hours per day that women could work, and to defeat the Equal Rights Amendment. Gareth Morgan notes that “By controlling knowledge and information, a person can systematically influence the definition of organizational situations and can create patterns of dependency […] opening and closing channels of communication and filtering, summarizing, analyzing, and shaping knowledge in accordance with a view of the world that favors their own interests.”\textsuperscript{144} In her work towards securing for women the right to vote, Agnes Nestor used Control of Knowledge and Information to shape public opinion in accordance with a view of the world that favored her own interests as a social reformer. For example, Nestor’s lengthy article, “The Working Girl’s Need of Suffrage,” controls information by expanding the conception of the woman voter to include both wealthy club women and working class industrial women. According to Nestor, earning the right to vote was less a matter of equality between men and women, but rather a tool women workers could use

\textsuperscript{144}Morgan, \textit{Images of Organization}, 166.
to mediate conflicts of interests with employers. Equipped with the ballot, women could marshal political support for government actions that would benefit women, including proposals that would secure better wages, hours, and working conditions for women workers. Similarly Agnes Nestor accessed Control of Knowledge and Information to shape discourse around the fight for a shorter working day. Nestor published articles regarding how states ought to implement legislation limiting the hours of work for women, relying on evidence from states outside of Illinois to bolster her argument that the authority to set work hour limits should rest in the legislature and not a specially appointed commission. Nestor accepted speaking engagements at women’s clubs and universities to advocate for shorter working hours in person. Most importantly, Nestor drew on the large body of data collected in the Brandeis brief to shift debate away from whether a woman should be free to work however long she wished (an argument that employers had already won in court and in public opinion) towards whether employers had the right to profit at the expense of the health of women workers. By controlling knowledge and information, Nestor was able to control the entire conversation on work hour limitations, shaping public perception of employers in such a way that she was able to achieve protective legislation for women workers.

However, more subtle instances of Nestor’s use of Control of Knowledge and Information include the creation of published work itself. Shortly after leaving school in the eighth grade, Nestor began her career at the Eisendrath factory making gloves. Although Nestor was a working-class woman of limited education, still she sought to control knowledge and information by synthesizing facts into her own published works.
By publishing her own analysis of current events, position papers on women’s rights, and reflections on the labor movement from a woman’s perspective, Nestor created a powerful public voice that extended far beyond her specific activities as a social reformer.

The second most often accessed source of power in Agnes Nestor’s practice of leadership as a social reformer was *Gender and the Management of Gender Relations*. Through the use of *Gender and the Management of Gender Relations* as a source of power, Nestor was able to utilize her position as a woman to further her interests as a social reformer. Gareth Morgan writes that “organizations often segment opportunity structures and job markets in ways that enable men to achieve positions of prestige and power more easily than women.”145 Generally, Morgan views *Gender and the Management of Gender Relations* as a power source that benefits men rather than women. However, Agnes Nestor was able to capitalize on conventional notions of women’s roles in society to argue that women entering a male-dominated workforce ought to have special rights and legislation as a matter of fairness. The National Women’s Party believed that women and men in the United States ought to have equal rights, yet never successfully achieved the passage of the Equal Rights Amendment. Nestor and her allies argued explicitly that women were different from men and thus should have different rights than men. Nestor used this tactic routinely in her fight for the shorter working day and in her later efforts to maintain protective legislation for women. The premise that women workers experienced different occupational risks to

145 Ibid., 172.
their health than men allowed Nestor to use *Gender and the Management of Gender Relations* as a potent source of power in her practice of leadership as a social reformer.

Nestor also maintained a strong reliance on *Interpersonal Alliances, Networks, and Control of “Informal Organization”* as a source of power in her practice of leadership as a social reformer. Morgan writes that a leader who uses this source of power “systematically builds and cultivates interpersonal alliances and networks, incorporating whenever possible the help and influence of all those who have common interests.”

Nestor’s actions in accepting speaking engagements at women’s clubs were more than another opportunity to advocate for the right of women to vote or the necessity to protect women from unsafe working conditions. Rather, Nestor used these speaking engagements as opportunities to increase her network of supporters and expand her influence over social reform measures. Furthermore, by aligning her interests with the interests of organized labor, prominent Chicago women, and other social reform organizations, Nestor was able to increase her capacity to secure legislation for work hour limits and helped to prevent ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment by the Illinois General Assembly. By cultivating interpersonal alliances and networks, Nestor was able to increase her influence over the social reform movement both in Illinois and nationally.

**Sources of Power by Relation to Each Other**

Although the document record indicates that Agnes Nestor accessed some sources of power with greater frequency than others in her practice of leadership as a social reformer, other patterns in her use of sources of power appear when analyzed in relation

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146Ibid., 169-70.
to each other. The first notable pattern is how Formal Authority appears to be Nestor’s pathway to access other sources of power. The second is in how one limited, yet strategic use of Symbolism and the Management of Meaning allowed Agnes Nestor to transform her effectiveness as a leader in the social reform movement.

Gareth Morgan defines Formal Authority as “a form of legitimized power that is respected and acknowledged by those with whom one interacts.” Although most often associated with a leader’s position within an organization, Formal Authority can also be viewed as a license which grants permission to practice leadership within various arenas. Thus, Formal Authority, as a source of power, becomes the platform upon which leaders build their capacity to effect change. As a social reformer, Agnes Nestor mediated conflicts of interests between dominant groups of employers and male politicians and marginalized women workers. Nestor’s formal authority as a lobbyist associated with the Women’s Trade Union League and an officer affiliated with both the Chicago Federation of Labor and the American Federation of Labor was a license which granted her access to the interpersonal networks, publishing outlets, and legislative bodies through which she needed to work if she was to be of influence in social reform. Through her careful cultivation of Formal Authority, Agnes Nestor was a respected and acknowledged leader among women, and in turn, became a formidable force for social reform.

Another pattern that emerges in comparing Agnes Nestor’s use of various sources of power in relation to each other lies in how Nestor incorporated one particularly poignant use of Symbolism and the Management of Meaning into her repertoire of power sources to effect change in her fight for shorter working hours for women. Luther
Bradley’s cartoon “Sacred Motherhood,” was a forceful image that played upon prevailing notions of a woman’s proper role as a mother and the debasement of motherhood brought about through overwork and fatigue in the factory. Once Nestor realized that the key to winning a shorter working day for working class women was to attach her secular position as a working woman to the nearly sacrosanct symbol of ‘woman as mother,’ Nestor was able to use other sources of power to complete her mission. Although Nestor did not often access Symbolism and the Management of Meaning in her practice of leadership as a social reformer, the targeted use of this power in her fight for the shorter working day increased Nestor’s capacity to effect change.

**Absent Sources of Power**

Nestor accessed numerous sources of power in her practice of leadership as a social reformer, but four sources of power do not appear in the document record. These sources of power are:

1) **Ability to Cope with Uncertainty**

2) **Control of Technology**

3) **Structural Factors that Define the Stage of Action**

4) **The Power One Already Has**

The nature of documentary evidence, the circumstances of Nestor’s practice of leadership as a social reformer and Agnes Nestor’s own favored means of effecting change may account for the absence of these sources of power.

One source of power absent from Nestor’s practice of leadership as a social reformer is **Ability to Cope With Uncertainty**. This source of power refers to a leader’s
capacity to achieve success despite the vagaries of one’s environment. Although Nestor frequently describes moments when the outcome of a particular effort was in doubt, there is no direct evidence to indicate that Nestor’s capacity to deal with ambiguity was a source of power for her as a social reformer. This could be a function of the nature of documentary evidence. Since Ability to Cope with Uncertainty entails the capacity to transform doubtful outcomes into success, documents that indicate failures would document the absence of this source of power while documents that indicate success would document capacity to access other sources of power. Thus, for Ability to Cope With Uncertainty to appear in the document record, documents would have to first establish an unexpected event and then document strategies used to overcome uncertainty. If Agnes Nestor accessed Ability to Cope With Uncertainty, her use of that source of power would have to be inferred indirectly from documents. Although many instances of uncertainty occurred during Nestor’s practice of leadership as a social reformer, no documents exist that indicate that Nestor acknowledged the uncertainty and took explicit measures to create confidence in an unpredictable environment.

Another source of power that is apparently absent from Nestor’s practice of leadership as a social reformer is Control of Technology. A social reformer mediates conflicts of interests between dominant and marginalized groups. Nestor’s primary concerns as a social reformer were to secure for women the right to vote, limit the hours of work for women, and to prevent ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment. Morgan writes, “Organizations usually become vitally dependent on some form of core
technology as a means of converting organizational inputs into outputs.” \(^{147}\) Although the reforms Nestor sought to achieve may eventually have affected women’s ability to access various technologies, technology itself was not an issue that Nestor sought to address.

Similarly absent is **Structural Factors that Define the Stage of Action**. Leaders who access this source of power understand that

the stage on which they engage in their various kinds of power play is defined by economics, race, class relationships, and other deep-structural factors shaping the social epoch in which they live...As such, people may be no more than semiautonomous pawns moving themselves around in a game where they can learn to understand the rules but have no power to change them. \(^{148}\)

To a certain degree, societal structures such as embedded sexism, class differences between working women and wealthy women, and the absence of any solidarity between white women workers and women workers of color indicate that structural factors affected Nestor’s practice of leadership to a large degree. However, when Nestor was able to address sexism as a leader of social reform, she did so primarily through **Gender and the Management of Gender Relations**, and often utilized prevailing stereotypes of women as tools to achieve her goals as a social reformer. Although Nestor worked to improve the conditions of women workers by securing the right to vote, limiting work hours, and defeating the Equal Rights Amendment, the deep, structural factors that

\(^{147}\)Ibid., 169.

\(^{148}\)Ibid., 173.
affected the stage on which she accessed other sources of power do not appear to have played a significant role in furthering her agenda as a social reformer.

The final source of power that is absent from Nestor’s practice of leadership as a social reformer is The Power One Already Has. Morgan writes, “When people experience progress or success, they are often energized to achieve further progress and success.”149 The overall narrative of Nestor’s practice of leadership as a social reformer, however, indicates three separate and discrete struggles: first, to secure for women the right to vote; second, to limit the hours of work for women; third, to defeat the Equal Rights Amendment. Nestor supported the right of women to vote and was an active member of organizations that worked to achieve full suffrage for women. However, Nestor herself regarded her work in the Suffrage Movement as a means towards expanding her own network of supporters and towards giving working women a means of improving their wages, hours, and working conditions. Nestor’s work towards securing the right of women to vote is important to understanding Nestor’s practice of leadership as a social reformer, but her successes in the suffrage movement do not appear connected to her successes in limiting work hours for women or towards defeating the Equal Right Amendment. Although Nestor’s work as a social reformer occurred throughout her public life, the three primary changes she wished to effect (Woman’s Suffrage, shorter working day, defeat of the Equal Rights Amendment) occurred in three discrete times, meaning that success in one struggle did not necessarily assist in the next.

149Ibid., 174.
Conclusion

Although some sources of power appear to be absent in Nestor’s practice of leadership as a social reformer, her support of the right of women to vote, her determination in securing legislation limiting the hours of work for women, and her determination to guard protective legislation for women against the perceived threat of the Equal Rights Amendment are three key examples of how Nestor was able to effect meaningful and lasting change through her practice of leadership as a social reformer.
CHAPTER V
SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS

“She had to fight for the right of women to fight for working women.”
—Lillian Herstein, quoted in Transcript of The Women’s Trade Union League of Chicago, Memorial Service in Honor of Agnes Nestor

Introduction

This dissertation investigates the life of Agnes Nestor as labor leader, politician, and social reformer to explore how Nestor used various sources of power in her practice of leadership. Gareth Morgan defines power as “the medium through which conflicting interests are ultimately resolved.” In this study, the researcher has analyzed primary source documents, interpreting them through the lens of Gareth Morgan’s sources of power:

Table 4. Fourteen Sources of Power

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Formal Authority</th>
<th>Authority one holds that is associated with the position one holds in an organization.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Control of Scarce Resources</td>
<td>Ability to control the resources an organization uses to accomplish its work, or conversely, the ability to reduce an organizations’ dependency on external resources.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of organizational structure, rules, and regulations</td>
<td>Ability to invoke laws, policies, and procedures to one’s advantage.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1Morgan, Images of Organization, 162.

2Ibid., 163.
| Control of decision processes | Influence over decision premises (control of agenda and strategies that force or guide attention to our point of view) decision processes (how, when, and where decisions are made, and who gets to make them), and decision issues and objectives (control of reports and information upon which decisions will be made, and rhetorical skill in arguing for perspectives). |
| Control of knowledge and information | Possessing the right information at the right time, having exclusive access to data, or talent in organizing, synthesizing, and applying data. |
| Control of boundaries | Influence over transactions occurring at junctures between different elements within an organization. |
| Ability to cope with uncertainty | Describes how well a leader copes with unpredictable events both in the external and internal organizational landscape. |
| Control of technology | Control over technology that converts organizational inputs into outputs allows leader to determine the pace and quality of the organization’s work. |
| Interpersonal alliances, networks, and control of “informal organization” | Leaders can systematically build and cultivate power through interpersonal alliances and networks, incorporating whenever possible the help and influence of those who have common interests. The currency in these alliances is one of mutual dependency and exchange. |
| Control of counterorganizations | Counterorganizations exist to balance the power of an existing power structure. Unions, consumer groups, and social movements are examples of organizations that can wield considerable countervailing power and effect considerable organizational and environmental change. |
| Symbolism and the management of meaning | Ability to shape the organization’s story, to call to mind certain images, symbols, and expressions that guide work and decision making a certain way, and influence over the way followers interpret their place in the organization. |
| Gender and the management of gender relations | Leaders can manipulate prevailing views and stereotypes on the role of men and women at work to increase their influence over organizations and their environment. |
| Structural factors that define the stage of action | Ability to access sources of powers given structural realities that affect the internal and external environment in which leadership is practiced. |
| The power one already has | The presence of power attracts others who want to feed off a leader’s influence, lending the power holder uninvited support. Similarly, the experience of success becomes a transforming force as one victory leads to another. |

Through rigorous analysis of the words and actions of Agnes Nestor as well as the words and actions of those who corresponded with Agnes Nestor in her life as labor
leader, politician, and social reformer, this study has uncovered not only which sources of power Agnes Nestor accessed in her practice of leadership, but also unique patterns and relationships that emerge when comparing sources of power in relation to each other.

Now that Nestor’s leadership as labor leader, politician, and social reformer have been researched and analyzed separately, this chapter answers this dissertation’s guiding research questions in a final summary, discussion, and conclusion. Questions for further research are presented, and a final epilogue links the work of Agnes Nestor in the first half of the twentieth century to issues facing leaders today

**Research Questions**

This dissertation is guided by the following questions:

1. From what sources of power did Agnes Nestor draw as a labor leader to effect change?
2. From what sources of power did Agnes Nestor draw as a politician to effect change?
3. From what sources of power did Agnes Nestor draw as a social reformer to effect change?
4. How do the sources of power that Agnes Nestor accessed as labor leader, politician, and social reformer compare to each other?
5. What implications do power sources accessed in various domains of Agnes Nestor’s practice of leadership have for the practice of school leadership?
The first three research questions examine the distinct contexts of Agnes Nestor’s leadership and the sources of power that Nestor accessed to effect change in each strand. The fourth research question investigates the patterns and insights that emerge as each arena of Nestor’s public life and the sources of power accessed in each are compared to each other. Finally, the fifth research question looks for implications for the practice of school leadership that emerge from this study of power sources accessed in Nestor’s three leadership contexts. To answer the first, second, and third research question, the researcher will summarize the narrative and analysis of the corresponding chapters, discuss the sources of power accessed, and draw conclusions that emerge from the analysis of Nestor’s documentary record. To answer the fourth research question, the researcher will examine the sources of power already analyzed separately in relation to each other, discuss patterns that emerge when Nestor’s leadership context of labor leader, politician, and social reformer are taken together, and draw conclusions as to Nestor’s capacity to effect change. Finally, the researcher will discuss implications of Gareth Morgan’s fourteen sources of power as accessed by Agnes Nestor upon the practice of school leadership.

Research Question 1: From what sources of power did Agnes Nestor draw as a labor leader to effect change?

As a labor leader, Agnes Nestor resolved conflicts of interests between employers and employees on behalf of women workers. Agnes Nestor’s public life and career as a labor leader began as a young woman. When faced with a choice between either accepting her current reality as a woman working in a glove factory, or leading her fellow
workers to a different future, Nestor chose to lead. Nestor was 22 years old when she led her fellow workers out of the Eisendrath Glove Company factory in 1902. During that strike, she and her male counterparts at the Chicago Federation of Labor successfully formed the International Glove Workers Union of America, negotiated a closed shop at the Eisendrath Glove Company, and secured a raise in wages. Two years later, Nestor was known throughout the United States as an authority on working conditions for women and the status of women’s trade union organization. Throughout her career as a labor leader, Nestor collaborated with members of Women’s Clubs, and with their support created a sense of solidarity between women of wealth and prominence and women who worked long hours for meager wages.

Nestor rose quickly within the Women’s Trade Union League organization, serving as president of the Chicago Women’s Trade Union League, and later becoming president of the National Women’s Trade Union League. Markedly different from other labor organizations, the WTUL was founded by women of wealth and prominence, including Mary McDowell and Jane Addams. During her career as both an officer in the International Glove Workers Union of America and as the president of the WTUL, Agnes Nestor enlisted the support of both organized labor and the wealthy, powerful women of the WTUL to challenge the status quo of long hours, poor wages, and dangerous working conditions that women workers faced in a variety of industries. Agnes Nestor marshaled resources from organized labor and the WTUL to provide legal and financial support to strikers and women on picket lines, to communicate a national message of solidarity and justice for women workers, and to organize women into trade unions. In her later years,
Nestor continued to effect change by resisting efforts during the Second World War to use worldwide conflict as a pretext for relaxing labor standards.

As a labor leader, Agnes Nestor drew on a variety of sources of power to effect change, most notably *Gender and the Management of Gender Relations*, *Formal Authority*, and the *Control of Scarce Resources*. Nestor was practicing leadership in a field thoroughly dominated by men, and as a woman in organized labor, Nestor’s actions and words frequently set her outside prevailing notions of expected behavior. For example, men were expected to work yet women were expected to maintain a home. Furthermore, working women were expected to hope to marry and to maintain a home. This expectation allowed Nestor to capitalize on prevailing notions of what women ought to desire and ought to have time and leisure to do to strengthen her negotiating position with employers. Nestor used strategies typically employed by men in the labor movement to secure better wages and working conditions. This occurred through her formal position in the International Glove Workers Union of America and the National Women’s Trade Union League. Within the context of Agnes Nestor as labor leader, Nestor was able to employ *Control of Scarce Resources* to resolve conflicts of interest between women workers and their employers. Nestor and her affiliated labor organizations worked to maintain control of the human resources that employers needed to run profitable businesses. By controlling the supply of labor, Nestor was able to negotiate for women workers better wages and working conditions, a strategy that she utilized throughout her career as a labor leader.
Nestor was able to use Gender and the Management of Gender Relations to exercise Control of Boundaries. Although the National Women’s Trade Union League admitted both working women and women of wealth and power, Nestor consistently affiliated with women who work. Nestor chose to remain a single woman throughout her life, and although she left factory work before turning thirty, neither achieved nor sought out wealth despite becoming a well known figure in Chicago and throughout the United States. Instead, Nestor uses her position as a woman to engender solidarity between women of power and women in industry. This is evident in Nestor’s numerous speaking engagements to women’s clubs on topics of women’s labor issues, as well as her friendship with the wealthy and powerful members of the National Women’s Trade Union League. Thus, Gender and the Management of Gender Relations became a means through which Nestor, as a member of a similarly marginalized group in American society, controlled boundaries between women of wealth and power, and women who worked for wages.

The documentary record does not indicate that Agnes Nestor utilized Control of Decision Processes as a labor leader. A leader who controls decision processes is able to influence the premises, processes, issues, and objectives surrounding important decisions within the organization.\(^3\) Although Nestor was a decision-maker within the organizations that she led, the documentary record does not suggest that she explicitly sought to increase her influence as a leader by controlling decision agendas, deciding who should make decisions or how they are made, or by controlling the issues and objectives that

\(^3\)Ibid., 165.
important decisions were to address. Other sources of power, such as **Control of Knowledge and Information** allowed her to explain decisions in ways favorable to her agenda, yet never does Nestor articulated or acted in a way that indicates an awareness of the decision processes themselves being a source of power that she could access as a leader to resolve conflicts of interest.

When exploring Agnes Nestor’s practice of leadership as a labor leader, Nestor’s primary goal was to secure better wages, hours, and working conditions for women workers. Organized labor traditionally resolves conflicts of interests between themselves and employers by restricting or threatening to restrict needed human resources from employers as a means of negotiating better outcomes for their membership. As a labor leader, Nestor utilized similar strategies employed by men in organized labor to achieve these outcomes for women, who were increasingly becoming organized into their own labor unions. The unique position of organized women within a predominantly male organized labor movement, coupled with prevailing idealized notions of a woman’s domestic role, also allowed Agnes Nestor to use her place as a woman to increase her influence as a leader. This occurred principally through her willingness to be a voice for working women, beginning with her first strike at the Eisendrath Glove Company, and continuing throughout her career as an officer in the National Women’s Trade Union League.
Research Question 2: From what sources of power did Agnes Nestor draw as a politician to effect change?

As a politician, Agnes Nestor resolved conflicts of interest between her various constituencies and formal government institutions on behalf of her constituencies. In Nestor’s public life, this occurred as a member of the National Commission on Vocational Education, a member of several Women’s Commissions during the First World War, and as a candidate for State Representative to the Illinois General Assembly in 1928.

The National Commission on Vocational Education was Nestor’s first experience representing the interests of organized labor on the national stage. Nestor was particularly interested in representing the interests of women workers and girls who may become women workers as the Commission discussed recommendations for promoting vocational education among the states. Nestor’s formal appointment to the commission increased her exposure to school leaders in Illinois and throughout the United States, and granted a unique opportunity for a woman in organized labor to work on issues affecting the education of women in the workforce with members of the United States House of Representatives and the Senate.

During the actual work of the commission, Nestor grew into her role, speaking with greater frequency during hearings and asking questions of greater import. While the male-dominated committee outlined an agenda that conflated domestic and industrial education, Nestor used her position on the committee to separate the two and to advocate for a program of education that allowed women unique vocational training for a career
outside the home. Ultimately, the National Commission on Vocational Education did recommend that boys and girls have a comprehensive education that included opportunities to study a variety of trades, with no reference to domestic sciences.

Nestor also represented women workers as a member of various Women’s Commissions during the First World War. Appointed by Newton Baker, then Secretary of War, the Women’s Advisory Committee was formed to recommend to the Council on National Defense ways in which women could assist in the defense of the United States during the First World War. Although the Women’s Advisory Committee and its various subgroups in Washington, D.C. and in the individual states were neither able to coalesce around one common vision nor have the few recommendations that they did submit to the Council on National Defense taken up in any significant manner, Nestor was able to use her formal position as head of the Committee on Women in Industry to pressure decision makers not to use the First World War as a pretext to relax hard-won labor standards.

Agnes Nestor effected change as a politician most strikingly as a candidate for State Representative to the Illinois General Assembly in 1928. The documents surrounding Nestor’s campaign for office reveal two separate, parallel narratives. The first narrative reveals Nestor’s campaign strategy, and the second narrative outlines Nestor’s motivations for entering the race. As a candidate in the Democratic party running against an incumbent representative, Nestor had little formal support from the Democratic establishment. Instead, Nestor uncovered a network of supporters in the Sixth Senatorial District. These supporters came from organized industrial labor and from local unions of teachers. By using her personal networks within Chicago-area
women’s clubs, Nestor expanded her reach into Evanston, where her contacts in organized labor were less useful. Finally, Nestor utilized door-to-door canvassing and asked her friends to host events to invite new supporters to participate in her campaign.

The second narrative emerging from Nestor’s campaign for State Representative regards her motivations for running. Throughout her campaign, Nestor articulates vehement opposition to Weber’s candidacy, citing his past opposition to legislation limiting the hours of work for women and his desire to relax laws concerning the use and distribution of alcohol. Nestor also cited an encounter with a representative of Governor Small’s office who advised her not to run, since Weber had promised to vote for her Eight-Hour Bill in the next session. Governor Small believed that Nestor entered the race less to become a member of the Illinois General Assembly, but rather to punish Weber for not supporting her legislation. Nestor frequently noted Weber’s position on work hour limitations as the principal reason to unseat him in the primary, and focused her campaign principally on defeating Weber rather than on advancing a platform uniquely hers. Nestor failed to unseat Weber in the primary election, but did manage to secure approximately one third of Democratic votes cast with no support from the established Democratic Party. Although Nestor failed to effect change as a duly elected representative, she did manage to access sources of power in her campaign to represent the cause of working women in her district as an official candidate in the race.

To promote equity in educational opportunities for works and for women, to protect working conditions for women in industry, and to win her 5,424 votes as candidate for State Representative in the Illinois General Assembly, Nestor used Formal
Authority, Interpersonal Alliances, Networks, and Control of “Informal Organization,” and Control of Knowledge and Information as sources of power. Nestor’s reliance on these sources of power as a politician depended on how she viewed her role in the formal government institution on which she served or sought to serve. As a member of the National Vocation on Vocational Education, Nestor’s role was to gather evidence, create a report, and submit recommendations to Congress and to President Woodrow Wilson as to the proper role of the Federal Government in supporting vocational education throughout the United States. In this political role, Nestor represented a constituency of families in organized labor and also the unique constituency of women and girls who would one day participate in the labor force. By collecting evidence, gathering testimony, and shaping the course of the Commission’s work, Nestor was able to control knowledge and information and shape a report favorable to her interests as a representative of labor and of women. While serving on Women’s Commissions during the First World War, Nestor also accessed power sources to effect change while representing her constituency. Her formal authority as a member of the Women’s Advisory Committee provided a national forum for addressing the needs of women workers, eventually leading her to become the chair of the Women in Industry Committee. Finally, Nestor relied heavily on Interpersonal Alliances, Networks, and Control of “Informal Organization” to advertise her candidacy and enlist support for her campaign for the Illinois General Assembly. In the absence of formal support from the established Democratic Party, Nestor needed to uncover a network of voters willing to support her candidacy who were not already connected to the established Democratic
Party organization. Accessing her network of labor leaders and women’s club members, Nestor gained 30 percent of all votes cast in her election, even though this was her first campaign for elected office, she was running against as a Democrat against an incumbent Democrat, and she was a women running in an environment typically hostile to female candidates.

The changes that Agnes Nestor effected as a politician were in how elected officials and educators viewed the role of vocational education towards workers and towards women workers in particular, the importance of protecting labor standards even in times of war, and most importantly, in strengthening the precedent that outside voices can develop substantial political campaigns, even in the face of tremendous opposition. The sources of power most used by Agnes Nestor as a politician were Interpersonal Alliances, Networks, and Control of “Informal Organization,” Formal Authority, and Control of Knowledge and Information.

*Research Question 3: From what sources of power did Agnes Nestor draw as Social Reformer to effect change?*

As a social reformer, Agnes Nestor resolved conflicts of interests between dominant and marginalized social groups in favor of the marginalized. In particular, Nestor resolved conflicts of interests in favor of marginalized constituencies by campaigning in Illinois for the right of women to vote, securing legislation limiting the hours of work for women, and defeating the ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment. In her career as social reformer, Nestor relied heavily on Control of Knowledge and Information, Gender and the Management of Gender Relations, and Interpersonal
Alliances, Networks, and Control of “Informal Organization.” The change Nestor effected through her leadership as social reformer quickened the pace of universal suffrage, shortened and codified working hours for women, and protected gendered legislation.

Nestor began her career as a social reformer working with other notable Chicago social reformers including Anna Nicholes and Jane Addams to secure the right of women to vote. Nestor represented a unique constituency among women, and spoke to the specific needs that working women could fulfill through exercising their right to vote. Initially, Nestor worked for women’s suffrage through speaking engagements at Chicago area women’s clubs. Her success as a speaker inspired Jane Addams to invite Nestor to be a speaker aboard a “Suffrage Express” event, where Nestor spoke on behalf of women in industry to their need to hold elected officials accountable through the ballot. Women seeking access to the ballot originally lobbied the Illinois General Assembly for municipal suffrage, which would allow women to vote for the mayor and city council. As the Suffrage Agenda gained momentum, Nestor advocated for universal suffrage for all women in Illinois. Nestor wrote a lengthy article, titled, “The Working Girl’s Need for Suffrage,” which appeared in Life and Labor, a labor magazine published by the National Women’s Trade Union League. In this article, Nestor explains that working women needed access to the ballot box primarily because voting is the most effective tool women have for holding legislators to account regarding laws and policies that affect women workers.
Nestor also worked as a social reformer to limit the working hours for women. Social reformers had been struggling to statutorily reduce the hours women worked for decades, but faced strident opposition in the judiciary. Finally, in Bunting v. Oregon, the Supreme Court of the United States ruled that a state may limit the hours of work for women, provided that the law was passed as a health measure. Nestor saw an opportunity to pass a similar law in Illinois, and rather than promoting a work-hour limit as a means of justice for women workers, Nestor crafted the bill to be a woman’s health measure. Nestor’s progress in limiting hours of work for women occurred in stages: first, a 1909 law affecting only a few categories of women employees; second, a comprehensive ten-hour bill affecting women in nearly every occupation; finally, legislations limiting work for women to eight hours a day, which passed in 1937.

Nestor also worked as a social reformer to defeat the Equal Rights Amendment. Although ardently feminist and stridently in favor of improving the position of working women in the United States, Nestor was equally resolved to prevent ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment. Nestor believed that although the workforce employed the labor of both men and women, marked gendered differences in the needs of women workers and socio-political realities surrounding an American understanding of a woman’s proper role in society required a gendered strategy towards achieving justice. After working most of her public life to achieve laws that treated women differently than man, Nestor found herself in opposition to the National Women’s Party and their support of a constitutional amendment aimed to guarantee that women and men would have equal rights. From Nestor’s perspective, the Equal Rights Amendment as authored by Lucretia
Mott would undercut decades of work to secure legislative provisions that gave women unique protections under the law that were not yet available to men. Should women and men be given equal rights, women’s unique rights in Illinois to shorter working days would likely never survive judicial scrutiny. While at first surprising to discover a prominent advocate for women’s rights opposing the Equal Rights Amendment, Nestor’s gendered understanding of women in the workforce and her own experience over nearly forty years advocating for special protections for women workers illuminates her opposition.

Agnes Nestor utilized *Control of Knowledge and Information*, *Gender and the Management of Gender Relations*, and *Interpersonal Alliances, Networks, and Control of “Informal Organization”* as sources of power in her practice of leadership as social reformer. Although Nestor had limited formal education, she published articles and created outreach campaigns surrounding women’s suffrage, the shorter working day, and the dangers of the Equal Rights Amendment. Nestor’s reform agenda was self-consciously gendered. Her primary aims were securing the right of women to vote, achieving special workplace protections for women, and protecting women from the Equal Rights Amendment. Additionally, Nestor worked as a social reformer in an environment that regarded women as in need of special protection. From the sociological findings of the Brandeis Brief4 which testified that fatigue plagues women more

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virulently than men to Luther Bradley’s cartoon\(^5\) which pictured a nursing mother broken over a sewing machine in a dim room, the prevailing notion of women was ostensibly that a woman’s proper role was as a mother, and that if a woman must work she ought not work as hard or as long as men who were strong enough to bear it. Given the social environment in which Nestor was working, Nestor chose *Gender and the Management of Gender Relations* as a power base through which she could resolve the conflicting interests of women and a male-dominated legislature and business environment.

Nestor also accessed *Interpersonal Alliances, Networks, and Control of “Informal Organization”* as a source of power in her practice of leadership as a social reformer. Beginning with her work to secure the right of women to vote, Nestor aligned her interests as an officer of the International Glove Workers Union of America and member of the National Women’s Trade Union League with Jane Addams’ network of Suffrage activists. These alliances continued to provide logistical and financial support to Nestor’s lobbying efforts to limit legally the hours of work for women. Finally, Nestor worked with a broad coalition of women’s organizations, most notably the International Glove Workers Union of America and the National Women’s Trade Union League to oppose the National Women’s Party’s efforts to ratify the Equal Rights Amendment in Illinois. By accessing her interpersonal alliances as a source of power, Nestor marshaled a broad network of resources that ultimately prevailed. Nestor’s work quickened the pace of

Women’s Suffrage in Illinois, shortened the workday for women to eight hours, and likely played a significant role in stalling the momentum of the Equal Rights Amendment nationally.

Finally, Nestor utilized Control of Knowledge and Information to resolve conflicts of interest as a social reformer. In a movement dominated by the wives of wealthy men, Nestor’s written works during the campaign for woman’s suffrage expanded prevailing conceptions of which women were seeking the right to vote. Nestor carefully explains both to working women and to women of power and prestige how ballot access could transform the working woman’s struggle for better wages, hours, and working conditions. Nestor also engages in speaking campaigns among women’s clubs, special Suffrage events, and at places of worship. These speaking campaigns are further evidence of Nestor’s use of Control of Knowledge and Information. By accepting speaking engagements, Nestor was able to communicate her reform agenda to diverse audiences. Through increasing her target audience, Nestor increased her influence and her capacity to resolve conflicts of interest in her favor.

Research Question 4: How do the sources of power that Agnes Nestor accessed as labor leader, politician, and social reformer compare to each other?

Agnes Nestor accessed every sources of power at some point during her public life as labor leader, politician, and social reformer, with the exception of Ability to Cope With Uncertainty. At every moment in which Nestor accessed a source of power, she did so in order to resolve conflicts of interests in her favor. The table below summarized the favored sources and absent sources of power that Agnes Nestor accessed to effect change.
Table 5. Agnes Nestor—Labor Leader, Politician, and Social Reformer: Comparison of Sources of Power by Leadership Context

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Leadership Context</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Favored Sources of Power</th>
<th>Absent Sources of Power</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Labor Leader</td>
<td>A person who mediates conflicts of interests between employers and employees on behalf of workers.</td>
<td>Gender and the Management of Gender Relations, Formal Authority, Control of Scarce Resources</td>
<td>Control of Decision Processes, Ability to Cope with Uncertainty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Politician</td>
<td>A person who mediates conflicts of interests between her/his own constituencies and formal government institutions on behalf of her/his constituencies.</td>
<td>Interpersonal Alliances, Networks, and Control of “Informal Organization,” Formal Authority, Control of Knowledge and Information</td>
<td>Control of Boundaries, Ability to Cope with Uncertainty, Control of Technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Reformer</td>
<td>A person who mediates conflicts of interests between dominant and marginalized societal groups on behalf of the marginalized.</td>
<td>Control of Knowledge and Information, Gender and the Management of Gender Relations, Interpersonal Alliances, Networks, and Control of “Informal Organization,”</td>
<td>Ability to Cope with Uncertainty, Control of Technology, Structural Factors that Define the Stage of Action, The Power One Already Has</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Relating Gareth Morgan’s Sources of Power relate to Nestor’s practice of leadership as labor leader, politician, and social reformer, three intriguing comparisons emerge when examining the favored and absent sources of power among Nestor’s different contexts of leadership. First, Nestor favored Formal Authority as a source of power as a labor leader and politician, but not as a social reformer. Second, Nestor favored Gender and the Management of Gender Relations as a labor leader and as a social reformer, but not as a politician. Finally, Ability to Cope with Uncertainty is completely absent as a source of power in any of Agnes Nestor’s three leadership contexts.

Agnes Nestor appears to use Formal Authority as a source of power in her practice of leadership as a labor leader and as a politician, but not as a social reformer. Formal authority is power intrinsic to the position one holds in an organization. The reason that formal authority occurs in Nestor’s work as labor leader and politician, but not in her leadership in social reform, may lie in the nature of leadership praxis in those three contexts. As defined in this study, labor leaders resolve conflicts of interests between workers and employers in favor of the workers that they represent, politicians resolve conflicts of interests between formal government institutions and the constituencies whom they represent, and social reformers resolve conflicts of interests between dominant and marginalized societal groups in favor of the marginalized. When Nestor practiced leadership as a labor leader, she did so in the context of an organized labor movement. Although representing the broader interests of working-class Americans, the labor movement nevertheless had a hierarchical structure that permeated
the organization. Certain individuals were elected or appointed to positions that entailed the specific authority to achieve their responsibilities. Thus, Formal Authority was already an understood source of power in the labor movement, and one which Nestor was able to access by virtue of her position in the International Glove Workers Union and the National Women’s Trade Union League. Likewise, when Nestor practiced leadership as a politician, Nestor was similarly leading groups of people within a markedly hierarchical structure where candidates managed people with specific positions and responsibilities within her political organization, or in which appointees had positions that carried understood power to accomplish their mandates. Thus, as politician, Nestor accessed Formal Authority to resolve conflicts of interests when her position allowed. However, as a social reformer, Nestor never represented one clear organization that bestowed a singular mandate to effect change. Rather, she worked with a coalition of women’s organizations, legislatures, the media, and her network of supporters to create a different kind of power to effect change, one that relied primarily on her own personal networks and alliances and on gender and the management of gender relations to effect change. Formal Authority requires a formal organization with a clear hierarchy, and as social reformer Nestor typically effected change across constituencies and organizations sufficiently broad and diverse to prevent her from using a source of power found exclusively within formal institutions to effect change.

The second pattern that emerges when sources of power are compared across leadership contexts lies in Nestor’s use of Gender and the Management of Gender Relations. As a leader, Nestor accessed Gender and the Management of Gender
Relations to effect change as a labor leader and social reformer, but appears not to have favored Gender and the Management of Gender Relations as a politician. Nestor’s extensive use of Gender and the Management of Gender Relations in her practice of leadership as labor leader and social reformer indicate her awareness that gender could be a tremendous source of power from which to effect change. Yet this source of power is absent from her work as a politician, even as she worked on gendered issues. As a labor leader and social reformer, Nestor sought protections for women workers, and even worked to defeat legislation to ensure women’s rights when she felt that such legislation would undermine gendered protective legislation to benefit women. However, in her campaign for State Representative and in her service on government commissions, Nestor mentioned issues that affected women (longer work hours, need for comprehensive industrial training alongside men), but typically relied upon her formal authority within the political body to resolve conflicts of interests in favor of women rather than her status as a women per se. Gender and the Management of Gender Relations is most effective as a source of power for women in contexts where women or men can gain power through structural factors in gender relations that allow for a gendered advantage. As a leader of women workers in a glove factory, Nestor’s industry was dominated by women who could easily create a gendered advantage through organizing into a union. As a social reformer, prevailing notion’s of a woman’s role as mother gave women a gendered advantage in lobbying for protective legislation and for defeating the Equal Rights Amendment. As a politician, Nestor did seek to resolve conflicts of interests between formal government institutions and her constituency of women in favor of the women
whom she represented, yet did not appear to see a gendered advantage emerging from any of the formal government bodies on which she served or in her campaign for State Representative.

Finally, Ability to Cope with Uncertainty is completely absent from the documented record of Agnes Nestor’s practice of leadership. Leaders who can cope with uncertainty negotiate unpredictable events in the internal and external landscape of their organizations. The foundation of this source of power is the talent for imagining flexible alternative courses of actions when the path forward is unclear. One reason that this source of power appears absent from Nestor’s practice of leadership may lie in what the documents would have to record in order to reveal the existence of this source of power. First, Nestor had to acknowledge the existence of uncertainty in her internal or external environment, and second Nestor would have needed to communicate several actionable choices that she would consider equally viable as circumstances changed. Given Nestor’s forcible and at times obstinate disposition, she may not ever have wished to articulate such uncertainty. Even when challenged with adversity (first labor strike, running as a woman against a well-supported candidate, lobbying for shorter working hours for women), Nestor always spoke as though she knew perfectly well the right action for the moment. Being unwilling to acknowledge uncertainty is different from coping with uncertainty, and often belies reluctance to compromise, a skill that talented leaders often possess. The significance of Ability to Cope with Uncertainty not appearing in the documented record of any of Nestor’s leadership context appears to lead to three conclusions: first, that this particular source of power is difficult to capture in
documentary sources; second, that Nestor was unable to articulate multiple ways to process environmental data and convert that data into action; third, that Nestor was unaware that uncertainty could become a major source of power.

Research Question 5: What implications do power sources accessed in various domains of Agnes Nestor’s practice of leadership have for the practice of school leadership?

This dissertation is a study of Agnes Nestor and the sources of power she accessed as labor leader, politician, and social reformer to effect change. As labor leader, politician, and social reformer, Agnes Nestor accessed various sources of power to resolve conflicts of interests in favor of her agenda. School leaders also manage conflicts of interests, and as Nestor exemplifies in her own practice of leadership, the sources of power that school leaders access affect the way in which those conflicts of interests are ultimately resolved. Agnes Nestor considered her greatest success as a leader to be achieving the shorter working day for women. Conversely, she appears to consider her greatest failure in leadership to be her unsuccessful bid for state representative in the Illinois General Assembly in 1928. Examining the sources of power that Nestor favored in success and in failure leads to significant implications of Agnes Nestor’s life in how her life as leader illuminates school leadership.

Nestor rooted her leadership on the campaign for the shorter working day in a deep, abiding conviction that protecting women’s health was more important than an employer’s right to make a profit. This core value grew from Nestor’s own experience as a glove-maker and drew strength from the tangible change Nestor knew she could affect in the lives of women in factories throughout Illinois if she succeeded. Nestor’s
campaign for state representative, however, was rooted in personal animosity towards her opponent. Few documents record any reason for Nestor to enter the race at all except to protest the incumbent representative’s reluctance to support Nestor’s favored legislation. Indeed, the primary change that Nestor appears to have wanted in her 1928 campaign for the Illinois General Assembly is that Nestor would be a State Representative and Weber would be in office no more.

One key implication for school leaders is that leaders who wish to effect change should view their planning, decisions, and actions through what they value most, and then decide if what they value truly warrants action. In the case of the shorter working day, success would mean that Illinois would limit hours of work in dangerous working conditions to ten and ultimately to eight instead of twelve or more. Women’s health and safety was, for Nestor, a value worth acting upon, and ultimately led to her success. Regarding her campaign for the Illinois General Assembly, personal animosity towards her opponent became the only message Nestor communicated effectively, and ultimately was not enough to convince sufficient voters to oust an incumbent representative. The implication for school leadership is that values shape thought and action, and becoming aware of what one values as a leader is a critical step in thinking through a course of action that will ultimately affect the kind of change that school leaders want to see.

Another key implication for school leadership lies in Nestor’s success in cultivating personal relationships and networks throughout her public life. As labor leader, politician, and social reformer, Agnes Nestor possessed remarkable insight regarding who would be able to help her achieve her goals. Whether by affiliating her
young International Glove Workers Union with the National Women’s Trade Union League, speaking to clubs of women with whom she would never interact professionally or personally outside of her work as labor leader, or deliberately seeking out opportunities to serve on commissions, committees, and boards, Agnes Nestor was diligent in forming a powerful network of allies, supporters, and friends with power to help her to effect change. The implication for school leadership is that developing a robust school community with a broad network of support both within and without the school organization greatly enhances the school leader’s capacity to effect change.

**Recommendations for Further Research**

Discovering and analyzing the sources of power through which Agnes Nestor effected change as labor leader, politician, and social reformer have important implications on the practice of school leadership. However, numerous facets of Agnes Nestor’s leadership remain unexplored.

The first possibility for further research stems from the unique relationship between Agnes Nestor and the National Women’s Trade Union League. Most research currently focuses on the history, values, strategies, and personages of the NWTUL. Research into how Nestor and the NWTUL collaborated to meet each other’s needs would uncover the extent to which Nestor’s agenda was set and shaped by the NWTUL.

Another recommendation would be to examine moments when Nestor made decisions using Maslow’s hierarchy of needs. Maslow posited that people make decisions so as to meet a hierarchy of human needs: physiological, safety, social, esteem, and self-actualization. As people meet basic needs, they become better able to meet more
complex needs. Nestor’s work as a labor leader effected change in basic physiological and safety needs of her fellow working women, yet leading a labor organization likely led to meeting more complex needs as well. Did Nestor achieve self-actualization due to her historic achievement? Did she meet social needs through developing networks of colleagues in labor, politics, and social reform? Did Nestor accept an honorary degree from Loyola University to meet her need for esteem, or did she accept the award as a self-actualized leader among the Chicago elite? Examining what Nestor stood to gain in key decisions through Maslow’s hierarchy of needs would be a fascinating study of a complex leader.

A final recommended area of further research would be to examine the life of Agnes Nestor through the lens of Noddings’ ethic of care. Noddings understands right actions to be those motivated through care, when the agent’s actions are motivated primarily by subject’s needs. Nestor waged fierce, protracted battles to win better wages and special protective legislation for her own constituencies, to oust political opponents from office, and to defeat the Equal Rights Amendment. Examining the words and actions of Agnes Nestor through Noddings’ ethic of care would reveal both whether Nestor considered the needs of those affected by her actions when making decisions and to what extend Nestor developed relationships based on care throughout her wide network of colleagues and supporters in labor, politics, and social reform.

**Epilogue—Agnes Nestor Speaks to Leaders Today**

Agnes Nestor was most successful when she accessed sources of power connected to deeply held values of equity and justice. Nestor’s legacy of securing and protecting
collective bargaining rights, building coalitions to promote political change, and
protecting the health and safety of workers required a full repertoire of power sources,
some used more effectively than others. At her best, Nestor resolved conflicts of interests
to further her agendas as labor leader, politician, and social reformer. In an era where
corporate managers in the business sector are often held as exemplars to students of
educational leadership, Agnes Nestor stands as an example of a woman who consistently
chose to practice leadership in three unique contexts to effect change. Like Nestor,
school leaders often contend with conflicting interests in labor, politics, and social
movements, and many of the competing forces that Nestor faced are recurring in
contemporary American life. Understanding Nestor’s role in the labor, political, and
social environment of a century ago are relevant again in the policies and positions of
prominent and powerful figures in organized labor and social reform. This is especially
evident in light of contemporary attacks on collective bargaining rights, and in recent
activity in many states to increase restrictions on voting rights.

 Attack on Collective Bargaining Rights

On February 23, 2011, the Chicago Tribune reported:

Facing widening Republican attacks on organizers labor,
Democrats struck back Tuesday with legislative walkouts and boisterous
rallies across the Midwest to defend one of their core constituencies.

In Wisconsin, where the state Senate has been paralyzed because
Democrats fled to block Gov. Scott Walker’s attempt to strip collective
bargaining rights from government workers, the governor warned he
would send 1,500 layoff notices unless his proposal passes.

In Indiana, House Democrats vanished, depriving that body of the
quorum needed to pass a right-to-work law and limit government unions’
powers.
And in Ohio, an estimated 5,500 protesters stood elbow to elbow in and outside the Capital, chanting “Kill the bill!” as a legislative committee took up a proposal that would similarly neuter government unions.6

In 2011, governors in Wisconsin, Ohio, and Indiana, state with long histories of organized labor and collective bargaining, launched a coordinated attack on collective bargaining rights. Public-sector unions, long accustomed to negotiating for better wages and working conditions, awoke to a political climate that no longer considered the rights of workers to form collective bargaining units a matter of settled law. After decades of experience bargaining contracts with governments, unions of public employees faced sudden legislative challenges that undermined the entire purpose of their organizations. Indeed, unions are preparing for precisely the same struggle that Agnes Nestor and her contemporaries waged at the turn of the century.

Nestor’s first experience of leadership occurred when she was faced with a critical choice: lead a strike or remain one of the crowd. Nestor chose to lead, and immediately discovered that organizing women glove makers at the Eisendrath Glove Company required an as yet uncultivated set of leadership skills. In fact, “Few of us had ever been to a business meeting and we were all ignorant of parliamentary procedure. At our first meeting after the strike, we were so green as to applaud when the minutes were read.”7 The women at Nestor’s first union meeting after the strike had not yet had sufficient


7 Nestor, Woman’s Labor Leader, 42.
opportunities to establish themselves in the broader context of organizes labor, nor
had they yet developed their local union organization to the point of waging a serious
struggle against a prominent Chicago manufacturer. Nestor understood that the essential
cflict between women workers and their employer was an imbalance of power that
allowed employers to resolve conflicts of interests in their favor. By discovering where
she had access to various sources of power, Nestor was able to charter the International
Glove Workers of America with the American Federation of Labor, compel the
Eisendrath Glove Company management to recognize her local union as the sole
bargaining unit of glove makers, and draw upon new sources of power to resolve
conflicts of interests in favor of women workers for the first time. Most importantly,
Nestor began this process with a values-driven goal. Nestor regarded the relationship
between her employer and her fellow employees as unfair, and she discovered sources of
power that allowed her to create a more equitable situation for herself and her fellow
glove workers.

**Ballot Access**

On October 23, 2011, the Washington times reported: “Voters in Maine,
Mississippi and Washington will decide election-reform questions this November, joining
a wave of thirty-six states that in 2011 moved to increase identification requirements,
limit the early-voting period, or toughen up registration rules.”

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8Valerie Richardson, “Voter ID, other initiatives follow GOP’s resurgence,”
Washington Times, October 23, 2011,
legislation “has sparked intense opposition from critics who say it will discourage low-income and minority voters” who have “compared the identification requirement to the poll tax and other impediments to voting.”\textsuperscript{9} Requiring new types of identification that are more difficult to obtain, adding new requirements to voter registration protocols, reducing availability of polling places all combine to decrease citizen’s access to their right to vote. Many believe that efforts to increase these administrative hurdles are geared less towards preventing fraudulent voters from rigging elections, but rather to eliminate groups of voters historically less able to negotiate complicated government bureaucracy.

On the contrary, Agnes Nestor worked to increase ballot access. As a labor leader, Nestor recognized that only those able to vote could truly hold elected officials to account. Beginning first at the municipal level, and continuing until passage of the Nineteenth Amendment granting full women’s suffrage in 1919, Nestor explained to the public and demanded of the government that working women needed access to the ballot to secure their rights as both women and workers. Like contemporary critics of increasingly restrictive voting legislation, Nestor believed that those with the least power have the greatest need for the right to vote. According to Nestor, “Of all the groups of women asking for the ballot the working girl needs it and can benefit more by its power and use than any other group.”\textsuperscript{10} Nestor sought the right to vote, knowing that the best

\textsuperscript{9} Ibid.

way for women to effect change in government was to have a voice in creating the
government in the first place. For decades, broad, universal and relatively simple access
to the ballot has been the norm in virtually every state for decades, and those who wish to
maintain liberal access to a ballot are again faced with a conflict that remains
perniciously unsettled in American political life.

The conflict between employers and organized labor that Nestor faced as a young
labor leader at the turn of the century has clear correlations to contemporary conflicts
between governments and public sector unions. Nestor resolved her struggle by
accessing sources of power to communicate a clear, values-based message that women
should be able to earn a living wage without spending the totality of their waking hours
stitching gloves together by hand, an issue public-sector unions are facing today.
Similarly, Nestor’s participation in the Women’s Suffrage Movement in the early 1900s
mirrors today’s conflict between those who perceive a need for a smaller, better-
controlled electorate and those who prefer broad, universal, and simple access to the vote.
In both instances, these conflicts arise from one constituency accessing power sources to
resolve conflicts of interests in its own favor. As a labor leader, politician, and social
reformer, Nestor increased her power by accessing power sources that connected to
common values, communicating a message of equity for women workers that while in
conflict with the status quo nevertheless resonated with values generally held sacred by
most Americans. School leaders who follow Nestor’s example lead best when they
recognize conflicts of interest, name the conflict, and communicate a clear vision for its
resolution in a way consistent with the core values of the communities that they serve.
APPENDIX A

EVIDENCE OF SOURCES OF POWER ACCESSED AS LABOR LEADER SORTED BY WORDS AND ACTIONS
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sources of Power</th>
<th>Words</th>
<th>Actions</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Formal Authority</td>
<td>By 1913, Agnes Nestor was the President of the National Women’s Trade Union League</td>
<td>Nestor belonged to the Labor Council, the Bureau of Registration and Information, the Women’s Advisory Committee of the Council of National Defense, and finally, the Women in Industry Committee.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control of Scarce Resources</td>
<td>Ultimately, the strike resolved so that workers “would have a fifty-two-and-a-half-hour week. There would be no more charging for power, for machine straps, or for needles. The strikers would go back to work with wages adjusted. A board of arbitrators would be set up to settle other differences upon which the manufacturers and the union could not at once agree.”</td>
<td>Nestor wrote to Ralph Bard, then Assistant Secretary in the Navy Department, reminding him that “you...”</td>
</tr>
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</table>

1Program of the Thirty-Fifth Anniversary of the National Women’s Trade Union League, February 4, 1939, box 4, folder 1, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

2Ida Glatt to Agnes Nestor, January 17, 1917, box 1, folder 8, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

3Elizabeth Martin, chairman of the Bureau of Registration and Information of the National League for Woman’s Service, to Agnes Nestor, April 30, 1917, box 1, folder 8, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

4Newton D. Baker, Secretary of War and Chairman of the Council of National Defense, to Agnes Nestor, May 7, 1917, box 1, folder 8, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

5Agnes Nestor, Chairman of Women in Industry Committee to the Women’s Committee of the Council of National Defense, August 23, 1917, box 1, folder 8, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

6Nestor, *Women’s Labor Leader*, 111.
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Use of organizational structure, rules, and regulations</th>
<th>Nestor writes in her autobiography that “picket line girls were being arrested every day. We had to be prepared with bail and also to hire an attorney where necessary and to follow the cases to court.”</th>
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| Control of decision processes | After offering their “descriptions of conditions surrounding the toilers of Chicago”

Whether speaking to the Jefferson-Lincoln club on “The Workers of the City” attending luncheon with Elizabeth Edwards Fields of the Wilmette Club, or to the Social Services Club on “the various bills which are now pending in the Legislature,” Agnes Nestor frequently interacted with a number of prominent Chicago-area club women.

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7 Agnes Nestor to Mr. Ralph A. Bard, Assistant Secretary, Navy Department, DC, June 9, 1943, box 4, folder 4, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

8 Nestor, *Women’s Labor Leader*, 106.

9 Ibid.

10 Mary Spaulding Lee to Agnes Nestor, January 18, 1909, box 1, folder 4, Agnes Nestor Papers Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

11 Elizabeth Edwards Field to Agnes Nestor, January 1, 1911, box 1, folder 5, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

12 Grace Abbot to Agnes Nestor, March 16, 1911, box 1, folder 5, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.
During the same strike, Nestor “decided to have as observers particularly well-known women of Philadelphia who would find out first-hand what was really happening in the picket line and whose word would be taken in the courts.”

One strategy employed by the Department of Women in Industry was to gather data. In one survey created by the Department of Women in Industry, Nestor and the Committee surveyed employers throughout Chicago, explicitly seeking information regarding working conditions for women.

| Control of boundaries | Whether speaking to the Jefferson-Lincoln club on “The Workers of the City” or attending luncheon with Elizabeth Edwards Fields of the Wilmette Club, or to the Social Services Club on “the various bills which are now pending in the Legislature,” Agnes Nestor frequently interacted with a number of prominent Chicago-area club women.

Although Agnes Nestor attended these speaking events and conferences as “the guest of the Club” rather than a member, she networked closely with Chicago area women. |

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14 Report of Department of Woman and Children in Industry Committee on Standards, September 15, 1917, box 1, folder 8, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

15 Mary Spaulding Lee to Agnes Nestor, January 18, 1909, box 1, folder 4, Agnes Nestor Papers Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

16 Elizabeth Edwards Field to Agnes Nestor, January 1, 1911, box 1, folder 5, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

17 Grace Abbot to Agnes Nestor, March 16, 1911, box 1, folder 5, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

18 Ibid.
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<th>women’s clubs to further the agenda of the International Glove Workers Union.</th>
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<td>Control of technology</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Interpersonal alliances, networks, and control of “informal organization”</td>
<td>“We walked out. We did not use the near-by stairs, but walked through the next room in order that the girls there might see us leaving. The girls there were busily at work quite unconscious of our strike movement. I knew that our cause was lost unless we got those girls to join us. When we got out to the street, I told my companions that all was lost unless we could get those others to walk out too. We lined up across the street shouting, “Come on out!” and calling out the names of some of the girls. We kept this up until a few did obey us. Gradually others follow until the shop was almost emptied.”¹⁹</td>
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<td>Control of</td>
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In April of 1909, Agnes Nestor, Jane Addams, Margaret Drier Robins, and Anna E. Nicholes campaigned together for the right of women to vote.²⁰

When one of the arrested strikers was charged with disorderly conduct and held for bail, Nestor “hurried to telephone Mrs. Laurence Lewis, a well-known woman who belonged to one of the old families of Philadelphia” (1954) who invited Nestor to her home and secured bail for the striker over breakfast.²¹

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²⁰“Speakers and Delegates Appointed to Represent Various Chicago Clubs at the Suffrage Hearing in Springfield,” leaflet, [ca 1909], box 1, folder 4, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

counterorganizations

| Symbolism and the management of meaning | “A woman came up to me and felt the material of my white blouse. ‘You’re not a real working girl,’ said she. ‘Look at the good blouse you are wearing!’ At least this time I had the satisfaction that the blouse was recognized for what it was and was not called ‘a black dress with a touch of white around the neck.’”<sup>22</sup> Nestor herself notes the irony inherent in the Women’s Trade Union League, which “was not a movement which had begun at the bottom among the lowly. Sparking the organization were women like Mary McDowell and Jane Addams, women who had the advantage of cultural background and high social standing, but who were also motivated by a high sense of social justice.”<sup>23</sup> During the same strike, Nestor “decided to have as observers particularly well-known women of Philadelphia who would find out first-hand what was really happening in the picket line and whose word would be taken in the courts.”<sup>24</sup> |
| Gender and the management of gender relations | |

| Structural factors that define the stage of action | Nestor often felt that “this Woman’s Committee did seem like a fifth wheel and not to fit into the regular machinery of the Council of National Defense.”<sup>25</sup> |
| The power one already has | |

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<sup>22</sup>Ibid., 74.  
<sup>23</sup>Ibid., 64.  
<sup>24</sup>Ibid., 108.  
<sup>25</sup>Ibid., 174.
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<tr>
<td>Control of Scarce Resources</td>
<td>“I have received your letter of February 6th in which you comment upon a copy of a letter I received from President Durian and which I sent you a short time ago. In your letter you present difficulties with which your international union is confronted. I regard your letter as about the same as the one sent me by President Durian. Both your letters present a rather discouraging situation. […] I must be frank with you and tell you that it is simply impossible for me to continue to finance your international union.”</td>
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<td>Control of decision processes</td>
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| Control of boundaries | “an industrial revolution was painted on the horizon and clubwomen were told they must take steps to bring about the betterment of conditions of the toiler or they would have a revolution to reckon with.” | 26Contract between the Eisendrath Glove Company and the International Glove Workers of America Local 4 and 18. 1904, box 1, folder 1, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.  
27William Green to Agnes Nestor, February 10, 1941, box 4, folder 3, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.  
Our subject for the afternoon of the 9th is the “Girl in the Factory” and I’m sure you can do a great deal with this subject. Can you give us some reason as to why she is there—what the effect of her being forced into factory work means to the nation etc. as well as conditions now found in factories, how they may be improved, what women can do to help and so on. Just a few words about the strike will not be amiss, although we have had some of that in our previous meeting. We are studying “The Girl” all this year, and have just had “The Girl in the Sweat Shop.” I might add that by “we” I mean the Social Economics Department of the Nineteenth Century Club.29

| Ability to cope with uncertainty | Nestor was acquainted with Newton Baker, Secretary of War during the First World War, since at least 1910.30 |
| Control of technology | “All us girls miss you very much, but I hope we will soon meet again in the near future. In regard to the settlement things are not all together satisfactory, but I suppose it will a little time before everything gets straightened out. I am working at the present time in my old place, but all |
| Interpersonal alliances, networks, and control of “informal organization” | |

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29Grace M. Pebbles to Agnes Nestor, January 2, 1911, box 1, folder 5, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

30Newton Baker to Miss S. M. Franklin, December 6, 1910, box 1, folder 5, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.
of our girls are not back yet as our employer is sending for the girls individually. He is about the only one that has not kept up to the agreement bus as far as we girls are concerned that are working, he is treating us exceptionally nice."

“The standing of our organization is good, very good, better still than we had ever expected to be. We lost very few of our membership. They pay their dues regularly. It seems as a while that they have no more to complain. They have won in some measures materially, and on the outset I expect that this organization will be so permanently in its existence.”

“At last I have heard from you. I was really [sic] angry that you should not write, being so active and so near to us during the strike. Well, I am glad you found my address, I hope you will write again. Our organization is not altogether as it should be after such a struggle and after even such a settlement. We have certainly [sic] won some favorable points, which could develop [sic] a strong body with the conceit of the employes [sic], that is avoiding strikes and quarrels in the shops, but not all the girls, it seems, have understood it and if our union is in bloom now, if our meetings are lively, it could be very much more successful if they had the power of strife and will as of the time during the strike, that is the main illness of our Jewish organization---strike

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31Annie Staimovitz to Agnes Nestor, February 28, 1910, box 1, folder 5, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

32I. Sacke to Agnes Nestor, March 21, 1910, box 1, folder 5, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

33Max Katzman to Agnes Nestor, April 26, 1910, box 1, folder 5, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.
Control of counterorganizations

“All us girls miss you very much, but I hope we will soon meet again in the near future. In regard to the settlement things are not all together satisfactory, but I suppose it will a little time before everything gets straightened out. I am working at the present time in my old place, but all of our girls are not back yet as our employer is sending for the girls individually. He is about the only one that has not kept up to the agreement bus as far as we girls are concerned that are working, he is treating us exceptionally nice.”

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34 Annie Staimovitz to Agnes Nestor, February 28, 1910, box 1, folder 5, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

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understood it and if our union is in
bloom now, if our meetings are
lively, it could be very much more
successful if they had the power of
strife and will as of the time during
the strike, that is the main illness of
our Jewish organization---strike
fever."36

Symbolism and the
management of
meaning
The seal of the WTUL bears the
phrases “The Eight Hour Day,” “A
Living Wage,” and “To Guard the
Home,”37 indicating that the WTUL
believed that by reducing work hours
and raising wages, women workers
would be better able to attend to
domestic responsibilities.

By contrast, the seal of the American
Federation of Labor reads “Labor
Omnia Vincit,”38 revealing a
markedly different ideology.

Gender and the
management of
gender relations
“undermine that old and salutary
spirit of humility in the presence of
masculine judgment on which the
gentlemen of the old school were
wont to believe that the foundations
of society rested.”39

“Ms. Casey’s remarks apparently
stirred the wrath of some of the St.
Louis clubwomen, who have been
coping with the servant girl problem,
and when the conference was over
they made a charge on Miss Casey,
firing a rapid volley of arguments and
questions at her until the poor girl

---

37 Julia Bracken Wendt, [National Women’s Trade Union League Seal], 1908 or 1909, retrieved
December 29, 2010 from Library of Congress, American Memory Collection,

38 American Federation of Labor, Seal, ca 1881, retrieved December 29, 2010 from Library of
Congress, American Memory Collection,

(Document ID: 421977541).
was overwhelmed. Mrs. Chivvis, heading the charge with wildly gesticulating arms ordered the working girls “Back to the kitchens,” which she said were yawning for them and offered a panacea for all the troubles of the working girls depicted in Miss Casey’s address […] Miss Casey replied that most working girls were competent to do housework, did not like to do housework, and did not intend to run homes for women too incompetent to run them for themselves.”

Our subject for the afternoon of the 9th is the “Girl in the Factory” and I’m sure you can do a great deal with this subject. Can you give us some reason as to why she is there—what the effect of her being forced into factory work means to the nation etc. as well as conditions now found in factories, how they may be improved, what women can do to help and so on. Just a few words about the strike will not be amiss, although we have had some of that in our previous meeting. We are studying “The Girl” all this year, and have just had “The Girl in the Sweat Shop.” I might add that by “we” I mean the Social Economics Department of the Nineteenth Century Club.”

40 Ibid.

41 Grace M. Pebbles to Agnes Nestor, January 2, 1911, box 1, folder 5, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

42 Newton D. Baker to Dr. Elizabeth Shaw of the Women’s Advisory Committee of the Council of National Defense, June 16, 1917, box 1, folder 8, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

43 W.S. Gifford of Council of National Defense to Dr. Anna Howard Shaw, Chairman of Committee on Woman’s Defense Work, July 6, 1917, box 1, folder 8, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

44 Frank G. Carpenter to Agnes Nestor, March 15, 1904, box 1, folder 1, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.
The creation of the Advisory Committee on Woman’s Defense work was prompted by an appreciation on the part of the Council of the very valuable service that the women of the country can and are anxious to render in the national defense, and the desire to establish some common medium through which the Council might be brought into closest touch with them and into the fullest utilization of their service.\textsuperscript{42}

With reference to the suggestion that employment adjustment bureaus be maintained in connection with registration centers under the direction of the proper federal and state departments, it was thought unwise for the committee on Women’s Defense Work to undertake this.

With reference to the suggestions that enrollment for training classes be conducted in connection with general registration centers, and that training classes be organized to fit women to take the places of men in general occupations and trades, it was thought the Women’s Committee might be helpful in that connection, and the Director was instructed to ask the Women’s Committee to outline to the Council the proposed method of accomplishing such training.

With reference to the suggestion that plans be adopted for the enlistment of women as non-commissioned officers for service in those departments of the Army and Navy in which they may be substituted for men, it was thought inadvisable to take such action.

[…] The Council approved the recommendations made with reference to food conservation and home economics, if carried out with the full cooperation of Mr. Hoover.\textsuperscript{43}
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4. What should women do to help their sex as to labor matters?</td>
<td>WHEREAS governmental agencies have taken over the initiation, administration, and support of nearly all of the work outlined in the Woman’s Committee program […] so that even advisory guidance for such work is beyond the jurisdiction of the Woman’s Committee […] we respectfully beg to ask if the work of the Advisory Woman’s Committee is not now at an end.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Are trades unions a good thing for women?</td>
<td>One outcome of her committee work during the First World War was that Samuel Gompers invited her to join a Labor Mission to Europe.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Do they not tend to unsex them and make them masculine?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Structural factors that define the stage of action

Resolution Presented by Mrs. McCormick of the Woman’s Committee appointed last April by the Secretary of War, November 28, 1917, box 1, folder 8, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

George H. Barnes of the Cabinet of the British Government to Samuel Gompers, November 10, 1917, box 1, folder 8, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.
APPENDIX B

EVIDENCE OF SOURCES OF POWER ACCESSED

AS POLITICIAN SORTED BY WORDS AND ACTIONS
Formal Authority

The Department of Women in Industry obviously cannot offer to every woman in the community opportunities for daily service in the same way as they can be offered in, for example, the field of home economics. The work of the Department of Women in Industry is necessarily to a great extent of a more specialized character. Its most general work is concerned with the upholding of labor standards, and every woman who cares to have a share in this work can do so by watching for violations of her state labor laws, or for other bad conditions and reporting them to her local Department of Women in Industry (or, where no local department exists, to the Department of Women in Industry, Woman’s Committee, Washington,) being sure that in helping to prevent the breaking down of standards she is rendering service to her country. Those who are particularly interested or informed with regard to women in industry should get in touch with their local departments and cooperate with them in the various branches of their local work. Working women and others who possess first-hand knowledge of conditions can be especially valuable to these departments and it is hoped they will not hesitate to offer their cooperation “concerned with the upholding of labor standards.”

They began by assessing what the federal government was already doing to support vocational education, gathering data through questionnaires sent to officials in various government agencies. These agencies included the Department of the Interior, Department of Commerce, Department of Agriculture, the United States Navy, and the Army Corps of Engineers.

Later in the week, Nestor increases her presence even more and actually presides over a hearing.

Some of my friends are urging me to be a candidate for the Illinois Legislature. Of course I would run on the democratic [sic] ticket if I should decide to make race and as I am in your district I am eager to have your judgement [sic] on this.

---

1Agnes Nestor, Memorandum as Executive Chairman of Department of Women in Industry, [ca 1917], box 1, folder 8, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

2Ibid.

3Commission on National Aid to Vocational Education, 181.

4Agnes Nestor to Mr. Forstall, February 1, 1928, box 6, folder 2, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.
### Control of Scarce Resources

Nestor and the rest of the commission were privileged to an expense account that covered meals, lodging, and transportation between home and the nation’s capital.  

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### Use of organizational structure, rules, and regulations

Miss NESTOR: I think there is a great deal of confusion in regard to the girl training. We have had it brought in here by some of the speakers who have appeared before us in regard to this home economics, and I would like to have you, for the sake of the record here, tell us how you feel from the point of view of the worker on that question, whether it ought to go in as part of our training in general education or whether it ought to be termed that at all.

Representative HUGHES. That will have to be discussed before this Congress.

Miss NESTOR. We have had the woman outside tell us her interpretation of that. I would like to have you as a worker put your interpretation on it. You see, it is so often termed vocational. By home economics is generally understood some training for the home, as sewing, cooking, and all sorts of training for good home keeping.

---

### Control of decision processes

Nestor continues to advocate for comprehensive vocational education beyond the home “unless, of course, the girl on the farm that Senator Page speaks of is really looking forward to her work on the farm as a vocation.”

Miss NESTOR: I think there is a great deal of confusion in regard to the girl training. We have had it brought in here by some of the speakers who have appeared before us in regard to this home economics, and I would like to have you, for the sake of the record here, tell us how you feel from the point of view of the worker on that question, whether it ought to go in as part of our training in general education or whether it ought to be termed that at all.

---

5Weidt, Secretary of the Commission on Vocational Education to Agnes Nestor May 16, 1914, box 1, folder 7, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

6Commission on National Aid to Vocational Education, 203.
view of the worker on that question, whether it ought to go in as part of our training in general education or whether it ought to be termed that at all.

Representative HUGHES. That will have to be discussed before this Congress.

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Senator PAGE. Including hygiene, ventilation, art, first aid—

Miss NESTOR. It can be very broad.

Miss O’REILLY. Under no consideration would I think of that as vocational training.7

Control of knowledge and information

There is an excellent chance because I am the only one running against Weber and he has the worst record of almost anyone in the Legislature. He only stands for “BEER” and that is his one platform all the time. He is not reliable and even the men and young fellows through the district have no use for him and want to help me defeat him.”8

“reported filing her petition in person

[This] “is work, as you know, that I am especially interested in and I will want to consult with all who are working for the best system of vocational training as I take up the work.”10

“include in their curriculum a course in collective bargaining.”11

Miss NESTOR. Would it point out new opportunities for both? I think

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7Ibid., 201.

8Agnes Nestor to Margaret Dreier Robins, Chicago, February 22, 1928, box 6, folder 2, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

9Minutes from campaign meeting in Chicago, February 21, 1928, box 6, folder 2, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.
in Springfield, and added an aftermath, Mr. Schroeder called at Miss Nestor’s home and said that the governor had sent him to tell her that Weber had promised to vote for the eight hour bill next time, and that she needn’t run. He said that the governor was counting on the Democratic votes Weber controlled being used for him in the Republican primary.⁹

Mr. VERRILL. No; there is no special attention given to new opportunities. It is rather a study of things as they exist.

Miss MARSHALL. I think that question was meant to show the opportunity not only for entrance, but for advancement in these industries for women and men separately […]

Take, for instance, the candy industry. We find more women employed than men, yet if we analyze the candy industry the men are holding all of the so-called higher occupations within the industry and the women are holding all the low-grade skilled occupations within that industry. For the purpose of industrial education that would be a very valuable analysis of the various industries.

Miss NESTOR. And to know, too, whether equal opportunities are afforded.¹²

In one survey created by the Department of Women in Industry, Nestor and the Committee surveyed employers throughout Chicago, explicitly seeking information regarding working conditions for women.¹³

⁹Agnes Nestor to Mr. William J. Bogan, February 14, 1914 box 1, folder 7, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

¹¹Nestor, Woman’s Labor Leader, 145.

¹²Commission on National Aid to Vocational Education, 108.

¹³Report of Department of Woman and Children in Industry Committee on Standards, September 15, 1917, box 1, folder 8, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ability to cope with uncertainty</th>
<th>Control of technology</th>
</tr>
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</table>
| Interpersonal alliances, networks, and control of “informal organization” | Some of my friends are urging me to be a candidate for the Illinois Legislature. Of course I would run on the democratic [sic] ticket if I should decide to make race and as I am in your district I am eager to have your judgement [sic] on this. I love [sic] in Ravenswood which is about in the center of the District but I have many connections in the South end of the district because I lived down there so long.  

Nestor understands that Carter is “a Republican so feel that you are not likely to be free to come out for me in the primary. [...] If, however you would like to give us some advice, knowing Evanston so well and about running a campaign, I will be glad to have you come.” |

“happy to meet with you [Bogan] and Mr. Henderson to talk over some of the problems that our Commission will have to face.”  

Nestor arranged to meet with the Chicago school leader “to talk over the matter of vocational education”  

Writing to her friend Irene Treacy, Nestor announces “that I am to be a candidate for Representative to the Illinois Legislature from the 6th District. I will run on the Democratic ticket and of course, you know Evanston is in my district. I do not know where you both stand politically but if you are free to support me I would like you and Philip to come to a little group meeting at my home Monday evening, the 13th, called by Dr. John A. Lapp. Dr. Lapp is very eager to get an organization under way and we will discuss this at that time. There seems a very good chance to win the nomination in the primary.”  

Nestor thanks Arthur Locke “for filling so many petitions for me in Evanston. I went to Springfield Friday night and filed my petitions in person on Saturday so I am now officially a candidate and will appreciate all the assistance that your |

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14 Agnes Nestor to Mr. Forstall, February 1, 1928, box 6, folder 2, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

15 Agnes Nestor to Mr. Carter, February 10, 1928, box 6, folder 2, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

16 Agnes Nestor to Victor Olander, February 27, 1928, box 6, folder 2, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

17 Agnes Nestor, February 29, 1928, box 6, folder 2, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.
“write notes to your friends […] I would invite them but it may save time for you to do it and anyway it would mean more to get a note from you.”

“At the Chicago Federation of Labor meeting on Saturday […] I just learned this morning that he told Mary Dempsey that all the other candidates went to the Wage Earners’ League with their hats in their hands looking for endorsements, and that I did not seem to think it worth while to go in and ask for it. Just so you may have this matter perfectly straight, I am enclosing herewith a copy of the letter which I sent jointly to Mr. Kelly and Mr. Jacob.”

“Control of counterorganizations”

“Unit System, a combination of vocational training and liberal education which might give the worker-to-be vocational training without denying him cultural background.”

Symbolism and the

“group can give me in Evanston.”

“All of Evanston is in my district so your brother can be helpful out there and I am very glad to know we can call on him. I have a very fine group in Evanston. I am enclosing a few cards, which you may send to your brother, and if you will tell me just where to reach him and give me his full name, I will be glad to communicate directly with him.”

18 Agnes Nestor to Mrs. Fisher, March 5, 1928 box 6, folder 2, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

19 Agnes Nestor to Victor Olander, Chicago, March 21, 1928, box 6, folder 2, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

20 Agnes Nestor to William J. Bogan March 25, 1914, box 1, folder 7, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

21 Agnes Nestor to Ella Flagg Young, March 3, 1914, box 1, folder 7, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

22 Agnes Nestor to Irene, February 8, 1928, box 6, folder 2, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

23 Agnes Nestor to Arthur Locke, February 22, 1928, box 6, folder 2, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

24 Agnes Nestor to Beulah Berolzheimer, President of the Federation of Women High School Teachers, box 6, folder 2, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>management of meaning</th>
<th>“Miss Florence Marshall and I foresaw difficulties when we found out that some of the men wished to give girls more domestic science than opportunity to learn trades. We knew that most of the girls would have to become wage earners as well as homemakers. We, too, loved the home; but the girls needed also training which would equip them to earn a living.”26</th>
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</table>

Miss NESTOR. I think there is a great deal of drudgery that has been considered distinctly woman’s work, such as scrubbing, washing, and the like, that requires a great deal of physical exertion. In some other countries and ages women do a considerable of what is termed drudgery work. Now, in our day and time, there are new opportunities for women. We feel very strongly that the women ought to be given equal opportunities with men. I think Miss O’Reilly will agree with me on that.”

Senator PAGE. May the Lord hasten the day when that will come. But it seems to me that there is no uplift in putting a woman into man’s work in the field, in the stable, or in the hide house.

Miss NESTOR. A great deal of our work has been taken out of the home and put into the factory and the mills and all that, and men have taken our work. For instance, at one time we did all the baking of our bread. Now nearly all the bakers are men. And the weaving of the cloth—the men have taken some of that. I do not think there have been enough opportunities really opened up for the women. They have not followed all of those trades. Some seem always

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26Ibid., 151.

27Commission ton National Aid to Vocational Education, 204-5.
to think of the women just doing the sewing and the cooking. That seems to be the thought in the minds of so many people when you talk of woman’s work. There ought to be a lot of other opportunities open for women.

Senator PAGE. Will that not grow out of vocational education?
Miss NESTOR. That is my hope, Mr. Chairman […] I hope the commission will recognize that in their report. I should very much like to see that. We know that a great many particular trades have been distinctly women’s trades, and the women are being displaced by men. We know that in the making of straw hats the men are coming in. The men do not like to see us breaking into certain trades, but we are coming into ours.27

Structural factors that define the stage of action
“this Woman’s Committee did seem like a fifth wheel and not to fit into the regular machinery of the Council of National Defense,”28

The power one already has

<table>
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<th>Sources of Power</th>
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<th>Actions</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Formal Authority</td>
<td>“I am writing you, as a member of the committee on National Aid for Vocational Education, in behalf of the State Manual Training Normal School, of Pittsburg, Kansas. This is one of the largest manual training schools in the United States. Students from from [sic] almost every State in the Union, and the school is splendidly equipped for vocational training. I most earnestly request that your committee will give</td>
<td>In 1914, President Woodrow Wilson appointed Agnes Nestor to “a commission consisting of nine whose duty it shall be to consider the subject of national aid for vocational education and report their findings and recommendations not later than June first, next.”30 Nestor was acquainted with Newton Baker, then Secretary of War, since at least 1910,31 and later worked with</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

28Nestor, Women’s Labor Leader, 174.
this school the recognition it deserves when you take up this work.”

Baker on a number of committees in the Department of Defense. Nestor belonged to the Labor Council, the Bureau of Registration and Information, the Women’s Advisory Committee of the Council of National Defense, and finally, the Women in Industry Committee.

| Control of Scarce Resources |  |
|----------------------------|  |
| Use of organizational structure, rules, and regulations |  |
| Control of decision processes |  |

The commission recommended “That [the schools] should be designed to prepare boys and girls over 14 years of age for useful or profitable employment in agriculture and in the trades and industries,” without any mention of creating schools to teach domestic science or home economics.

According to the report, the commission decided at the outset to address itself to the following questions:

1. To what extent is there a need for vocational education in the United States?
2. Is there a need for national grants stimulating the States to give vocational education?
3. What kinds or forms of vocational educations should be

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29 Representative Phillip P. Campbell to Agnes Nestor, March 23, 1914 box 1, folder 7, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

30 Woodrow Wilson to Agnes Nestor, February 17, 1914, box 1, folder 7, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

31 Newton Baker to Miss S. M. Franklin, December 6, 1910, box 1, folder 5, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

32 Ida Glatt to Agnes Nestor, January 17, 1917, box 1, folder 8, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

33 Elizabeth Martin, chairman of the Bureau of Registration and Information of the National League for Woman’s Service, to Agnes Nestor, April 30, 1917, box 1, folder 8, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

34 Newton D. Baker, Secretary of War and Chairman of the Council of National Defense, to Agnes Nestor, May 7, 1917, box 1, folder 8, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

35 Agnes Nestor, Chairman of Women in Industry Committee to the Women’s Committee of the Council of National Defense, August 23, 1917, box 1, folder 8, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

36 Commission ton National Aid to Vocational Education, 15.
stimulated by national grants?

4. How far can the Federal Government aid through expert knowledge vocational education in the various States? To what extent should the Federal Government aid the States through national grants for vocational education?

5. Under what conditions should grants to the States for vocational education be made?37

| Control of knowledge and information |  |
| Control of boundaries |  |
| Ability to cope with uncertainty |  |
| Control of technology |  |
| Interpersonal alliances, networks, and control of “informal organization” |  |

“I heard from Agnes Peterson that you are doing active canvassing. What you need with you is a woman who is an excellent organizer and knows the influential people in the district. I am sure that many would rally to you if they could be reached, but there is so much work connected with that.”38

“If you start for Washington I should like to have an opportunity to talk over with you some of the problems that your commission will have to face. As President of the Vocational Education Society of the Middle West I am greatly interested in seeing vocational education placed on a democratic basis in the United States. Mr. Wilson H. Henderson, Treasurer of the Vocational Education Association, and also Editor of the “Industrial Arts Magazine” would like to talk matters over with you. He has a fund of information which you should know about.”39

“Miss Isabel Ely Lord a representative of the National Society for the Promotion of Industrial Education will be at the Hotel Blackstone Chicago after four o’clock today and I wish her to meet...

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37 Ibid.

38 Mary Anderson to Agnes Nestor, DC, February 17, 1928, box 6, folder 2, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

39 William J. Bogan to Agnes Nestor, March 24, 1914, box 1, folder 7, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.
you and talk with her about the industrial commission and this society [sic] interest in your kind of industrial education program.\textsuperscript{40}

Mary Miller, Legislative Director of the organization, wrote letters asking other women’s organizations to “help file up the vote for Miss Nestor.”\textsuperscript{41}

An unusual opportunity is presented to the teachers in the Sixth Senatorial District at this primary election on April 10 because we have Miss Agnes Nestor a candidate for State Representative on the Democratic Ticket. We need Agnes Nestor in the Legislature. She can be very helpful to the teachers because she has had a wide experience in legislative work and has been active in the field of education too.\textsuperscript{42}

\begin{tabular}{|l|l|}
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Control of counterorganizations & \\
\hline
Symbolism and the management of meaning & “So Little Agnes, the Child-Wonder, the Girl Agitator and the Promoter, is to sit ‘round a table with Hoke Smith & Page and discuss vocational education! Good! If I were you, I’d get a yet larger bag (you’ll probably have to order one made!), take along the “answered” & “unanswered” portfolio, wear a dress with little buttons on it, and show the Commission at its very first meeting that you mean business!”\textsuperscript{43} \\
\hline
Gender and the & The longer I think about your \\
\hline
\end{tabular}

\textsuperscript{40}Cleo Murtland to Agnes Nestor, telegram, February 20, 1914, box 1, folder 7, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

\textsuperscript{41}Mary Miller, Chairman of the Illinois Legislative Board of the Ladies Auxiliary of the Brotherhood of Railroad Trainmen, to Eva Wemple, February, 1928, box 6, folder 2 Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

\textsuperscript{42}Margaret A. Haley, Business Representative of the Chicago Teachers’ Federation, March 31, 1928, box 6, folder 3, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

\textsuperscript{43}Harriet Reid to Agnes Nestor, February 18, 1914, box 1, folder 7, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.
management of gender relations

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appointment in the Voc.Ed. Committee the more it pleases me. You are just the one for the job—as if you were made to order they won’t be able to put one over on the Trades Unionists without your knowing it. Wilson must have hear that [Illegible] story. I thought all along he showed fair judgment in selecting people to assist him—such men as Louis Post and Frank Walsh of Kansas City. You may be sure it is recognition of your ability. The Prs. Of the U.S. is sometimes the College Pres. It cheers my soul to see that you who had to quit school so young, the poor little kid the machines nearly killed, in spite of everything, now coming along at the head of the procession It is fine! [sic] Keep up the good work. May your light shine before all men (suffrage version)  

The creation of the Advisory Committee on Women’s Defense work was prompted by an appreciation on the part of the Council of the very valuable service that the women of the country can and are anxious to render in the national defense, and the desire to establish some common medium through which the Council might be brought into closest touch with them and into the fullest utilization of their service.  

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<th>The power one already has</th>
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| Mrs. Henry Faxan promptly wrote Nestor to “offer the faithful confidence of a friend and congratulations to the 9,000 girls in

“I shall be glad to attend the meeting and make a few “broken remarks” although I will be much most interested in listening to the speaker

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44Josephine Casey to Agnes Nestor, March 3, 1914, box 1, folder 7, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

45Newton D. Baker to Dr. Elizabeth Shaw of the Women’s Advisory Committee of the Council of National Defense, June 16, 1917, box 1, folder 8, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.
K.C. that they among others have such a champion.\textsuperscript{46}

The longer I think about your appointment in the Voc.Ed. Committee the more it pleases me. You are just the one for the job-as if you were made to order they won’t be able to put one over on the Trades Unionists without your knowing it. Wilson must have hear that [Illegible] story. I thought all along he showed fair judgment in selecting people to assist him- such men as Louis Post and Frank Walsh of Kansas City. You may be sure it is recognition of your ability. The Prs. Of the U.S. is sometimes the College Pres. It cheers my soul to see that you who had to quit school so young, the poor little kid the machines nearly killed, in spite of everything, now coming along at the head of the procession It is fine! [sic] Keep up the good work. May your light shine before all men (suffrage version)\textsuperscript{47}

You do not know me, but I have followed your career for some years with appreciative interest, and I cannot refrain from telling you how greatly I admired the brave fight you made in the recent political contest, as well as your stand on various important questions, and how sorry I am that you were not presently victorious.

Better luck next time!

\textsuperscript{46}Mrs. Henry D. Faxan to Agnes Nestor, March 10, 1914, box 1, folder 7, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

\textsuperscript{47}Josephine Casey to Agnes Nestor, March 3, 1914, box 1, folder 7, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

\textsuperscript{48}Ethel M. Colson Brazelton to Agnes Nestor, April 16, 1928, box 6, folder 3, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

\textsuperscript{49}Jane Addams to Agnes Nestor, February 27, 1928, box 6, folder 2, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.
And, meanwhile, it is pleasant to realize that every such stand, and every such fight brings nearer the good conditions for which we all hunger, and that no-one merely human can measure the good accruing from efforts that, on the surface, seem to fail.\textsuperscript{48}
APPENDIX C

EVIDENCE OF SOURCES OF POWER ACCESSED AS
SOCIAL REFORMER SORTED BY WORDS AND ACTIONS
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| Control of Scarce        | However, the amended House bill still needed to win approval by the  |                                                                         |
| Resources                | Senate before passing. In its current form, Nestor’s bill was now   |                                                                         |
|                         | markedly different than the bill originally approved by the Senate. |                                                                         |
|                         | Nestor hoped that the Senate would refuse to agree to the House     |                                                                         |
|                         | amendments and force a vote on the bill as originally written.     |                                                                         |
|                         | “It didn’t get back to the Senate for amending until after 11 o’clock |                                                                         |
|                         | on the final night, and then only with assistance. There are lots   |                                                                         |
|                         | of places where a bill can get stuck, and this one stamped its toe  |                                                                         |
|                         | in the clerk’s office. We got the Senate to send for it, however,   |                                                                         |
|                         | and after it once got into their hands, they were only a few       |                                                                         |
|                         | minutes in striking out the amendment. The bill had no accident    |                                                                         |
|                         | on its return trip to the house.”³                                 |                                                                         |
|                         | Forced to vote on the bill as written,                            |                                                                         |

¹Agnes Nestor to Herschel H. Jones, October 26, 1917, box 1, folder 8, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.


the “woman’s ten hour bill, in the exact wording desired by Agnes Nestor and the organized laboring women of Chicago, is up to the governor. The bill as amended in the senate, striking out the Shurtleff amendment, won in the house by a vote of 88 to 55.”

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7Agnes Nestor to Mr. Ralph A. Bard, Assistant Secretary, Navy Department, DC, June 9, 1943, box 4, folder 4, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

8Draft of article by Agnes Nestor “Place of Women Wage Earners in Post-War Industry” [ca 1943], box 4, folder 4, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.
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Long hours of labor sap the strength and vitality of the workers, and the poison of fatigue is a danger to our health.

Long hours are usually accompanied by low wages. Low wages deprive the workers of the means of proper food, clothing, housing, educations and recreation. Low wages deprive one of all that gives the joy and fullness of life.

**Safety**
All hazardous and dangerous machinery in factories and workshops should be properly guarded.

Fire laws not enforced, inspections neglected or inadequate provisions for proper inspections, lack of fire laws for the prevention of fires and safety in case of faire, and fire trap places of work all spell hazard and disaster. The catastrophe where so many young lives were lost in the Newark factory fire and the memorable Triangle fire in New York shirt wais factory are all fresh in our minds. And still conditions may be such that a similar disaster can happen in your city now.

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12Anna E. Nicholes to Agnes Nestor, postcard, September 27, 1905, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.
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These are matters to look into and inform yourself about.

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In reply to this let me say that even when it is necessary to resort to a strike to win our just demands we have other forces than the employer to fight. The police has been used on the side of the employer against the worker and the Courts are resorted to for injunctions and restraining orders against peaceful picketing—the method of informing persons of the issue in dispute.

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[...] this commission plan leaves rulings open to review by the court which means that there may be constant litigation through the courts because rulings made, if they give real relief to the workers, are bound to be attacked by the employers [...] There is too great a danger in delegating this legislative power to a commission. It should be reserved by the legislature.

[...] There should be a maximum legal day of eight hours for women in the industries now carefully worked and classified in the statutes, and other industries added if necessary. Let us work to retain statutory limitation and to secure the eight-hour day to safeguard the thousands of working women and the future welfare of our race.6

Dear Mr. Bard:-

By this time you no doubt know that the so-called relaxation bills to amend the Women’s 8Hour Law to allow a 10 hour day and a 54 hour week for a period of 10 weeks and standards of wages, hours and conditions of labor as might be held reasonable and not detrimental to health and welfare.

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The first documented instance of Agnes Nestor working towards
also amending the 6 Day Week Law to allow a 7 day week, passed the House and Senate in Illinois.

[…]

We have been quoting from the report signed by you for the Navy Department and by representatives of the War Department, Maritime Commission, Public Health Service, War Manpower Commission, War Production Board, Commerce Department and Labor Department, entitled “Recommendation on Hours of Work for Maximum Production,” issued about a year ago, where you urged the 6 day week, the 8 hour day and the 48 hour week as approximately the best working schedule for sustained efficiency and urged that plants now employing industrial workers longer than 48 hours a week should carefully analyze their present situation with respect to output and time lost because of absenteeism, accident, illness, and fatigue. […] We had presumed that these were still the standards as advocated by the Navy Department.

[…]

I would appreciate any further information that you can give me regarding the present policy of your Department on the question of labor standards and would like to know whether you intended your telegram to pass the bills relaxing our labor laws.

Very truly yours,

Agnes Nestor

universal suffrage was In fall of 1905, the State Federation of Women’s clubs was “counting on you to speak”12 at a Federation Meeting regarding the right of women to vote.

What will be the place of women wage earners in the Post-War industries and what special problems will they face? This is a question we are concerned about at this time.
How many women expect to remain in industry out of this large working force? This is difficult to answer but from surveys made and cut-backs thus far it is presumed about 80 per cent may remain.

There will be new fields of employment for women that will absorb some women and give them an opportunity for employment. Women have learned new skills and will want to use them and in many industries they will be marketable after the war so we look to much shifting in employment from the old time jobs held before the war to newer jobs, particularly by women who have been in war work and experienced the better jobs. There will be opportunities in the electrical, chemical and plastic and many newly developed industries for which women are particularly suited and in which many of them are skilled. These industries will continue and expand and here the employment of women is probable.

The issue of equal pay for equal work is not a new one but has come sharply to the fore during the war when so many women were replacing men and the difference in wage rates for the same work became more evident.

Your letter addressed to the Woman’s Industrial Commission, Washington was received by the Woman’s Committee and referred to me for reply.

You complain of having a regulation
of hours for women in States claiming that in those States where the Woman’s forty-eight hour law and the fifty-four hour law are in effect you are barred from working unless exempted from these laws.

Your letter puzzles me somewhat as you write as if you were talking for all women in your particular line of work, but do not say by what authority you speak for them or in what way you represent them.

The law in the several states limiting the hours of women’s work have been passes as health measures and while you claim your work is different from factory work we know there is a strain in your work and while different from the strain of factory work it is possibly equally as great.

At this time we are trying to extend whatever protection we can to women workers and we trust that the women already protected by laws limiting their working hours to eight or nine hours a day will appreciate it sufficiently to try to keep this protection.

Since the United States Supreme Court sustained the Oregon Ten Hour Law for men last spring and since the passage of the Adamson Law by Congress there has been considerable agitation in some states for eight hour laws for men too. Until such a time as this can be extended to men, I advise, as one interested in the welfare and protection of working women, that we keep the shorter hours.13

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13 Agnes Nestor to Mrs. K.A. Holmes, November 12, 1917, box 1, folder 8, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.
| Technology | “Speakers and Delegates Appointed to Represent Various Chicago Clubs at the Suffrage Hearing in Springfield,” leaflet, [ca 1909], box 1, folder 4, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago. Lists Agnes Nestor, Jane Addams, Mrs. Margaret Drier Robins, Anna E. Nicholes  

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<td>Control of counterorganizations</td>
<td>Because “The opposition we were meeting now represented not only the manufacturers, but also the large merchants and the utility operators,” women workers who wanted shorter working days were in conflict not only with the status quo, but differentiated conflicts particular to each industry. “Everyone had been coming to me and asking would we take this amendment and that, and I had said no to every one. Our friends would come to us and say seriously: ‘Well, you’re going to lose your measure.’ I’d say, ‘I don’t think so, and, besides, we’d rather lose it than to have any joker in it at all’ […] They had me sit on the floor of the Senate and help advise them about amendments. What I always advised was no amendment at all. Then in the</td>
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15 Anna E. Nicholes to Agnes Nestor, postcard, September 27, 1905, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

Symbolism and the management of meaning

Gender and the management of gender relations

| House we had the most awful time to get them to take it up at all. They tried to shelve it by not taking it up. And, of course, if a bill isn’t taken up out of order it isn’t often taken up at all.”17 | Nestor remembers, “As arranged, the train stopped at various towns en route, and the various delegates spoke to groups at the stations. Because it was an industrial town, I was selected to speak at Joliet.”18 |
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18 Nestor, Women’s Labor Leader, 118.

19 Agnes Nestor to Herschel H. Jones, October 26, 1917, box 1, folder 8, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.


22 Agnes Nestor to Mr. Ralph A. Bard, Assistant Secretary, Navy Department, DC, June 9, 1943, box 4, folder 4, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

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There should be a maximum legal day of eight hours for women in the industries now carefully worked and classified in the statutes, and other industries added if necessary. Let us work to retain statutory limitation and to secure the eight-hour day to safeguard the thousands of working women and the future welfare of our race.  

Dear Mr. Bard:—

By this time you no doubt know that the so-called relaxation bills to amend the Women’s 8Hour Law to allow a 10 hour day and a 54 hour week for a period of 10 weeks and also amending the 6 Day Week Law to allow a 7 day week, passed the House and Senate in Illinois.

We have been quoting from the report signed by you for the Navy Department and by representatives of the War Department, Maritime Commission, Public Health Service, War Manpower Commission, War Production Board, Commerce Department and Labor Department, entitled “Recommendation on Hours of Work for Maximum Production,”
issued about a year ago, where you urged the 6 day week, the 8 hour day and the 48 hour week as approximately the best working schedule for sustained efficiency and urged that plants now employing industrial workers longer than 48 hours a week should carefully analyze their present situation with respect to output and time lost because of absenteeism, accident, illness, and fatigue. […]We had presumed that these were still the standards as advocated by the Navy Department.

[…]

I would appreciate any further information that you can give me regarding the present policy of your Department on the question of labor standards and would like to know whether you intended your telegram to pass the bills relaxing our labor laws.

Very truly yours,

Agnes Nestor

What will be the place of women wage earners in the Post-War industries and what special problems will they face? This is a question we are concerned about at this time.

[…]

How many women expect to remain in industry out of this large working force? This is difficult to answer but from surveys made and cut-backs thus far it is presumed about 80 per cent may remain.

[…]

There will be new fields of employment for women that will
absorb some women and give them
an opportunity for employment.
Women have learned new skills and
will want to use them and in many
industries they will be marketable
after the war so we look to much
shifting in employment from the old
time jobs held before the war to
newer jobs, particularly by women
who have been in war work and
experienced the better jobs. There
will be opportunities in the electrical,
chemical and plastic and many newly
developed industries for which
women are particularly suited and in
which many of them are skilled.
These industries will continue and
expand and here the employment of
women is probable.

[...]  
The issue of equal pay for equal work
is not a new one but has come sharply
to the fore during the war when so
many women were replacing men
and the difference in wage rates for
the same work became more
evident.23  

Your letter addressed to the Woman’s
Industrial Commission, Washington
was received by the Woman’s
Committee and referred to me for
reply.

You complain of having a regulation
of hours for women in States
claiming that in those States where
the Woman’s forty-eight hour law
and the fifty-four hour law are in
effect you are barred from working
unless exempted from these laws.

Your letter puzzles me somewhat as
you write as if you were talking for
all women in your particular line of
work, but do not say by what
authority you speak for them or in
what way you represent them.

The law in the several states limiting
the hours of women’s work have been passed as health measures and while you claim your work is different from factory work we know there is a strain in your work and while different from the strain of factory work it is possibly equally as great.

At this time we are trying to extend whatever protection we can to women workers and we trust that the women already protected by laws limiting their working hours to eight or nine hours a day will appreciate it sufficiently to try to keep this protection.

Since the United States Supreme Court sustained the Oregon Ten Hour Law for men last spring and since the passage of the Adamson Law by Congress there has been considerable agitation in some states for eight hour laws for men too. Until such a time as this can be extended to men, I advise, as one interested in the welfare and protection of working women, that we keep the shorter hours.24

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30 Anna E. Nicholes to Agnes Nestor, postcard, November 23, 1905, box 1, folder 1, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

31 S.P. Beckinridge to Agnes Nestor, March 18, 1909, box 1, folder 4, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.
Control of Scarce Resources  

much I shall have to hear and how eager I am to have your story not only off the strike but of your legislative fight and your wisdom on some of our difficult problems.32

“Margaret asks me to enclose this check and to say that it is for you Miss Maloney and anyone else that it is thought best to bring down for the fight tomorrow.

“Mrs. Robins is well and sends regards to all at the office.”35

Rec’d of Legislative Committee of the Womens’ Trade Union League Nine Dollars for 3 days time in legislative work36

“A benefit performance for the legislative committee will be given at the Whitney theater on Feb 20. “Don’t Lie to Your Wife” is the title of the play.”37

Additional support came from “More than 100 women, representing the alumnae of eleven colleges” who at a meeting announced “A fund of

32Mary E. Dreier to Agnes Nestor, May 23, 1911, box 1, folder 5, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

33Elizabeth Maloney to Agnes Nestor, Receipt for $9.00, February 25, 1911, box 1, folder 5, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

34Program of the Thirty-Fifth Anniversary of the National Women’s Trade Union League, February 4, 1939, box 4, folder 1, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

35Raymond Robins to Agnes Nestor, April 26, 1909, box 1, folder 4, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

36Elizabeth Maloney to Agnes Nestor, Receipt for $9.00, February 25, 1911, box 1, folder 5, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

$1,000 was pledged for the campaign for the proposed amendment.\(^{38}\)

| Use of organizational structure, rules, and regulations | A Bill for an Act to regulate and limit the hours of employment of females in any mechanical establishment or factory or laundry in order to safeguard the health of such employes [sic], to provide for its enforcement and a penalty for its violation. Section 1. Be it enacted by the People of the Sate of Illinois represented in the General Assembly: That no female shall be employed [...] more than ten hours during any one day. Provides for a fine of $25- $100 for each offense.\(^{39}\) |

| Control of decision processes | “I notice by the “Socialist” this evening that the Employers Association expect to meet in a body before the Senate Committee on Wednesday at one o’clock, to protest against the eight hour bill. Strong measures ought to be taken at once to offset this attack."\(^{40}\) “I am afraid that from the nature of the appeal reprinted in the “Socialist”, that the Employers Association honestly believe the bill to be unconstitutional. It should be amended before it passes if it can.” It was very pretty of you to send us a copy of the Bill. It seems to us it is a |

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\(^{39}\)Illinois General Assembly, Senate Bill No. 497 (Springfield, 1909), box 1, folder 4, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

\(^{40}\)Jacob C. Le Bosky, Lawyer to Agnes Nestor, April 19, 1909, box 1, folder 4, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.
very good one. It is much better to have more occupations included even at the sacrifice of a few hours in the week to some. Last year while working in the factory, I could appreciate the value of limiting the hours of evil. I can’t bear even now to think of the aches in my shoulders & it is a satisfaction to know that the girls who are still at the job can go home at a certain hour. I want as many of the girls as possible to be spared the torture of braving when they are tired, the forlady say in a sweet impersonal tone, “Another hour overtime tonight girls.” This is why I don’t think your bill is such a compromise & why I hope it will pass the House.41

| Control of knowledge and information | Anna told me that you would speak for us on suffrage at the Chicago Woman’s Club, Wednesday Morning, December 16. I am so glad that you can come. The general topic is to be “What is Woman’s Great Limitation?” I would like to have you talk about ten minutes on how you think the ballot would help the girls in the Industrial World.42 “Miss Nestor, Please be ready to speak from train 3 minutes at Joliet + send me, 135 Adams St Monday, a synopsis of your speech so I can duplicate for papers”43 | I am sending you two books in which perhaps you will interested [sic]. One is Louis Brandeis’s brief which won a favorable decision from the United States Supreme Court on the subject of the ten-hour law for women in Oregon. The other is the Illinois report on women in factories. You may have seen both these books but in case you haven’t I think you will enjoy looking them over.50 “I have been explaining to Station girls about the 10 hour law – one worked until 9 o’clock six weeks |

41 Josephine Casey to Agnes Nestor, April 26, 1911, box 1, folder 5, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

42 Grace Nicholes to Agnes Nestor, December 3, 1908, box 1, folder 3, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

43 Catharine W. McCulloch to Agnes Nestor, Postcard, [ca 1909], box 1, folder 4, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

44 Mary Healey to Agnes Nestor, November 24, 1909, box 1, folder 4, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.
Reverse side bears printed message: “Men, who love the Freedom which your Fathers won for You, Pay your Debt by Winning Freedom for your Daughters.”

Although gone from this Capital City, you are not forgotten, by your friends or by the merchants, the latter remembering you when they endeavor to adjust hours so that they will not be subject to fine. The first day of July fell on Saturday, which made all the clerks aware that a new law was in effect. I hear that one man clerk as he went home at ten o’clock that night said: “First time in years I’ve been home this early on Saturday night. I’m glad I work with women clerks.” Instead of having to rush madly back on Saturday night, two of the girls at the boarding house saunter in and say nonchalantly that before Xmas – the other from 6 a.m. – 6 p.m. in a Bakery – but I presume our law would not cover her care.”

“We are planning a leaflet on the 10 Hour Law – a very simple statement telling who and what are protected by this law.”

Legislations Section:

In the fall of 1916, the Legislative Committee sent a letter to each candidate for nomination to the legislature asking him to state his position in regard to the women’s eight hour bill. Many replies were received and these were tabulated and printed. In several instances these were used in the campaign that followed. Members of the

45Mary Durham to Agnes Nestor, April 26, 1910, box 1, folder 5, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

46Grace Abbot to Agnes Nestor, March 16, 1911, box 1, folder 5, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

47Mrs. A. J. Link to Agnes Nestor, July 25, 1910 box 1, folder 5, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

48Alice Hickey to Agnes Nestor, June 17, 1937, box 3, folder 8, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

49Lucy Rogers Hawkins, Medill School of Journalism, May 6, 1946, box 4, folder 6, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

50William Hard to Agnes Nestor, July 21, 1908, box 1, folder 3, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

51Anna Nicholes to Agnes Nestor, December 26, 1909 box 1, folder 4, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

52Mary Drier Robins to Agnes Nestor, May 8, 1910, box 1, folder 5, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

53Annual Report of the WTUL of Chicago, June 16, 1917, box 1, folder 8, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.
they have two hours for supper! Minnie Lord, from Indianapolis, says that her native town of Peoria was madly excited July 1st, arranging shifts. You recall that interesting talker from Peoria who spoke of marvelous wages and ideal conditions, carriages, etc.? He declared the ten hour law would never affect them, yet I fancy he was one of the excited ones when July 1st arrived.

You have been recommended to me by Miss Mary McDowell to take her place at our Woman’s Club at Henry Booth House next Monday afternoon. She was to speak to us on “Laws concerning Women in Illinois”. We have sent out cards and hope for a big meeting. It is a great disappointment not to have Miss McDowell, but I have heard you and I know that you can give us just what we ought to know about the new bill which you had so much to do with securing. Hence I am very anxious to have our women hear you.44

“I rejoice with you in the Supreme Court decision, and feel that you were an important factor in the ordeal. Work is the best thing in life, but work for a reasonable number of hours and for fair and living wages.”45

Letterhead: Immigrants’ Protective League

“Mrs. Robins has probably told you that she thought you would present the ten hour situation to the Social Service Club on Monday Evening-March 20-and so we have announced you on the program. We are going to have the various bills which are now pending in the Legislature that social workers are interested in or should be interested in presented. This means six speakers so we will have to limit each on to 15 minutes. The Club meets in the International Legislative committee appeared before each of the political parties of the state when they were drawing up their platforms and asked that an eight hour day for women be included in their platform. The Democrats included an eight hour day for both men and women and the Republican went on record as being in favor of shorter hours for women.”53
Harvester Bldg. Michigan Ave. & Harrison- and begins with a dinner at 6:30. We would like to have you be the guest of the Club on that Evening for dinner.  

We would like to have you talk to the Chicago Woman’s club May 4th, 1911, 2:30 P.M. as our club has followed the ten hour fight they are well up with it, so we will ask you to choose your own subject.

Dear Madam,

Just a few words from an ardent admirer of yours for the fight your have waged for so many years for the welfare of women. I have never had the pleasure of seeing or hearing you but I have watched and waited all these long years for the gallant and humane fight for the welfare of women.  

It is just a little difficult for me to say and express what my heart feels.

I am 72 years old and for 28 almost 29 years was employed in one of the loop dept. houses. Am now incapacitated and no longer able to work and after those years of faithful service there was nothing in store for me only to stay home by physicians orders.

I sincerely hope all the Dept. Stores will live up the law because they surely take all the energy and strength from their help and do not appreciate the service of loyal employees.

Hope you will be blessed with health and strength for many long and happy years to come and I sincerely hope all your efforts will be crowned with success.

Hoping I have not trespassed on your valuable time and pray that God will bless you and your gallant humane
My dear Miss Nestor:

As you know, I was delighted with the talk you gave my class of girls on April 13 and this is simply confirmation on paper (for your files).

I wish it were possible to have such realistic talks from more speakers for students to gain so much vital insight for their future reporting and editing.

Many thanks again, and best wishes for the speedy completion of your book.\(^{49}\)

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Interpersonal alliances, networks, and control of “informal organization”

Lays out itinerary beginning Chicago on April 13\(^{54}\) for a hearing on woman’s suffrage to take place at 3pm on Wednesday April 14\(^{th}\).\(^{54}\)

“The enclosed circular explains the arrangements Mrs. McCulloch’s Committee has made for a public hearing at Springfield on the afternoon of April thirteenth. We are planning for fifteen or twenty speakers who will present various aspects of the need of the municipal franchise for women.

Never mind the papers, forget them entirely, whether they praise or blame. Keep your conscience clear, and your mind and heart free from bitterness and nothing can harm you long. Can’t you meet me Sunday at the N.W. R.R. depot 9:30am. Bring your sister and a simple lunch and spend the day on the Lakeshore at Kenilworth? I have the tickets.\(^{60}\)

The enclosed circular sets forth the purpose of an Industrial Exhibit which will be held in Chicago next

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\(^{54}\) Ella S. Stewart and Catharine W. McCulloch to Agnes Nestor, [ca 1909], Illinois Equal Suffrage Association, box 1, folder 4, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.
“We hope very much you will consent to be one of them, giving a three minute talk.”

You have been recommended to me by Miss Mary McDowell to take her place at our Woman’s Club at Henry Booth House next Monday afternoon. She was to speak to us on “Laws concerning Women in Illinois”. We have sent out cards and hope for a big meeting. It is a great disappointment not to have Miss McDowell, but I have heard you and I know that you can give us just what we ought to know about the new bill which you had so much to do with securing. Hence I am very anxious to have our women hear you.

March. A series of conferences on allied subjects will be held in connection with the exhibit. These will be under the direction of a committee of twenty-five of which Mrs. Raymond Robins is chairman. May we ask your cooperation as a member of this committee? We will so reduce the number of committee meetings that they will take as little of your time as possible. Kindly send your reply on the enclosed postcard.

“In response to your kind acceptance to take part in the hearing at Springfield, the Committee has put your name in the enclosed list of speakers.”

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55 Jane Addams to Agnes Nestor, March 29, 1909, box 1, folder 4, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

56 Mary Healey to Agnes Nestor, November 24, 1909, box 1, folder 4, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

57 Mrs. A. J. Link to Agnes Nestor, July 25, 1910 box 1, folder 5, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

58 Jane Addams to Agnes Nestor, March 23, 1911, box 1, folder 5, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

59 Thomas W. Allinson, to Agnes Nestor, April 11, 1911, box 1, folder 5, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

60 Mary E. McDowell to Agnes Nestor, postcard, June 15, 1906, box 1, folder 3, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

61 Jane Addams to Agnes Nestor, January 24, 1907, box 1, folder 3, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

62 Jane Addams to Agnes Nestor, April 9, 1909, box 1, folder 4, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

63 George W. Coleman, “Invitation to Fourth Annual Sagamore Sociological Conference,” [ca 1910], box 1, folder 5, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

We would like to have you talk to the Chicago Woman’s club May 4th, 1911, 2:30 P.M. as our club has followed the ten hour fight they are well up with it, so we will ask you to choose your own subject.

Addams writing as Chairman of The Child Welfare Exhibit

Recently in New York City, a Child Welfare Exhibit was held, the purpose of which was to educate the community in the betterment of conditions for children.

This Exhibit is to be moved to Chicago, supplemented by local material, and displayed in the Coliseum from the 11th to the 26th of May. The expense of the entire exhibit has been most generously assumed by Mrs. Cyrus H. McCormick, Jr.

A group of representative citizens have been requested to lend their names as a General Committee. Will you kindly allow us the use of your name?

General Secretary of The Child Welfare Exhibit
Repeats previous request to allow C.W. Exhibit to use Nestor’s name.

Meanwhile, prominent allies such as Jane Addams made public appearances to speak on behalf of the bill: “It is the dull fatigue in long hours of work,” said Miss Jane Addams, “that is apt to break down the physical and nervous organization of women, and I hope all will do what we can to aid this work.”

Control of counterorganizations

“I notice by the “Socialist” this evening that the Employers Association expect to meet in a body before the Senate Committee on Wednesday at one o’clock, to protest against the eight hour bill. Strong

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65 Jacob C. Le Bosky, Lawyer to Agnes Nestor, April 19, 1909, box 1, folder 4, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.
measures ought to be taken at once to offset this attack.

“I am afraid that from the nature of the appeal reprinted in the “Socialist”, that the Employers Association honestly believe the bill to be unconstitutional. It should be amended before it passes if it can.”

It deals with abstract rights and not real rights. Legal equality between the sexes is not possible because men and women are not identical and their interests therefore can not be equal.

[...] IT IS MISLEADING AND THEREFORE DANGEROUS

It masquerades as a progressive measure, whereas it is really detrimental to the interests of women and the social order. For instance it would eliminate all existing State legislations, enacted especially in the interests of women.  

### Symbolism and the management of meaning

Reverse side bears printed message:
“Men, who love the Freedom which your Fathers won for You, Pay your Debt by Winning Freedom for your Daughters.”

---

### Gender and the management of gender relations

You remember that you spoke so well for us at the Reform Department of the Chicago Women’s Club that they wanted the whole club to hear it. They gave us Wednesday afternoon, February 17, at two o’clock. Can you be with us then and give substantially the same talk? As it was impossible to secure the use of the room at the School of Civics for Friday Afternoon, the next meeting of the conference for the limitation of hours of work for

**A Bill**

for an Act to regulate and limit the hours of employment of females in any mechanical establishment or factory or laundry in order to safeguard the health of such employees [sic], to provide for its enforcement and a penalty for its violation.

Section 1. *Be it enacted by the People of the State of Illinois represented in the General Assembly:*

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67 Catharine W. McCulloch to Agnes Nestor, Postcard, [ca 1909], box 1, folder 4, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.


69 Grace Nicholes to Agnes Nestor, February 3, 1909, box 1, folder 4, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.
women will be held at the City Club, Tuesday, at 2:30 P.M.\textsuperscript{70}

That no female shall be employed […] more than ten hours during any one day.

Provides for a fine of $25- $100 for each offense.\textsuperscript{71}

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\textsuperscript{70}S.P. Beckinridge to Agnes Nestor, March 18, 1909, box 1, folder 4, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.

\textsuperscript{71}Illinois General Assembly, Senate Bill No. 497 (Springfield, 1909), box 1, folder 4, Agnes Nestor Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center, Chicago.
REFERENCE LIST

Agnes Nestor Papers. Chicago History Museum Research Center. Chicago, IL.


“Primary Results,” Chicago Tribune, April 12, 1928, 8.


State v. Muller, 48 Ore. 252; 85 P. 855, (1906).


VITA

Timothy Michael Grivois-Shah is the son of Betty Jean Smith and Michael Roland Grivois. He was born in Fort Worth, Texas on February 6, 1981. Tim grew up in Mesa, Arizona, and is the oldest of three siblings. In 2000, Tim moved to Chicago to attend Saint Xavier University. At Saint Xavier, Tim graduated *summa cum laude* with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Religious Studies and Philosophy. Following graduation, Tim was a member of Loyola University Chicago’s inaugural cohort of the Loyola University Chicago Opportunities in Catholic Education (LU-CHOICE). As a member of LU-CHOICE, Tim earned a Master of Education degree and Elementary Teaching Certificate while teaching fourth grade at Our Lady of Tepeyac Elementary School. LU-CHOICE created a unique teaching apprenticeship opportunity that not only allowed Tim to apply his coursework at Loyola the very next day in his classroom but also inspired him to wonder how he could effect change as an educator if his classroom were an entire school, or even an entire school system.

Tim joined Loyola University Chicago’s doctoral program in Administration and Supervision in January of 2007, and currently teaches third grade at Willard Elementary School in Evanston, Illinois. Tim is the chair of Willard’s PBIS Tier II committee and serves as co-chair of the Social Committee. Tim is also the founder and Executive Director of Excelencia School of Chicago, a team of teachers and professionals working together to create an outstanding bilingual elementary school.
Tim currently lives with his husband, Dr. Ravi Grivois-Shah, and daughter in Oak Park, Illinois.
DISSERTATION COMMITTEE

The Dissertation submitted by Timothy Grivois-Shah has been read and approved by the following committee:

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