Piecing the puzzle:
## The development of feminist identity.

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Declaration

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that the work contained in the research assignment is my own original work and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted is at any university for a degree.

Signature:…………………….

Date:………………………….

Abstract

The question addressed in this thesis was how women developed a feminist identity around other markers of identity, such as race, gender, motherhood, etc. and in the face of the negative connotations of the feminist label and what implications this hold for feminist solidarity. This question arose out of a careful study of current literature, both on international and local levels, concerning perceived division and problems within the feminist movement. The research was conducted in a quantitative and qualitative manner administering questionnaires to women electronically via e-mail and doing interviews to explore certain more sensitive issues. The criteria for the drawing of the sample were that women must have some form of feminist consciousness or identity. To satisfy these criteria the sample was drawn form the Women's Forum at the University of Stellenbosch, from the Gender Education and Training network (GETNET) and the Social Change Assistance Trust (SCAT), both gender training organizations and from the Provincial Administration of the Western Cape where women have been through a gender training programme. The completed questionnaires were statistically analysed through using The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS).

Three broad themes emerged as the main findings in this thesis. First it became clear that the uncritical application of foreign measuring instruments may lead to false representation in the South African context, underlining the importance of situational and contextual specifity in research. Second, the propagated divisive power of race within feminism was not supported by the findings in this thesis. On the contrary, the profile of the sample is one of women with well-integrated racial identities and very little racial antagonism. Third it became apparent that women do support the values of feminism, but are unwilling to take a feminist label, implying perceived structural and ideological problems within the feminist movement.

The feminist movement needs to redefine their theoretical base, accessibility and their approach to outcomes-based action. If the movement fails to realize the above aims they run a serious risk of disintegration as a political interest group working for the improvement of the lives of women. In order to accomplish the challenges mentioned above the feminist movement must first start with the specific circumstances of the lives of women and use that as a base for theory, policy and strategy to change the lives of

women and second align themselves with grassroots movements in order to establish ties to a constituency of women they have lost touch with.

Opsomming

Die vraag wat aangespreek word in hierdie tesis is hoe vroue 'n feministiese identiteit ontwikkel rondom ander merkers van identiteit, byvoorbeeld, ras, geslag, moederskap, ens, sowel as hoe 'n feministiese identiteit ontwikkel ten spyte van die negatiewe konnotasies geheg aan die feministiese beweging en die implikasies daarvan vir feministiese solidariteit. Die vraag het ontstaan uit 'n studie van huidige literatuur, beide op nasionale en internasionale vlakke, aangaande verdeeldheid en probleme binne die feministis beweging. Die navorsing is gedoen op kwantitatiewe en kwalitatiewe wyses deur vraelyste elektronies te administreer via e-pos en dan onderhoude te voer met die focus op meer sensitiewe sake Die kriteria vir die trek van die steekproef was dat vroue 'n mate van feministiese bewussyn of identiteit moes hê. In lyn met hierdie kriteria is die steekproef getrek vanuit die Vroue Forum aan die Universiteit van Stellenbosch, vanuit die Gender Education and Training Network (GETNET) en die Social Change Assistance Trust (SCAT), beide nie-regerings organisasies wat fokus op geslagsopleiding en van die Provinsiale Administrasie van die Wes Kaap waar vroue deur n geslagsopleidings program gewerk het. Die voltooide vraelyste is statisties verwerk deur die gebruik van die Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS).

Drie breë temas het na vore gekom as resultate in die tesis. Eerstens het dit duidelik geword dat die onkritiese gebruik van buitelandse meetinstrumente kan lei tot 'n vals beeld van die omstandighede binne die Suid Afrikaanse konteks. Dit dui op die belangrikheid daarvan om navorsing spesifiek te hou in terme van konteks. Tweedens word die verdelende krag van ras, soos gepropageer in die literatuur nie deur die resultate van die tesis ondersteun nie. Inteendeel, die profiel van die steekproef dui op vroue met geintegreerde rasse-identiteit en lae vlakke van antagonisme op grond van ras. Derdens ondersteun vroue die waardes van feminisme, maar is onwillig on hulself as feministe te identifiseer. Die implikasies van laasgenoemde is dat daar strukturele en ideologiese probleme binne die huidige feministis beweging is.

Die feministis beweging benodig 'n herdefinisie in terme van teoretiese gronde, strukturele toeganklikheid en hulle benadering tot uitkoms-gebasseerde aksie. Indien die beweging nie die bogenoemde kan bewerkstellig nie, is daar risiko van disintegrasie as 'n politieke belangegroep wat werk vir verandering in die lewens van vroue. Dit is nodig dat die

feministies beweging eerstens begin met die spesifike omstandighede van vroue se lewens en dit gebruik as 'n basis vir teorie, beleid en strategie om verandering te bewerkstellig. Tweedens moet die feministies beweging alliansies vorm met bewegings wat hulle oorsprong het in vrouens se ondervindinge om weer van nuuts af bande te vorm met die vroue op grondvlak waarmee hulle uit voeling geraak het.
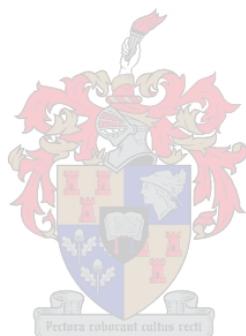
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Chapter 1: Introduction

Ever since women first became aware of the fact that they are discriminated against on grounds of their gender and decided to take action to address this, women have been labelled as some variety of what we term 'feminist' today. Both the ground that they won in these early efforts and the obstacles that they encountered, served as motivation to further advocate the plight of women throughout the world. These efforts drew women together and gave rise to the formation of a movement by women, for women. The feminist movement has, over the years, evolved into a complex organization of women's interests where many dynamics are at play. Due to the diversity among women, coupled with the historical and situational specific attributes of the lives of women, many formal and informal schools of feminism have developed, both differing in how they view gendered oppression and in how they feel gendered oppression should be addressed. There also exists a group of women who still advocate the rights of women, but who refuse to take the label of feminist. The result of this evolution of the movement is very little, if any, consensus on what exactly it is that the word feminist entails and how a feminist movement should function in addressing women's oppression. This holds dire consequences for feminism both as a movement and as a body of ideas, since such a great degree of diversity can jeopardize the solidarity of the feminist movement and so weakens the ability of such a movement to unite around gender oppression and bring about change.

The same scenario as above is applicable to the development and subsequent functioning of feminism in South Africa. Deep divisions along the lines of race, class, sexuality and a number of other markers of identity today mark the South African feminist movement, giving rise to differing needs and different strategies to address these needs, weakening the movement as a tool of political change. There are two main areas of disagreement. The first area of disagreement focus on the vitality of feminism in the face of the development of gender activism as a more practical, outcome based alternative in addressing gendered oppression. The second area of disagreement focus on the right of women who differ in race, class and ultimately experience to represent other women, both in academic writing and in putting issues on the table in the national political arena. Both areas will be discussed shortly below.

1.1) <u>Feminist versus Gender activist</u>

The term *feminism* or the identifying label *feminist* has been met with resistance from some women working with the concept of gender, possibly due to the general disagreement of what exactly these concepts have come to entail. Feminism in its most simple form can be seen as an advocacy for equality of the sexes. Differing contexts and differing needs that arise from the lived reality of the lives of women have lead to the formation of a wide variety of feminisms, as mentioned already. A fact that further complicates the issue is that feminism exists on two levels, firstly the notion of feminism as a body of ideas and secondly feminism as a practised theory in especially the political sense to better the lives of women. On both levels feminism seems to be in a position of double jeopardy. On the one hand there is division within the movement concerning the value of the different schools of feminism, for example liberal feminism, radical feminism, post-modern feminism, etc, leading to contested areas within feminism and on the other hand a whole new type of gender consciousness is busy evolving outside the boundaries of traditional feminism, threatening the vitality of the movement from the outside.

The first issue that should be taken into consideration here is why women are reluctant to identify themselves as feminist. Kadalie (1995:73) writes on the Association of Women in Development conference held in Washington in 1993 and makes the following observation:

> "Most women who attended this session felt they could not identify with the stereotyping of feminists as bra-burning, frustrated, men-hating, spinsters whose rebellion primarily revolves around their wanting to be men. However, these self-same anti-feminists openly claim the right to equality, work, a rape-free society and a safe environment, ignorant that since time immemorial feminists have risked their lives for today's seemingly commonplace rights."

This seems to be the case for an increasing number of women. They do support values that have come, through past efforts, to be associated with feminism, but are at best apprehensive or at worst refusing to identify themselves as feminists. If taken into account the results of past efforts by feminists and the feminist movement along with the resources it gathered through this process, this seems somewhat puzzling. A possible explanation is that in spite of the ground won by feminists, the movement as

it currently exists does not cater for the needs of all women and women are looking elsewhere to satisfy the needs that arise from their gendered struggles. Women also may agree with the basis of one school of feminism and disagree with the basis of other schools, as became apparent through the issue of Western feminism vs. indigenous feminism. Alternatively women have internalized feminist values, but do not need the support of a movement to make such values a reality in their lives, pointing to distinctly post-feminist sentiments. In order to understand the national impact of this phenomenon, it is necessary to ground this discussion in the South African context.

Before this discussion is continued, it is needed to make reference to a new development in the South African context where feminism and gender are concerned. This new trend is the suppression of women's subjectivity and activism through incorporating gender in the development industry. Gouws (2005:78) delivers the following commentary on this: "Where the driving force around gender activism used to be women's experience, mainstreaming turns it into a technocratic category for redress that also suppresses the differences between women." The problem this poses to feminism is that gender became a concept not to be questioned, but to be incorporated into structures of government assuming an already defined gender solution. (Gouws, 2005:78). Women who have no feminist consciousness or identity as a base of reference for gender struggle are defining gender discrimination and developing solution. This is a dangerous situation, since women may perceive this new technocratic brand of gender to be representative of the feminist movement, leading to higher levels of alienation from the movement.

A point that is widely made within the South African context is that feminism, both as a body of ideas and as a tool of political change, is not inclusive of all women, especially with regards to different needs and expectations. The onset of feminism in South Africa was marked by an overrepresentation of white, middle-class, often educated women in the academic field and the focus of this early feminism was the eradication of sexism. Initially women drew on the feminist models developed in the United States and Europe. While these models have worth and are responsible for many gains made by women, there were many who experienced issues, such as racism and poverty, on the part of South African women that were not included in these models and by implication were not addressed as women's issues at the onset

of feminism in South Africa. Many South African women experienced feminism as a movement not inclusive of their experiences and not responsive to their needs.

Indicative of this, Padayachee (1997:12) observes that South African women's groups did not fit into the ideological categories dictated by American or European models because of cultural, socio-political and socio-economic difference. The early stages of the development of feminism in South Africa was marked, in retrospect, by a failure to recognize that one internationally defined notion of feminism can not be applied to the lives of all women and that attention needed to be paid to the specific experiences of women. Kadalie (1995:74) criticizes this assumed homogeneity when aptly describing the feminist movement as "…characterized by different historically developed trends, each trying to explain subordination, exploitation and oppression of women within different theoretical frameworks and socio-political and cultural contexts."

The exclusion due to assumed homogeneity was most marked for black women in the South African context, since feminism was proclaimed to be a movement based on shared identity as women, but in literature and in political action their experiences as black *women* were not accepted and addressed in its entirety.

Benjamin (1995:90) states some of the limitations that feminism places on women as they engage in the gendered struggle: firstly feminist groups are often comprised of intellectuals, secondly feminists are not united since there are different types of feminism, thirdly within the category of feminists there is a high level of inter-individual competition and lastly the representation of the liberated woman and gender oppression excludes the experience of the majority of women. Even though the first three reasons cited by Benjamin holds truth, the last reason has come to the most important debated issue within the South African feminist context. As an alternative to this Benjamin identifies herself as a gender activist. The identity of gender activist implies a greater involvement in action concerning the gender struggle and a lesser emphasis on feminism as a body of ideas. An exclusive focus on activism to the complete exclusion of feminism is also not ideal. The discussion below will explore this issue in more detail.

The reality of the situation in South Africa is that gender consciousness exists on two levels, namely the analytical academic level and the level of the gender struggle in

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the reality of the lives of women. Both have worth and to exclude either one will lead to the development of a lesser feminism. Lewis (1992:16) states that women often fail to recognize that political (struggle) and academic issues are entwined. Both levels can satisfy different needs within the bigger arena of South African feminism. Padayachee (1997:12) states that academic feminists have been marginalized as elitist and bourgeois. She continues, however to argue that they do have a very important role for the development of feminism in South Africa. In the absence of theory specifically formulated for the South African context, we need to conduct research and then develop the research findings into new, clearly articulated and well-argued theories for the South African context.

A movement for women will do well do draw on the expertise, the knowledge and the access to resources that women within the academic sphere have. Benjamin (1995:91) argues that feminism must be made accessible to the masses and she advocates gender activism as the best manner for this to be achieved. While this is true, the national machinery that is to be made accessible was defined and institutionalized in 1996 to entrench women's equality. Measures already in place include the CGE, the Office on the status of women and gender desks in civil service departments. Academic feminists can play an invaluable role in the constant analysis of national machinery in order to ensure that it is a feasible option to aid women in their struggle against gender discrimination. Benjamin (1995:91) continues to say that: "A movement can only achieve strength if it gains in numbers and unity, yet those who advocate women's equality have already been divided in so many streams." By dividing gender activism and feminism, solidarity amongst women will be under more stress, since there will exists yet another divide to negotiate within the arena of the gendered struggle. Women must realize that while gender consciousness may exist on two levels, it is still two levels of the same concept. In the conclusion to her article she states that: "Perhaps feminism refers to intellectualising and theorizing about gender struggle, rather than simply doing it." However, both aspects are needed for women to win significant ground in the struggle against gendered oppression.

Kadalie (1995:77) focuses on the same notion in quoting Sheridan who states that feminist analysis is 'forged out of debate with received knowledge, as well as out of political activism.' These statements points to the fact that room must be made for

both. It is unwise to urge tolerance and acceptance across racial or class boundaries, but then to discriminate against women on grounds of how they practice their own personal feminisms. What is needed in the South African context is the fostering of an 'indigenous feminism'. A feminism that can cater for the specific needs of the women of South Africa, without losing sight of how we came to be here and how we fit into the global village of women. Such a type of feminism is busy developing as became evident in the <u>Agenda</u>[1] editions focussing on African feminism. If such a task could be successfully managed women will start to feel more comfortable with that which is termed 'feminist'. In short a redefinition of feminism is needed, one specifically suited to the South African context.

One cannot identify with something that does not provide for one's needs. As mentioned earlier, women have been mobilizing around their needs for some time as is clear with the emergence of grassroots women's organizations. Just because in those spaces there is no formal theory, does not make it less 'feminist'. Padayachee (1997:12) underlines the need for a redefinition of feminism:

> "Women in this new South Africa need to re-appropriate the term feminism to focus on the fact that to be feminist in South Africa can and does mean different things to different women, but that the common denominators are still liberation from sexist role patterns, domination and oppression."

From the above discussion it is clear that a division exists between women as feminists and women as gender activists. The nature of the divide is more difficult to define. Both groups mobilize around issues that are of importance to women, but still there is an insistence on different labels for inherently the same work with the same aims. As explained above this insistence may have its origins in the history of feminism in South Africa and rather than working towards a change in the status quo, women feel more comfortable to identify with a new movement, free from the cumbersome issues of the past. Gouws (1996:34) elaborates on this issue in discussing Maxine Molyneux's notion of strategic and practical gender interests. Molyneux's basic argument is that because women are divided along lines such as class, race ethnicity and religion, it is more appropriate to talk about gender interests rather than women's issues (Gouws,1996:34). The distinction is made between strategic gender interests which "..are related to analyses of women's subordinate positions in society and alternative measures to ensure equality" and practical gender

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[1] See Agenda's on African feminism 1 (2001), 2 (2002) and 3 (2003).

interests which ".. stem from the concrete conditions due to the gender division of labour, and the lack of basic needs which aggravate women's subordination." (Gouws, 1996:34). In the light of the above, it seems that the aims of feminism align themselves with strategic gender interests and that the women's movement is aligned with practical gender interests. Coupled with Hassim's (1991:72) distinction between feminism and the women's movement, for the purpose of this thesis the feminist movement captures ideological notions of political advocacy in order to ensure gender equality whereas the women's movement is more concerned with practical issues sprouting from the hardships and inequality that women experience in the lived realty of their lives.

Critique of any movement and its conduct is necessary and needed in order for such a movement to retain vitality. The same goes for the feminist movement. The feminist movement in essence mobilizes for change in societal conditions of gender inequality and also makes attempts to include men in the struggle against gender inequality. The Women's Movement on the other hand mobilizes around more diverse issues and often takes on single issues rather than the condition of society as a whole and focus exclusively on women. From a political point of view, the feminist movement may be better equipped to address inequality in society as a whole and not just to focus on isolated issues. The ideal is for the two movements to be able to work together, both on political level and on the practical level of implementation. For the purpose of this thesis, the focus will be on the feminist movement.[2] The aim here is not to disregard the importance of the Women's movement and the invaluable activist work that they are doing, but to determine how women come to a point where the personal indeed becomes political.

1.2) <u>The representation debate</u>

The second area of disagreement, as mentioned earlier, focus on the right of women who differ in race, class and ultimately experience to represent other women, both in academic writing and in putting issues on the table in the national political arena. Some reference to this topic was already made in the previous discussion of gender

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[2] In the questionnaire the respondents were not given a formalized definition of the feminist movement, but the interpretation of what feminism entails was left open to their own interpretation. This was done in an attempt not to be prescriptive, since the notion of feminism will not necessarily hold the same meaning for all women.

activism vs. feminism. Benjamin (1995:90) cited that the representation of the liberated woman and gender oppression excludes the experience of the majority of women as one of the reasons why women no longer feel comfortable with the feminist label. Even though the height of the representation debate was a few years ago and is not as applicable today, some of the arguments made are still important to discuss, especially for the purpose of this thesis. The dissatisfaction here originated from the fact that women did research and represented research findings across borders of race and class without paying attention to the context that the research was taking place in and without questioning their own preset convictions, motivations, ideas and expectations of why the research was needed and what the outcome of the research 'should' be. The result of research done in such a manner is either a misrepresentation of the lives of others or a decontextualized body of information, both of which is insufficient to address the problems women experience in their lived realities.

The biggest critique concerning the representation debate can be linked to the earlier mentioned division between gender activists and feminists with their roots in the academic sphere. The women who did research and represent other women through their findings were often from the academic sphere within feminism and as mentioned already were stereotyped as elitist, white, middle-class, educated, and so forth. The main argument here was that academic feminists did research on women who live in contexts vastly different from their own, but persisted to interpret the result of the research in terms of their own paradigms. The result of this was that women, as subjects, were misrepresented, untrue identities were imposed on them and 'problems' that they should experience according to the researcher became the focus of their 'emancipation', not the self-defined difficulties that marked their everyday lives.

Women doing research found themselves in a difficult position since research was needed then and this is still the case now, but if research is done in an ideological manner it may do more harm than good.

In literature there is a small, but significant, reference to the problem of treating women as if they are all part of one group that share the same basic characteristics, in other words assuming homogeneity on grounds of shared biology and universal

oppression by patriarchy. Even though this is often only mentioned in passing, it is important to pay attention to the problem of misrepresentation that it may cause.

Mohanty (1988:64) gives an accurate summary when she states that:

> The assumption of women as an already constituted and coherent group with identical interests and desires, regardless of class, ethnic or racial location, implies a notion of gender or sexual difference which can be applied universally and cross-culturally.

An ascription to this notion denies the difference that women experience as a result of race, class, sexuality, being a mother or not, employment status and many other factors. Reference has been made to women differing from each other and that they will experience the world in differing ways.

The most prevalent reason for grouping women together as one, homogeneous group can be found in biology. The argument is that women are essentially the same because of their female gender and the stereotypical attributes assigned to women on grounds of gender, as a consequence of radical feminism. The school of cultural feminism uses the female biology, along with its specific characteristics, as a material base. The ideology rests on the reappropriation of the female nature or female essence by feminists themselves, in an effort to revalidate undervalued female attributes (Alcoff, 1988:408). The primary constituent of identity becomes the female anatomy. This can be an empowering base for identity, if it is of the women's own choosing. If not, grouping women together on grounds of shared gender becomes a problem in two instances. First when writing about other women, the author fails to recognize levels of difference and individual experience and take shared gender as the most important marker of identity. Women are reduced to biological characteristics and are misrepresented through reliance on stereotypical views and the assumptions of the author that she understands the experience of the represented women simply because they share the same gender.

The second instance is when the female biological identity is assumed to be applicable to women. When certain characteristics are assigned to women on the grounds of the fact that they can reproduce. The biological characteristics of women, such as their reproductive capacity and their sexual roles, do provide grounds for a shared identification to different degrees (Meintjes, 1993: 39). This is the case since women are, because of their biology, defined different from men and therefore find it

harder to negotiate equality, which men often take as a given in their lives. To focus on biology as a shared and important characteristic if it is not part of the woman's self-defined identity, is a grave mistake in research about women. It is important to be aware of the fact that biology is just another characteristic and the importance of biology in determining identity and motivating behaviour stays the individual choice of every woman.

The second criteria for grouping women together and assigning shared characteristics, do not affect all women, but is limited to the case of the Third World-woman. Here residence in a Third World country becomes the beacon of shared identity. The assumption here is that all non-western women will share the same oppression and the same struggles. The dividing line and the base for assumption, becomes racial. Carby (1982:220) states that the lumping together of Third World women has the effect of generalizing specific oppression and experience into meaninglessness. This may also lead to the creation of theories on third world women that are used across the board, regardless of their relevance to the specific realities of the lives of women, such as different race, country of residence, or cultural practices. Again there is a risk of misrepresentation and of the imposition of identity. Central to the representation of Third World women as one group, is the power of the 'representer' over the 'represented'. The power often falls into the hands of western women who assume that a shared biology is enough "qualification" to write on the lives of Third World women. The vast difference in history and current circumstance as you move from one Third World country to the next is often ignored for the sake of comparison and generalization.

The third problematic area concerning the grouping together of women is found within the origins of feminism. Mama (1995:10) points to the fact that feminism originated as a single movement united around the common interests of women in an attempt to liberate women from male domination and oppression. Even though the statement is true, feminism has come a long way since then and has evolved into a movement that is far more complex and covers far more ground than male domination. Feminism is in essence a range of different political and theoretical perspectives, each with different and sometimes competing ways of viewing the world and women's oppression and with different strategies to overcome this (Mama, 1995:10). In South Africa difference can be observed between liberal/equality feminists with their focus

on law and institutions and radical feminists with their focus on gender-based violence and sexuality. If we look at difference in women and their situations, it is impossible to treat it all in the same category of a universal feminism. Griffen (1996:97) states that the voices of women are so diverse that the oppressive and marginal nature of our different social positions cannot be represented in a straightforward way. The only acceptable instance for the grouping of women is when they identify themselves with a group, knowing what he group membership entails. In order to combat the assumption that there are underlying commonalities in the lives of all women, it is needed to make research culturally and historically specific (Moore, 1994:80).

2.)   <u>Statement of the problem</u>

From the summary above it becomes clear that division exists between women involved in the struggle against gendered oppression on two levels. The first area of division concerns whether women identify with the feminist movement or with more activist orientated movements such as the Women's movement and thereby endorsing differing courses of action for the eradication of gendered discrimination and oppression. The second area of division concerns how and by whom women should be represented in order to portray a true picture of their lived realities and the struggles they have to face. Here it is of great importance to keep in mind that division exists between women *already involved* in the gendered struggle and not between women as a demographic group defined by their gender. Involvement in the gendered struggle implicates a certain degree of feminist identity or at the very least feminist consciousness. In the face of the great levels of diversity amongst women, this is the one common denominator. In order to foster a better understanding of how women are divided it is needed to explore the nature of their feminist identities and how they have acquired these identities.

Derived from the discussion above the following aspects pertaining to difference and division in feminism will be the focus of this thesis

> a.) how women develop a feminist identity with specific reference to the impact of other markers of identity such as race, motherhood, etc.
> b.) if and how the negative connotation of the label feminist plays a role in feminist identity development

c.) what implications the current nature of feminist identity, as determined by the sample, holds for feminist solidarity

3.)   <u>Rationale and objectives of the study</u>

This thesis is an attempt to unravel the perceptions of difference and the antagonism coupled with this difference as became apparent in debates in <u>Agenda</u> in the 1990's and at conferences. This is important since solidarity within feminism can aid the development of structures both formal (the state) and informal (the women's movement) to address the struggles women experience as a result of their gender.

Given the aforementioned problem statement and rationale of this study, the objectives of this thesis can be summarized as follows:
  a.) to explore the impact of demographic variables along with the experience of apartheid as pathways to feminist identity.
  b.) to explore the impact of race as a dividing factor within feminism
  c.) to explore perceptions of the efficiency of the state as a formal structure to provide for the needs of women
  d.) to explore how women perceive themselves as a group along with their potential for politically motivated activism
  e.) to explore the ground level manifestations of the negative connotation of the label "feminist"
  f.) to explore the degree of existing feminist sentiments even in the absence of self-identification as feminist
  g.) to determine the applicability of measuring instruments for feminist identity developed outside the South African context to the South African context.

4.)   <u>Structure of thesis</u>

The following will serve as a layout of the thesis according to chapters, including a short discussion on the main focus of every chapter.

Chapter 2 will serve as the literature review, mainly focussing on past and present reasons for division within the feminist movement. Firstly dividing issues on

international level will be addressed, including areas such as the critique on academic feminist practice and leading from this, a more in depth discussion of the representation debate as shortly mentioned earlier in this chapter. Since the international arena of feminism is not the focus of this thesis, this discussion will be short, serving an informative purpose concerning the later discussion of division within feminism in the South African national context.

Chapter 2 will proceed from this point to look at the divided nature of feminism in South Africa, with specific reference to the influence of the history of apartheid and the consequences this holds for the representation of the lives and oppressions of women. Here reference will also be made to the construction of difference within South African feminism and how this may add to the problem of division concerning the effective functioning of the feminist movement.

The discussion in chapter 2 continues by focussing on the challenges that difference and division may pose to feminism in South Africa, both as a movement and as a body of ideas. Specific reference will be made here to the influence of the political, social and economic environment on the development of feminism indigenous to the South African context. The concluding argument in this chapter is that solidarity is important for the vitality of feminism even in the face of difference. However, to foster and maintain solidarity it is needed to understand how women are drawn to feminism and how this interest becomes strong enough to motivate action and translate into feminist identity or consciousness.

Since the primary focus of this thesis is how feminist identity develops and subsequently functions to motivate action, chapter 3 continues the literature review with an in depth discussion on how identity is constructed. In the absence of a clear and comprehensive definition of feminist identity in literature, the concept of identity is analysed in this chapter with great care in order to clarify the formation and functioning of feminist identity. The introduction to chapter 3 clarifies the distinction between the personal and social aspects of identity. The next part of the discussion focuses on ways of constructing identity, drawing on several academic sources. Through summarizing the main arguments three ways of constructing identity were identified. Firstly, passive ways of forming identity, when the individuals resign themselves to identities subscribed to them by others or the environment. Secondly,

active ways of forming identity, when the individual plays an active role in choosing to adopt a certain identity and lastly shifting ways of forming identity when the individual will change their identity according to the social context they find themselves functioning in. Following this reference is made shortly to the influence of a changing political, social and economic environment on the development of identity.

The remainder of chapter 3 focuses exclusively on feminist identity. In the absence of a clear definition of feminist identity, writing on the concept was analysed to construct a criteria for feminist identity. Following this, pathways to feminist identity was discussed leaning heavily on the work of Klein (1984), but making allowance for the specific attributes of the South African context. Moving away from Klein's work, the significance of the experience of both oppression and violence in the South African context were also discussed as possible pathways to a feminist identity.

Chapter 4 focuses on feminist methodology as a guideline in conducting research and the subsequent representation of women, with specific reference to epistemological issues. Feminist standpoint is identified as the most applicable method of enquiry for the purposes of this thesis and in accordance to this the importance of the lived reality of women is shortly discussed. Necessary attention is paid to the possible power relations within the research relationship and some strategies to diffuse the power relations are discussed. The desirability of qualitative vs. quantitative research is shortly discussed, before the focus of the chapter moves on to the construction of the measuring instruments. Data was gathered by administering questionnaires electronically to a population of women who has a degree of feminist consciousness or identity and from the data further issues were identified to be explored through personal interviews.

The remaining chapters of the thesis focus on a discussion of the data gathered, with continuous reference to the issues raised in the literature review. Chapter 5 explores the demographics of the sample and the applicability of Klein's proposed pathways to feminist identity on the South African context is discussed in detail. Chapter 6 is concerned with the racial dynamics within South African feminism, specifically exploring the possible divisive power of race concerning women working together for social change. Chapter 7 explores the current situation concerning feminism in the South African context on three levels. First perceptions of the state is analysed in

order to determine the feasibility of utilizing existing measures in addressing the plight of women, along with perceptions of the extent of women's influence on state level. Second attention is paid to perceptions of equality, willingness to engage in behaviour to promote equality and levels of support for organizations involved in the struggle for equality, for instance the Women's movement and the feminist movement. The last level explored in this chapter is the stages of feminist identity development for the individual respondents included in the sample.
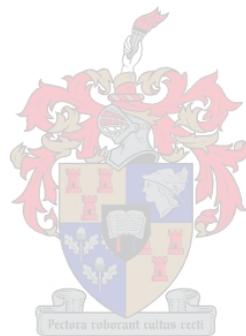
Chapter 2: Literature Review

From the brief discussion in the introduction to this thesis, it is evident that division exists within the feminist movement in South Africa. Even though an increasing number of women ascribe to the values and ideals traditionally associated with feminism as a movement, they have difficulty in identifying with the feminist label. Short reference has been made to the fact that this is partly a result of the fact that there exists no 'feminism' that is applicable, in its entirety, to the unique challenges and problems that women within the South African context face on a day to day basis. For this reason some women feel that it is of no use identifying with a movement that does not address the reality of their struggles and that cannot pose practical solutions for the problems they experience. However, feminism does not only exist on a political movement level, but can also be seen as a body of ideas. The notion of feminism as a body of ideas move away from activism or political involvement towards a more philosophical and ideological examination of the implications of the gendered divide, yet it is important that feminism should retain a praxis.

Since feminism is a relative young discipline within the South African context, it is inevitable that some of the theories, academic debates, arguments and solutions that are being applied to women in South Africa have their origins in the wider arena of international feminism. For this reason, it is not sufficient to only look at the practice of feminism within South Africa. It is needed to look at feminism on international level, before we can move to the local South African variety, since we need to establish similarity and difference, and to which extent the international issues and assumptions are applicable to the South African context.

In Western feminism there is a perceived split in the movement that centres on issues of race and research, specifically stating that women cannot do research across borders of race due to the fact that different racial backgrounds imply different experiences and that this may lead to misrepresentation of the struggles of women (De la Rey, 1997:7). The importance of addressing these issues lies in the fact that if women refuse to, or are apprehensive about, doing research across racial borders, it can pose a danger to the growth and vitality of the movement. If division in feminism is not addressed and remedied, the result will be the weakening of both the movement and the theoretical production of

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knowledge concerning women. This will leave women in the precarious position where they have neither a comprehensive body of theory, nor the necessary solidarity to address the discrimination and oppression that they may experience on grounds of their gender.

A critical assessment of the current writing on feminism shows that more emphasis is being placed on the occurrence of difference within the movement, both within the academic sphere and on the more practical level of activism. The notion of unity is becoming more and more outdated when we look at the practiced feminism of today. Feminist discourse can no longer be assumed to be unitary and the female subject it assumed can no longer be taken as representative of all women (Mama, 1995:10). Moodley (1993:11) captures the confusion that characterizes some debates when she states that "…there are different experiences of gender oppression, little or no agreement about a modus operandi to challenge and eliminate it and conflicting ideas of what exactly liberation from gender subordination is." From this it is clear that the difference within the feminist movement is causing fragmentation of the movement into sub-sections of women with their own oppressions and very different ideas of how these oppressions should be addressed. The challenge that feminists face is to turn difference around and use it as a pool of knowledge, not as tool of division.

What is needed is to take a critical look at Western feminism and to pinpoint where and how the differences amongst women within the movement have become a problem. When we look at the working of Western feminism and the contested areas, it is possible to identify two issues that are salient points of debate. The first issue centres on the fact that feminism operates on the academic level of theorizing and debate and that there is a need to move to the more practical level of experience. This is evident in the rising of, and recent focus on, the importance of grassroots movements or so-called organic feminisms. Women are starting to feel that the academic variety of feminism does not cater for their needs and they are creating alternative methods to foster solidarity on grounds of their gender.

The second issue has its roots in research done across borders of race and class captured in the representation debate that emerged both on international and South African levels. Western scholars are well resourced and do research in Third World countries. The problem here is that women from Third World countries are taken out of context, largely due to a misunderstanding of their experience, and are then misrepresented. When we

look at both of the contested areas, it seems that the problem resides in how research is done and how the results are interpreted and put to use. The following discussion will focus on the points of division within the international arena of feminism, moving on to the specific attributes of the South African context.

2.1) <u>Dividing issues on international level.</u>

2.1.1) Critique on academic feminist practice

Firstly we are going to focus on the critique surrounding the academic practice of feminism. Two causes of dissatisfaction that repeatedly surface in literature are: 1.) The (racist?) composition of the academic sphere and 2.) The exclusion of the research subject from knowledge.

Kitzinger and Wilkinson (1996:12) touch on the first problematic aspect of academic feminism when they state that the greater portion of academic feminists are white middle-class, western women, residing in First World countries, such as the United States of America or Europe. The result of this skewed composition, in the academic sphere of feminism, is that the problems and issues relevant to white, middle-class, western women are over-represented. When they indeed try to theorize the lives of non-western women, we find a misrepresentation due to a lack of understanding and experience, along with an application of western norms and values. The answer here is not to refrain from doing research, but to be aware of the possible problems that might sneak into the equation.

Bhabha (1990:219) states that while academics have a responsibility to intervene in struggles and situations of political negotiation, they should not change the object of the knowledge itself in order to fit it into a certain concept of society. In academic research it is important to pay attention to the context where the information originated and not to assume that shared gender implicates shared context and shared struggles. The notion here is one of doing research in a responsible manner, not disadvantaging the research subject in any way. A very important ingredient in this type of research is to never lose sight of the context and the personal experience in this context. Research becomes disempowering when there is a lack of

understanding and an exclusion from knowledge (De la Rey, 1997:196). It is true that the project of fully understanding any situation is virtually impossible. What is inexcusable though is to do research without having made the effort to understand the very specific dynamics of the context one is working in. This is not a task to do while you are busy doing research, but an understanding (although limited) that needs to become part of the researcher's frame of reference before venturing into research.

The second cause of dissatisfaction concerning academic feminism is that of exclusion from knowledge. This is applicable to both the research project and the results of research. The subject must be aware of what information is needed from them and what purpose it will serve when the research is completed. There is also a need to give feedback at the completion of any project. This places the research subject inside the process as opposed to using them as a mere source of information. The dynamic of power inherent in any research situation, means that whenever research is done on the lives of other people, there is never a clear separation from whether or not one is speaking for them (Moore, 1994:70). The answer to this predicament might lie in juxtaposing the academic report to the lived experience of the subject. The voice calling for the importance of the lived experience is becoming stronger and stronger within written reports on women's lives as is evident with the focus on feminist standpoint epistemology. Epistemology will be discussed later in the thesis in greater detail.

The focus on context, experience and the inclusion of the research subject, as proposed by feminist standpoint epistemology, is a backlash against academic reports littered with data, not paying attention to the reality of problems and struggles. Lazreg (1988:82) states that:

> …academic feminists have yet to break away from the philosophical and theoretical heritage it has so powerfully questioned. Knowledge is produced not only within a socio-economic and political framework but also within an intellectual tradition with stated and unstated assumptions. Although it questions traditional assumptions, academic feminism has often neglected to investigate its own premises. If it were to do so more often, it might become apparent that 'traditional' social science categories have not yet been transformed but have been given a different sex instead.

The criticism here neatly summarizes the failure of academic feminism. In not taking into account the lived experience of the women that they do research on, there is no sense of

empowerment, but a mere reproduction of the same oppressive dynamic in research, similar to that of the traditional male representation that feminism tries to address and eradicate. The only difference is that the researcher is female.

Lazreg (1988:95) continues to take issue with this problem in stating that we need to move outside of constructed categories to the experience of women's lives. We need to move away from merely describing women's subjective lives to a place where we study women to acquire new knowledge and not attempt to confirm the positions we already hold. The lived experience of women has been a source of information for a great deal of academic writing. The problem is that we try and fit this into a preconstructed idea of academic theory, while the opposite should apply. Lived experience should dictate theorizing since this is the only manner in which applicable theories can be formed.

Women have become apprehensive of feminism and one of the most frequently cited reasons is that the existing body of theory and literature is not applicable to the lived reality of their lives. Feminism has been challenging the way in which knowledge is produced in order to cater, through theory, for the struggles women experience in the lived reality of their lives. Caraway (1992:10) refers to Anzaldua's notion of 'theory in the flesh', which entails that the physical realities of our lives fuse to create a politic of necessity. This dictates that theory should take at its base the lived experience of women and the political needs that this implies.
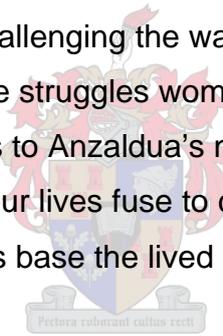
Lived experience alone is not enough and neither is a disembodied theory that exists in an academic space removed from reality. What is needed is a middle way, a compromise between the two. It seems to be an "and-and" situation, rather than an "either-or" situation. The trick is to allow both experience and theory to co-exist in a subjective manner, without the one dominating the other. (Mama, 1995:14) refers to the need that: "Theory must be able to address women's experience by showing where it comes from and how it relates to material social practices and the power relations which structure them." It is clear that theory as we have it now is not a sufficient tool when we start to look at the subjective experience of women's lives. The answer to this might lie in the restructuring of theory. Edwards (1990:147) states that black women cannot be merely added on to theory, but that a working of theory is needed instead. The argument that she makes can be applicable to the handling of experience regardless of race, class or other 'new' oppressions that may arise within feminism. What is needed is a new conception of theory

to incorporate how experience shapes action and ideas, not an 'adding on' of experience as a new dimension to feminism. In feminism experience forms an integral part of how women negotiate their lives, to not include this in theory will lead to the same insufficient theoretical base all over again. Feminism is at a point where the need for the incorporation of lived experience into academic research and theory cannot be ignored. This is not to insinuate that no effort has been made in this regard, since feminist theory has for a long period done exactly this, the point here centres on how this is done. The ideal approach being to complete revision of theory and not trying to fit new oppressions and experiences into old paradigms.

2.1.2) The representation debate

The second area that proves to be problematic within Western feminism is that of doing research across borders of race and class. This has proven to be a contested area, because there is a lack of understanding or a misunderstanding concerning the experience of women, from different classes and races. This is a result of the vastly different environments that we find when we move across borders of race and class. The effect of the misunderstanding is that false assumptions are made about the lives of women based on the norms, convictions and values of the researcher. This leads to false depictions of not only their lives, but also their convictions, struggles and goals. When we start to do research across borders of race and class, we re-present the lives of women to those who have access to the results of research. We take what is presented to us and put it into the paradigm of research. First and foremost, doing research across borders of race and class is a case of representation and inherent in this a judgement of the extent to which we manage to convey the truth of the situation we have observed.

Before we launch into arguments surrounding the issue of representation, it will be useful to establish exactly what is meant by representation. Woodward (1997:14) states that: "Representation includes the signifying practices and symbolic systems through which meanings are produced and which positions us as subjects." Representation is a process through which we establish individual and collective identities and symbolic systems to provide answers to questions such as: who am I? It entails the construction of a place from which individuals can position them and from where they can speak (Woodward, 1997:14). The problem with representation arises when we do not speak only for ourselves, but also

for the women that we do research on. This has the effect of not only establishing our own identities within the social space, but also the identities of those that we represent.

Alcoff (1994:289) summarizes it well when she states that we create ourselves when we speak for ourselves. By implication, when we speak for others, we create their selves. In representing others we create a public self that is more unified and simplistic than the subjective experience of women. This public self will, apart from showing an untrue image, affect the private self and might lead to the questioning of subjective experience. Furthermore we live in a space that is socially constructed with socially constructed available options. We are therefore forced to negotiate our lives within this space, regardless of subjective experience. To construct 'untrue' identities for those that we represent, will put more socially constructed boundaries down in which they have to negotiate their subjective selves.

We should never loose sight of the fact that although experience is subjective, it is dependant on the space it occupies. Representation then becomes careful balancing act between social space and individual experience. Madill (1996:159) distinguishes between speaking for and speaking about as two different forms of representation. It is very important that we focus on this distinction, if any, since it may imply two very different ways of representing that which we research. Representation rests on interpretation, either of our own reality or of the reality of the research subject. This is why I find it difficult to see how a distinction can be made between 'speaking for' and 'speaking about'. Whether we speak for another or about them, it is still us representing them, and not them speaking for themselves. The only possible distinction that can be made is that 'speaking about' can carry with it some degree of interpretation, while 'speaking for' should ideally refer to the 'retelling' of what others told us. This issue will be discussed later in more detail with reference to the responsibility of the researcher in representation. Representation is a virtual minefield where the researcher must be very careful to ensure that the exercise of reporting on the lives of others will better their situation, and not do harm. The feminist motivation is to provide a more accurate description of the lives of women than that of male scholarship and to advocate effectively for all women (Alcoff, 1994:306). If we fail to be aware of the pitfalls inherent in speaking for or about other women, all we will get is a reproduction of the inequality that we strive to eradicate.

Narayan (1997:103) points to one of the dangers of misrepresentation in stating that it is largely a result of taking issues out of context and discussing them on the grounds of western paradigms. When this happens the reality of the problem and the struggle that accompanies it, becomes skewed to such an extent that it seems to take on a different nature. This happens since the subjective experience component is present in the reported research, but the context is either absent or changed. It is this "false" nature of the problem that is put under the spotlight and analysed. It is clear that this is a futile project, since no real solutions can be found because of the fact that the real problem is not addressed. This often is the case when knowledge moves over borders of class, culture, race or other markers of identity that will cause difference in experience.

If feminism is viewed in a global sense the most prominent divide is between the Western World and the Third World, or the so-called North/South divide, the North referring to the Westernized United States and Europe and the South to Third World countries. It is important not to decontextualize a problem when you take it from the Third World reality into a western discursive space. Lazreg (1988:82) lists three consequences of writing on Third World women across the borders of race and class without critically looking at why the research is needed, how it is done and what the practical advantages of such research will be. Firstly there is the fact that the literature on Third World women is abundant, but the writing shows no promise of feminist practice or theoretical importance. Secondly, western feminism has carved for itself a position in feminist writing where it can be expanded on or accommodates the writings of non-western women, but there is an absence of the questioning of assumptions advocated by western feminism.

Lastly, although Western feminism has found a place for criticism within their own paradigm, the only space left for the writings of non-western women is the unoccupied discursive spaces left by western feminist writing. It seems that there is to some extent a superficial inclusion of literature on and from Third World women, without the critical evaluation of theory to accommodate this new knowledge. There needs to be an acknowledgement of the fact that similar issues may hold different meaning for non-western women and that these meanings must be incorporated into discursive spaces showing different experiences of the same issue. It is not acceptable to ignore these issues simply because they do not fit into the paradigms put there by Western feminism.

Narayan (1997:144) points to an interesting dynamic when we juxtapose the writing of western and Third World women concerning representation. In the writing of western women they seldom have to make the qualification that they are not writing for all western women. This is so since there is such a plurality of possible positions that western women can write from that it is seldom assumed that they write from only one all-inclusive perspective. In the writing of Third World women, it is assumed that they write from one all-inclusive perspective and if they attempt to position themselves, the positioning is often "silenced" since there is not a perceived plurality of positions within Third World feminism.

The power relation at work here rests on Western feminism seen as an evolved, complex space, while Third World feminism is taken to come from a space where all women is treated the same, regardless of the vast differences in their location and experience. The difficulty in writing on other women is often characterized in terms of race only. This is a dangerous assumption to make, since shared race does not necessarily imply shared experience.

This brings us to the question of whether, for instance, a black woman from the United States can ever understand the oppressions and difficulties of a black woman living in South Africa or Mozambique. Kitzinger and Wilkinson (1996:6) underlines this fact in stating that representation can also be problematic when western black women write on the women of their countries of origin when they do not share the experience of these women. They are by means of their class and way of living just as much a part of the western hierarchies of knowledge and power as any western white women. To assume that they are better equipped than their white counterparts in writing on the lives of Third World women, is to give power where it is not due.

Concerning the difficulties faced when writing across borders of race and class, there should be a questioning of motivation and ultimately a goal to justify such representation. Writing for or about women from a race or class different from our own, should not become a contest of how well we are able to understand their situations. Writing on other women and interpreting their lives is only justified if we can make a positive difference, either in lived realty or as a contribution to (valid) theory.

Alcoff (1994:301) identifies four criteria that we can use to evaluate speaking for others: First she states that we must carefully analyse the will to speak and resist it if we are not sure of the need for it. This implies that if we want to speak on the lives of others for reasons of our own advancement, we must rather refrain from doing so. In speaking about others we must make sure that we are addressing their needs and not our own. Second, she stresses the point that we must be aware of our location and context when we speak about others and not use it as a mere disclaimer. When speaking for others we must constantly assess how our own paradigms and location can warp that which we try to convey. Third, accept accountability and responsibility for what we say and be open to the criticism it might invite and incorporate this criticism in our understanding of the issues. This is important since criticism can serve the important function of pointing out flaws in our own understanding and argument.

Last, we must analyse the effect of our research and analysis on both the material and discursive contexts, ensuring that it makes a positive contribution in at least one of the contexts. In the end it all comes down to doing "responsible" research. It is needed to work with the whole picture and not just that which is perceived to be comfortable or easy. It is also needed to realise that race and gender exist together and are both identities that work in intersecting, complex manners. The one influences the other to such an extent that difference in race might lead to a whole different experience of the same issues within gender. It is imperative to realise and accept that there are barriers between racial groups that are existential, methodological, political and ethical in nature (Andersen, 1993:40). It is possible to work across these barriers, but one must never lose respect for what one cannot fully understand.

Both the issues of academic research as opposed to lived experience and of doing research across borders of race and class in international feminism calls for a re-evaluation of the way in which we conduct our research. Since there is such a great focus on the need for specifity in representation, the answer might be in paying attention to experience, history and context. Experience is not an easy concept to grasp and it is even harder to put it across without changing the essence of what we have observed. In feminism it is essential though that we manage to deal with experience in the best possible way. Hand in hand with experience we find the notion of subjectivity. The subjective experience of any situation, involves our personal feelings and prejudices regarding the situation at hand. Alcoff (1988:424) locates subjectivity in personal experience. She

defines experience as "…a complex of habits resulting from the semiotic interaction of 'outer world' with 'inner world', the continuous engagement of a self or subject in social reality." When we look at experience, we can never leave behind the interaction between our personal reality and that of the social structures in which we operate.

Experience can never be seen as autonomous choices free from material structures (Alcoff, 1994:290). The best we can do is to relate experience and then put it against the backdrop of the social situation. Experience is an integral part of feminist epistemology. It serves as a starting point for feminist research in the sense that we start with individual experience and then move on to the dynamics of the larger structures in which it is located. Edwards (1990:478) states that in starting with experience, we can recover the social relation of the research and put the inquirer on the same level of the research subject. If it is possible to do this, we might find a research situation, if not free of, then with minimal power relations at play. The aim should be to represent as truly and as accurately as possible that which is observed, not losing sight of the individual or the social situation that she is located in or the place from where we, as researchers, are speaking.

The critique on writing about or for other women is abundant and the amount of factors that we need to take into account is multiplying with every new publication. The question then becomes whether we should refrain from doing research on other women or whether we should change the way in which we do research. To refrain from doing research on women who share a reality different to our own, does not seem to be the answer though. Alcoff (1994:298) engages with the issue when she states that when we only speak for ourselves, we construct a possible self and present that to the world as a possibility. In retreating into an individualist realm we support the ideology that the self is not constituted by multiple intersecting discourses but consists of a unified whole capable of autonomy from others (Alcoff, 1994:289). The implication here is that I can separate myself from others to such an extent that I do not affect them, or they me. In this we give up both responsibility and accountability. In refraining from speaking for others we will effectively silence women who do not have the ability or the access to speak for themselves.

Kitzinger and Wilkinson (1996:20) state that speaking for others becomes a necessity when they are not able to speak or are not allowed to speak for themselves. Even though this is a noble line of reasoning, it can only be effective if it is done in a respectful way with the right intentions. Macmillan (1996:144) warns against the assumption that the other is

not able to speak adequately for herself, so we will take the job. Speaking for others should never be an act of condescension, but the manifestation of a desire to assist those who are unable of putting issues on the table, making grievances heard and then following through by engaging with those issues.

A further problem with refraining from speaking for the other is that we exclude the experience of all the women who do not have access to the means to get their opinions heard, from both theory and literature. There is a definite sense of responsibility and with that accountability that comes with the privileged position that we find ourselves in. The responsibility not to withdraw from issues because they are riddled with racial or classist pitfalls and the accountability to admit mistakes and right them if we disadvantage the other by inaccurate portrayal. The object of scholarship is to take issue with what we do not agree with and we must trust this mechanism to point to the flaws that we commit when we write on or about others.

Fine (1994:72) suggests that we should engage in social struggles with the other instead of writing on the social struggles of others. She continues to give three guidelines on avoiding othering: First we must check with the other the validity of our representation of them. Second we must listen to the other's accounts of us so that we can expose how we portray them in an undesirable way. Third we must listen to the members of the dominant group to see how they construct the other and last we must establish a dialogue between the other and us. If we manage to sidestep the pitfalls speaking for can become a powerful tool of change. The possibility of speaking for others influences the possibility of political effectivity, because both collective action and coalitions rest on the ability to speak for others (Alcoff, 1994:290). The bottom line is that we need to be aware of where we can go wrong and we need to be responsible in the research that we do, then speaking for can become a way of empowerment and not of oppression.

This can serve as a very broad overview of some of the issues within international feminism that are relevant to this dissertation. In the following section we will take a more detailed look at how these issues are at work within the South African context and how South African feminism differs on the grounds of the very specific context in which it exists.

2.2) Dividing issues within the South African context.

The issue of feminism operating mainly on academic levels of theorizing and debate and the issue of research across borders of race and class are also applicable to the South African context. What makes South African feminism distinctly different from her sisters in the international arena is the history of apartheid. The environment created by apartheid played a crucial role not only in the shaping of the feminist movement, but also in the differences in the experiences and histories of women. The effect of this very unique situation is that the potential for conflict increased because of the politicisation of race that went along with the history of apartheid. The "difference debate" has many meanings in international feminist writing and discussion, but in South Africa it has primarily been deployed to refer to race and class, especially the relations between black and white women involved in gender activism (De la Rey, 1997:6).

The consequences of apartheid are twofold. First we find an unequal distribution of resources as a result of selective access to institutions and resources. The power to do research and to theorize fell, until recently, almost exclusively into the hands of white, middleclass women with a tertiary education. This one-sided representation leads to a situation where only certain issues were addressed and the experience of research subjects often ignored or misrepresented due to unfamiliarity with their lived realities. The dissatisfaction with this state of affairs was clear in the heated discussions that centred around the exclusion of the experience of black women at gatherings such as the "Women and gender in South Africa" conference in 1991 in Cape Town and The National Women's Gender Studies network in 1992 in Durban. This leads to the creation of the other within South African feminism. Feminism functioned mainly on the academic level of debate with very little impact on grassroots levels.

Secondly, South Africa can be classified as a multi-cultural society. Kotze (1997:2) points to the fact that we have 11 official languages as an (superficial) indication of this. The United States can also be classified as a multi-cultural society, but in South Africa difference in culture transcended the social sphere and was entrenched in legislation, with a very specific focus on the racial rather then the cultural aspect. Apartheid led to the politicising of race, as well as class divisions along racial lines. This composition of society is also reflected in the feminist movement. The construction of society with deep divisions

along lines of race and class holds three implications for feminism. Firstly, we find an implication of different ways of socializing which leads to different convictions and ideas about the place of women in society. Second, we find that divisions along lines of race and class lead to different experience of the same environment. Difference in experience holds very real consequences for the political organization, research and theory, since it produces different needs/interests. Thirdly the history of apartheid played an important role in the multiple oppressions of women in that they were oppressed on grounds of race, class and gender. From the literature it is painfully clear that diversity, especially where race and class is concerned, is a perceived problem within the feminist movement. I want to stress the point that we are looking at diversity among feminists and not between feminists and non-feminists.

The first consequence of apartheid is that of the unequal distribution of resources. Apartheid worked in such a manner that there was selective access to institutions and funds, favouring white, middleclass women. The consequence of this skewed representation, as in international feminism, is that white women only addressed the issues relevant to their own experience. This course of action was not always by choice, since they were also prohibited from moving across racial lines. This lead to a situation where the experience of women from other races and classes where either ignored or misrepresented, because there existed a shortage of information on the lives of other women. Selective research is a source of both a gap in the history of South African feminism and of the current antagonism amongst women from different races and classes. Gouws (1996:74) states "… women's conferences in South Africa have been characterized by divisions between grassroots activists and academic women as well as between white and black women." She continuous to point to three major points of contestation within the representation debate:

1.) Under-representation of black women in the academe
2.) Misrepresentation of black women's experience and position
3.) The question of who has the right to represent whom embedded in questions of mandates and the accountability of researchers   (Gouws, 1996:74)

This is a neat summary of all the issues applicable to the representation debate within the South African context. Inherent in this is a dynamic of power putting those favoured by the

historical attributes of society under apartheid directly opposite those whose experiences have been excluded as a result of the same historical context.

The first issue that we need to address regarding selective research is that of power. Gouws (1996:75) points out that there exists a community of knowers who have excluded women and specifically marginalized black women. Here she specifically refers to women involved in academic institutions. The power in this instance was in the hands of the white, middleclass women who were favoured during the reign of apartheid by way of both access and the means to attend academic institutions. Many of the women within academic institutions were actively resisting the rule of apartheid and became involved in the struggle against it. They questioned their own identities, challenged the system and open themselves up to critique in an environment that did not support their sentiments. They were able to do this because of the position of privilege that they were in. They responded to a need that they perceived within society.

This was not the case for all women, though and there were those who resigned themselves to the system and in adhering to the principles thereof, supported the inequalities that it implied. Unfortunately it is hard to make a distinction between these two groups of women. The effect of this is that all women who were favoured under the previous system of government, is now being held accountable in the debate in South Africa for the misrepresentation and exclusion that black women experienced. The women favoured by the system of apartheid did have power in many instances, defined and undefined. A very important point is that they not only had the power to put issues on the political agenda, but along with this they could also dictate how these issues were represented. This had the effect of disregarding some issues in their entirety and if they chose to represent an issue, it was often a representation coloured by their own experience and frame of reference. The result of such a manner of representation is that women outside of the elite circle were blatantly ignored or represented in a way that added to the oppression of their lives, rather than empowering them. For this reason white women could not situate themselves on the same plain as black women; due to the power they wield (Gouws, 1996:75).

The second issue in selective research is that of history vs. experience. The uncomfortable marriage of history and experience causes women to ascribe to two very different views regarding their personal feminisms. This situation is further complicated by the fact that on

the one hand women need to focus on the differences they currently experience, but on the other hand they also need to take into account the effects of a history of apartheid and how this divided them as women (Gouws, 1996:74). This dynamic makes the lines of division even deeper, since women need to deal with the difference in current situations, as well as the very different experience of their pasts and how this influenced the type of feminist identity they developed.

There are not only divisions between women, but these divisions are often of an antagonistic nature. The bottom line in this debate is whether there can be a true representation of the lives of other women in the absence of firsthand experience of their particular situation. This is a question that does not sprout an easy answer, yet we need to engage in debate around it to avoid reproducing the oppressions of the past. Funani (1992:64) states that the collection and the subsequent analysing of data is not a match for the lived experience of women. Fouche (1993:40) argues along the same line in saying that people will misunderstand or only partly understand the experience of others due to the difference in circumstances. When we take into account statements such as these the question does not seem to be whether there is difference of experience, but rather how to deal with it. One possible answer here is to take the road of self-representation as a means of empowering.
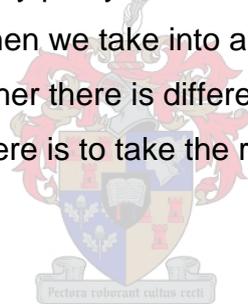
The flaw in the argument for self-representation lies in the fact that this implies separatism (Gouws, 1993:68). If we can only speak from our own experience, divisions on the grounds of race, class and gender will be made more prominent as opposed to bridging these differences. Hassim and Walker (1992:78) makes a valuable contribution to the debate in stating that women must be allowed to 'name their own oppressions' and that the women's movement must broaden itself to include the experience of all women. Space must be created for previously excluded women to bring their racially specific experiences and the insights gained through such experiences to the table. This can lead to the enrichment, challenging and transformation of existing theory (Hassim and Walker, 1992:79). We need to find a middle way where women feel safe in their own space, but where they also feel safe to venture out and engage with the spaces of others. Most of all we must find those spaces where we share experience regardless of the difference between us.

The selective way in which research was done, led to the creation of the "Other" within South African feminism. Brown (1996:129) states that creating the other "… involves the privileged researching and representing (of) 'ethnic minorities', the poor, the 'mentally ill' or even ordinary women." Othering happens when we use power in research to speak for other women, representing them according to our paradigm, not paying attention to their particular situation and experience or to how they want to be represented. Othering then becomes oppressive in the sense that it reinforces the power and purported superiority of those with control over the processes of representation (Kitzinger and Wilkinson, 1996:6). In the case of feminism Other does not refer to the division between the sexes. When we create the other in a space such as feminism that should be conducive to the empowerment of women, we discriminate against women on grounds of other markers of identity such as race, class, disability, sexual identity, age and so forth. Griffin (1996:170) identifies three ways in which we fail to successfully negotiate the other:

1.) Exclusion: the failure to include certain groups of women within feminism, to promote some kind of separatism, to privilege certain standpoints and ignore others.
2.) Subsumption: the failure to allow or encourage diverse women to raise their own voices, subsuming these instead in a position, which take a certain commonality for granted.
3.) Assumption: the failure to recognize that it might not be possible or appropriate for one group of women to speak on behalf of another, or to assume that those who speak have the knowledge and right to do so in the interests of those spoken for.

The answer does not lie in refraining from speaking for the other all together. This course of action can only lead to a silencing of that which must be heard. In the South African context this issue is especially problematic. The consequences of othering is twofold: firstly oppressed women had to struggle to make themselves heard and to try and put the issues that were of importance to them on the agenda and secondly they had to try and eradicate the false perceptions that exists as a result of misrepresentation. This made it twice as difficult for them to get the desired results addressing their oppressions in an environment that was difficult enough without adding any obstacles. Misrepresentation is not only oppressive, but it poses a threat to the achievement of desired results. Narayan (1997:45) states that misrepresentation across lines of class, race, ethnicity and national background, weakens feminism in the sense that it makes it harder for women to form

"communities of resistance". When women feel that they are misrepresented they become weary of both the feminist movement and the women involved in the movement.

The result if this is that they cannot put their issues in hands that they cannot trust. They choose to rather address these issues on their own than in the space provided by feminism, even though this may imply lesser chances of achieving their goals and aims concerning their specific problems and oppressions. There is a definite need to look at past difference and the problems it poses and to focus on those areas of women's lives where change is needed. It will be a pity if important issues had to take a backseat to the difference debate. Especially in an environment such as South Africa where there are so many battles left to fight, women need to stand together. It is impossible to disregard the damage that has been done by both apartheid and the subsequent misrepresentation of women, but this is an issue for the safe space within feminism. The empowerment of women and the eradication of discrimination on the other hand is a very public battle where women need to work together to get the best possible and most representative results.
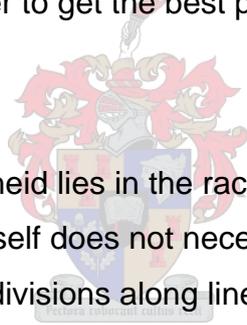
 The second consequence of apartheid lies in the racialization of the multi-cultural nature of the society. Multi-culturalism in itself does not necessarily pose a problem, but it does become problematic when we find divisions along lines of race, ethnicity and culture as entrenched through apartheid. Narayan (1997:187) states that it is difficult accommodating all parties when you have to deal with a heterogeneous, pluralistic society. She continues to state that the political task of effectively ruling such a type of society is a matter that needs urgent attention, since we cannot deny the existence of multiplicity and plurality in many societies

The effect of apartheid in a society where so many different cultures co-exist is that race has become a politicised attribute and that individuals may become weary and defensive in moving across racial lines. Along with the politicisation of race we find that there are deep divisions along lines of race and class. The class aspect of the situation is relevant in that the oppression under apartheid spawned a society where access to institutions of education and the distribution of resources where managed in such a way that certain races reaped most of the benefits and the others were excluded from the benefits. The fact that feminism had to survive in a society as such, lead to a situation where the composition

of society as well as the power dynamics and divisions were reflected in the feminist movement.

The implications of apartheid coupled with cultural and racial diversity holds three important implications for feminism. First, difference in racial background, second difference in experience as a result of racial and class divisions and last the notion of multiple oppressions. The first issue is that of difference in racial background. This implies different ways of socialization across race. The effect of this is that individuals from different racial or ethnic backgrounds will have different convictions about and different ideas on the place of women in society. One of the implications of apartheid for the feminist movement is that a "forced" difference was created. The plural nature of the South African society is marked by difference in many aspects of life, such as race, class, gender and so forth. The problem with apartheid was that people were made aware of their differences and that these differences were given negative or positive connotations.

Before we continue this discussion it is needed to look at how we create difference in society, even if it is not dictated to us. Woodward (1997:29) argues that the formation of identity rests on an awareness of difference. The marking of difference takes place both through symbolic systems of representation and through social exclusion. Symbolic and social differences are established through classificatory systems. Classificatory systems uses difference in such a way that any population can be divided into groups on grounds of often outwardly visible characteristics. Groups are often constructed as opposites such as male/female or white/black. The function of classification systems is that they provide some sort of order in social life.

When we look at the construction of difference in feminism, the same mechanisms used in society will translate to this social space. Women will be divided into groups on the basis of how they appear different from each other. It is important to know that women cannot be treated as a homogeneous group and that difference among women is just as real as difference between women and men. To arrive at a point where difference can be a positive aspect and not a drawback within feminism it is needed to place it under the same scrutiny as between gender difference and explore it with the same critical frame of mind in order to expose all of the dynamics at play. We need to understand that when individuals differ from one another, it does not necessarily imply hostility or a problematic situation.

Carabine (1996:165) distinguishes between three ways of looking at difference. First we find difference as diversity, second difference as division and last difference as difference. The argument that she tries to make here is that not all difference carries social significance and that difference is not necessarily laden with hierarchical power. Difference as difference does not pose a problem and is mostly used as a marker of identity. Difference as diversity is only problematic when there is a power relation inherent in the communication between different groups. Difference as division, is the most problematic way of looking at difference, since it implies an element of exclusionism. When groups are divided it is usually the result of an issue that cannot be resolved to the satisfaction of all parties. Difference then becomes a platform for debate. Apart from the historical difference, physical difference and difference of conviction, it is needed to pay attention to difference which is socially constructed. This is sometimes the worst kind of difference to deal with, since the individual has very little or no control over the creation of or the reaffirmation of this type of difference. Socially constructed difference is not of the individuals making but imposed upon them by the society they function in. Kitzinger and Wilkinson (1996:26) comments on the dangers of socially constructed difference when they state that divergences from the norms of privileged groups or groups in power can often carry negative or oppressive meanings and have real consequences in the lived reality of those not part of the privileged group.

In the difference debate the issue is not whether difference is "real" or "socially constructed", but how individuals experience difference and the material impact that it will have on their lives. When we pay attention to the difference in individual experience, it is a logical deduction that experiential difference will spawn a difference in interests. Due to the racial nature of the difference debate within the South African context, we find that different interests are often coupled with a difference in racial groups. The implication for feminism here is that women from different racial groups within the feminist movement will have different interests. Mama (1995:10) states that "… it was now patently clear that black women's subjective experience and political interests were not identical to those that had been articulated as women's concerns by the dominant white majority…" This may seem to be a logical, straightforward assumption that should be hard to miss, but yet feminism has developed in such a way that it disregarded the experience of non-white women in assuming homogeneity on the basis of shared biology or gender.

Carby (1982:214) makes the problem more specific in stating that concepts such as 'family', 'patriarchy' and 'reproduction' have vastly different meanings when applied to the lives of white and black women respectively. When we start to look at difference on this level, it becomes clear that even the most basic concepts within feminism needs revision in order to accommodate the difference debate. Apart from the different experience that is implicated by race, we need to keep in mind that black women have to negotiate two contested identities, namely race and gender, whereas white women, by privilege of a global western (white) culture, only need to focus on gender as the base of their oppression. Black women need to juggle both their gender and race as places of oppression and discrimination and maintain ties with both (Joseph and Lewis, 1981:28). The mere existence of another identity that is as powerful and prevalent as gender makes the experience of black women more complex when we start to venture into the arena of difference. It becomes painfully clear that we cannot take for granted a "shared experience" on the base of shared gender. Especially in the South African context, it is needed to see how race and ethnic heritage colour the experience of women in order to give a true representation of any one aspect of women's lives.

2.3) <u>Difference and division</u>

As we have already mentioned and discussed at great length, the feminist movement in South Africa, is marked by difference. To merely state that women differ from each other and to speak about the consequences of this difference will not bring us far in getting closer to why difference poses a problem. Kitzinger and Wilkinson (1996:27) supports this sentiment in stating that the emphasis of the debate on whether women are different or the same should move to a stance where the construction, purpose and material effects of the sameness or difference, is explored. The present situation within feminism is marked by a discussion of the effects of difference, but difference has become a concept and commodity outside of the individual that can be thrown around and used to reinforce the latent anger and division on issues and convictions. It has come to a point where women resign themselves to a situation of conflict, because they believe that the differences between them make it impossible to even tackle the problem. What is needed here is recognition of the fact that difference is not a construct outside of the individual, but that we actually rely on difference to construct and reinforce our own identities. Woodward (1997:29) states that "...identity is not the opposite of, but depends on, difference." Within feminism it is not necessarily the case that we construct difference to give order to the

organization. It might rather be a case of bringing those opposing, already constructed, identities that we experience in the social spheres of our lives into the arena of feminism.

When we start to dissect the issue of difference in this manner, it becomes clear that we need to work with it and not assume that we have a common base in our gender alone. It is a virtual impossibility to separate our feminist identity from the other identities that we ascribe to. The problems that are experienced now, concerning difference, might be a consequence of the fact that in the process of its own 'becoming' feminism reproduced universalistic claims, effectively suppressing difference (Stuart, 1990:34). Feminism constructed a dichotomy where difference and unity where two opposing concepts, with unity being the desired option. Moodley (1993:13) sheds more light on this issue in stating that:

> As a group (feminists) we reflected on the immediate past and that its particular character had been a fixation on unity with diversity, with the indirect injunction that differences- however much awareness there was of their existence- should be suppressed in the interest of a tenuous, undefined unity.

It seems that there is a definite need to move away from the notion of 'unconditional' unity to a place where we accept feminism is made up from a vast variety of women and that one approach or strategy will never be sufficient in addressing the needs of all the women involved in the movement. If we fail to accommodate difference, we run the risk of getting stuck in debate on our different experiences, without ever getting to a place where we can formulate a clear strategy to challenge and eliminate gender subordination (Moodley, 1993: 11).

There has been a bit of debate and comment on the fragmentation of the feminist movement and the needed deconstruction of the notion of women as one homogeneous group, both in Western feminism internationally and on local level. Both these areas of debate can be taken back to the long suppression of difference and in the end the emergence thereof. Caraway (1992:8) states that we cannot take one 'unity' to be representative of that, which is plural and fragmented. The feminist movement did not crumble or fragment, but it merely showed the true face of its diversity, which was long hidden under a blanket of assumed unity and homogeneity. The notion that women can be treated as one group has its origin in a shared biology. This assumption was a fine starting

point for feminism, but as soon as feminism developed to such an extent to sprout a number of comparative theories, it became clear that the social aspect of women's lives was a more important motivating factor than a shared biology. 'Women' could no longer be treated as a universal category, but rather a multiplicity of individuals from very specific and different cultural and historical backgrounds (Moore, 1994:80).

This became evident in the call for historically and culturally specific research. Ramphele and Boonzaaier (1988:164) underline this need for specifity through stating that the realities of women lives, such as marital status, age and degree of economic deprivation, becomes more important to women than their common oppression in gender. If we fail to recognize the reality of diversity and insist on a unity amongst women, we might run the risk of inviting a backlash against feminism in the sense that women can no longer identify with a movement that chooses to focus on only one aspect of their identities and realities, while ignoring the other struggles of their lives.

Even though race is a big dividing factor within feminism, especially in the South African context, it is not the only factor at play. The distinction is often made between first and third world feminism, along with the assumption that the first and third world will share the same attributes and concerns, respectively. This is not the case however. This became evident when there was an emergence of a split within the black faction of the feminist movement. Black feminism has been a special brand of feminism from the onset. Not only did they engage in anti-sexist struggles, but also were they involved in the struggle against racism. The anti-racist agenda was a strong binding force, perhaps even overriding the gender aspect of the movement. With the liberation from racial oppression a big part of the unity of purpose of the Black feminist movement fell away. Mama (1995:4) states that the struggle for racial equality leads to a failure of fully exploring the cultural and political diversity that existed within black feminism. The emergence of black feminism was a phenomenon with its origins in the US and conversely with a big western influence.

A new and authentic brand of feminism is that of Third World feminism. In writing about the third world, western feminists often lump together women from distinctly different backgrounds. Even though issues such as poverty, remnants of colonialism, oppression on ground of race and limited access to institutions of education might be common

denominators, third world women come from vastly different cultural and historic backgrounds. Narayan (1997:152) makes the valuable observation that third world feminism is often a product of ongoing social and political dialogue within communities. The brand of feminism that is formed this way, within race, will be of a multiple and heterogeneous type, since it is not a product of guided academic debate within an institution, but rather an answer to the very specific needs and problems that women experience within their own communities. Narayan (1997:144) continuous to refer to third world feminism as divided, split and debate-riven on certain issues. Race is not the only dividing factor within feminism and this is an important fact to keep in mind. In the South African context race has become such an issue that we might make the mistake of focusing on that to the exclusion of other important categories of difference. It is needed to be aware of all the possible aspects of diversity and to treat them according to their relative importance.

Apart from the various issues of diverse identity and difference, there are also other factors, which hampers the effective functioning of the feminist movement and play a dividing role. One issue that has its roots in the diversity of the movement, which has a practical impact, is that of too broad an agenda and not enough change to the material conditions in the lives of women. Klein (1984:18) states that if the feminist movement pursues too many issues at the same time, the possibility of structural change lessens. For this reason it is important that women must be able to identify those issues, which are either crosscutting or that will benefit the biggest part of their support base. A strategy of tackling one issue at a time and investing all possible resources to get the desired results before moving on to the next issue will be more effective than to try and spread limited resources to solve a multitude of issues at one time. This is important since support for feminism rests on the results that it can work in the lives of women. Especially when we look at the composition of the South African population, it is more important for women to see change in their lives than to solve some philosophical problem in the academic area of debate.

The points of difference mentioned above are applicable to feminism on a trans-national level, but the South African context spawned unique attributes where difference is concerned. The ideal for South African feminism would be to take diversity and to make it into a tool of power and a source of knowledge. The reality of the current situation does not

correspond to this ideal. South African feminism and feminism on an international level is plagued by an ongoing debate concerning the issues of difference and how this should be resolved. This debate currently serves as a source of conflict and division within the movement. To understand the nature of difference within the South African context, it is important to look at the issues that play a dividing role within the movement.

As a result of the very specific history of South Africa one of the most important dividing issues is that of race and the class structure that was created as a result of racial segregation. The history of apartheid, coupled with the liberation struggle and the eventual fall of apartheid and the structural changes that this implied, made race very salient as an identity. The implication of this for feminism is that women will step into the feminist arena with a very strong racial identity. Since this identity was formed in a social and political context marked by division and conflict, racial identity is still politically charged and women, especially women of colour, will assert their racial identity if confronted by difference. The uneasy partnership of gender and race may have its origin in the fact that women will not back down on their racial identity, even though they do find themselves in a space where their gendered identity should be of more importance. This is a remnant of their life histories in the sense that they had to fight hard and long for recognition of their racial identity.
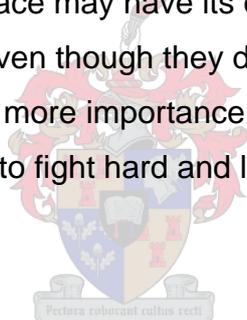
Feminism is not yet a safe enough space for women to disregard their race and focus on their gender. The gross injustice of the rule of apartheid, forced women to 'sacrifice' their gendered identity for that of a racial one. Women could not afford to and was not able or allowed to step into a space with women from a different race that enforced their oppression. The result of this was that gender relationships became irrelevant or was overshadowed by the more pressing problems associated with the relationships between different races, ethnic groups or cultures (Ramphele and Boonzaaier, 1988:153). Race became an identity that was publicly lived, while women reserved their gendered identities and issues for the private world of their homes (Edwards, 1990:489). The communities of women within races still continued to speak about and work on the issues that were important to them as women, but the result of this was that two different types of feminism evolved alongside each other, divided by barriers of race and class. Even though the structural reality today is that of a free and equal society, the heritage of racial segregation, is still active in forming racial boundaries. Edwards (1990:481) states that boundaries are

created, not by physical attributes alone, but also by the context of economic, political and social circumstances.

2.4) Challenges to feminism in South Africa.

From the discussion, it is clear that fragmentation and division mark South African feminism. This phenomenon is not unique to the South African situation though and can be seen in feminism across that globe. It is of great importance that we do not take South African feminism as a carbon copy of those trends in feminism that can be observed internationally. South Africa is characterized by a very specific history and while the dynamics at play within the South African environment might show similarities to that of the international trend, it is by no means the same. It is needed to look at the South African environment specifically in order to see how feminism operates independently from the international context. The most likely point to start from when we look at a South African feminism is that of the history of the country and the possible impact this could have had on the development of feminism. Internationally there have been calls for research and analysis to be historically, culturally and socially specific. This line of argument is especially important when we want to look at South African feminism on a critical level. When we look at the history of South Africa it is important to remember that it was a colonized country. Along with colonization, we find a suppression of the local traditions and a subsequent replacement of traditions by that of the colonizing force (Narayan, 1997:165). In this domination, no matter how long ago it happened, we find the origin of suppression of ethnic identity and the division that is formed in the efforts to reclaim that identity. The reclaiming of the past and the redefinition of what happened in the past in an important step in the formation of a distinctive cultural or ethnic identity in the present (Woodward, 1997:11).

This is relevant to South Africa in the sense that black ethnic groups where first victims of colonialization and then of apartheid. The effect of this is that when we start to work across racial lines, we do not start with a clean slate and only difference in origin to deal with. We open a Pandora's box of anger, frustration, guilt and myriad of other feelings before we even start to look at difference. For this reason attention must be paid to subjective and specific experiences of the historical context. Woodward (1997:19) makes a valuable

observation in claiming that there are different histories for any given situation. In South Africa we have the history of the white individual in the role of the suppressor existing alongside the history of the black individual in the role of the suppressed. It is therefore narrow-minded to try and work across race without looking closely at the histories of people and how this affect their identity-formation and their actions. Narayan (1997:43) states that we must ground all research both historically and politically, because this will lead to a more true depiction of history and will aid in a more useful feminist analysis of the current situation. Mama (1995:2) also picks up on this point when she states that while women creatively transform to 'fit' their environment, they are still influenced by the discourses that positioned them both historically and socially. The first step in building a workable South African feminism is to look at how history positioned us and what we carry with us, both in identity and in debate. If we can manage this, we will be able to discriminate between points of division that plague our current situation and those that are a product of history.

Apart from history, two other factors that play a part in the formation of an indigenous feminism are difference and the political environment. From prior discussion, it is clear that difference exists, both within the South African context and by implication in feminism in South Africa. A great deal of this difference is a result of the different histories of women and along with that, their different experiences. Feminism as a movement only confronting sexism will not be a viable option with the South African context. The bigger portion of the women in South Africa, come from a social and historical situation where issues such as poverty, economic exploitation, motherhood and racism are far more important than the liberation from sexually discriminating practices. Edwards (1990:478) states that: "Generally, there has been a recognition of social divisions between women and an acceptance that the effects of these divisions are real. Differences among women need to be explored as seriously as we have treated differences between men and women." The implication of this for feminism is that we need to incorporate difference with all its dimensions into the movement to ensure that the needs of all women are catered for.

Meintjes (1993:39) draws on the writings of bell hooks in addressing difference in South African feminism:

> …feminists need to acknowledge the differences between women, and to develop a political practice, which incorporates and builds supportive coalitions based upon these differences. This neither forces a false universalism upon the women's movement, nor does it lead to political fragmentation of such a movement. Instead it allows for autonomous organizations and actions, as well as coordinated programmes based upon agreed issues and areas of cooperation. This process allows for the development of a much more supportive and creative feminist politics of difference.

The trick for South African feminists is to get to a stage where they can address difference without invoking racializing discourse.

Another challenge to the feminist movement, is that of the political environment in which they must operate. Narayan (1997:38) states that: "Our very abilities to engage in the speech action and organization necessary for feminist political contestation are dependant on the nature of the institutions and the policies of the states under which we live." In this instance we are very fortunate within the South African context. We have a constitution that is progressive in the sense that it ensures freedom of speech and expression, while it protects our rights as women and guard against discrimination. For the institutions to work through to ground level, it is important that women are aware of the institutions that are in place and that they have the courage and the trust to draw on these when the need might arise. The constitution of South Africa can become a powerful tool of political change in the hands of feminists if they are aware how it protects and empowers them and put it to use.

When we look at the political arena outside of the legal institutions, it is evident that one of the most important characteristics of the political environment in South Africa, is the multi-racial nature of both the population and political arena and along with that the creation of a multi-racial policy. Even though it is important to accommodate multi-racialism through instating official policies, there are dangers inherent in such a policy. While racial diversity is encourage on the surface of the political game, we still find strong undertows of racial containment, where the ruling party will accommodate other races, only as long as they fit into the framework put there by the party. When we bring this home to the feminist agenda, we must exercise care in not promoting the values and convictions of one racial group, while giving 'token' space to smaller racial groups in the spirit of political 'correctness'. There must be a true accommodation of all frames of reference in order to form a representative movement.

Another effect of multi-racial politics is that race and political convictions are often bound together as a unity. The danger in this is that coalition or party loyalty can prevent women from putting their issues on the agenda (Moodley, 1993:18). This will happen when women's political party loyalty take precedence over her personal interests as a woman. Loyalty to a political party can also play a dividing role amongst feminists in the sense that women assume that they cannot work together on gender issues, because their political convictions differ. This danger is prevalent in the South African society, since we function in a loaded political environment, where parties can differ radically on certain issues. Coupled with party discipline and loyalty, this political circumstance can seriously hamper the effective resolution of contested issues within feminism. Apart from institutions and political parties, the national political context, is another factor that may play a role within feminism.

Narayan (1997:95) states that the national context can shape issues within the feminist agenda. The national environment that women are engaging with does not only dictate which issues they see as important and how they see these issues, but also how they will go about in addressing the issues. The importance of this is that it is not good enough to take solutions for problems across national borders, without critically inspecting whether it will be of use within another national context. For any movement to survive successfully they must look at the dynamics at play within the environment that they are functioning in and then tailor make a solution to best suit them.

The importance of the environment in relation to feminism has been discussed already. The point of departure in the previous discussion centred on the functioning of a movement, which already exists. For feminism to become a force to be reckoned with within the South African context, it is needed that the movement creates a wide support base, with a feminist consciousness.

Klein (1984:87,91) stipulates two conditions for the rise of a political consciousness. First she states that a long period of change and repeated exposure to alternative situations is needed to recognize and internalise new patterns. Only after this will new expectations start to form. Second she states that there must be an acceptance of social equality and a recognition and rejection of unequal and unfair treatment. The change from apartheid to a democratic society and the emphasis on inequality and unfair treatment that went along

with this, paved the way to an environment that is receptive to the rise of a consciousness and new movement.

In the past 10 years feminism has come a long way in righting the wrongs of the past, but this must still be seen as a continuous effort and not a task completed. This is not an easy task by any means, but the nature of the environment is likely to aid rather than stunt the process. The pitfalls regarding feminism in South Africa have received some attention in the previous discussions. Where to start and what to do still remain fairly open for discussion. In light of the history of South Africa, the most important task is to familiarize ourselves with the histories of the women we share the space of feminism with. Joseph and Lewis (1981:41) stresses the point in saying that: "It is incumbent on both black and white women to become familiar with each other's history and the way in which their sexual oppression has been felt and has influenced their present concerns and priorities." Once the importance of learning each other's histories has been grasped, there is a need to take a critical look at the structural inequalities that might still exists within the movement.

Klein (1984:87) underlines the importance of coalitions between traditional women's groups and new feminist movement to work change in the political status of women. Here it is important that women should be able to create a fusion of the academic and the activist sub-sections of the feminist movement. This is very true for South Africa. The feminism that existed under apartheid on both sides of the racial divides, need to come together and pool resources to build a new workable feminism. Moodley (1993:12) calls for the unravelling of difference in order to better understand it. We must first establish whether women really do want a united movement or if we need to work in our own safe spaces within race for a little while longer. If we do want a united movement we need to see how this can be established and how difference can be accommodated.

2.5) The importance of solidarity within feminism.

South African feminism is marked by a certain degree of difference and division. Hassim (2001:109) says that feminism has divided into issue-based networks and organizations in response to policy processes. The result of this, however, is that the links between specific demands and broader political transformation have weakened. This leaves women within the movement with two options. First they can embrace the division and choose to work

separately within groups based on shared racial, class or cultural identity. The second option is to work with difference and division in order to create a movement that can function as a vehicle for the interests of all women. In my opinion, the second option, while it is harder, will be the better one. Feminism is in essence a political movement. This implies that the movement work towards political representation for women and uses the political arena as a tool to enhance and better the circumstances in the lives of women. Klein (1984:2) defines the feminist movement as follows: "This protest movement evolved into and organized, sophisticated, political lobby, which initiated legislation and litigation and supported electoral campaigns on behalf of women's rights." Joseph and Lewis (1981:32) states that feminism is "...a recently reactivated sector of the movement for democratic rights." When we start to look at feminism in a political sense as a movement, which work toward results and political change, the need for numbers and collective action cannot be ignored.

For political change regarding the rights and interests of women, it is crucial that a collective activism evolves and that women do not isolate themselves within the movement by forming groups which are closed to other women. Hassim (2001:109) suggests, "… restoring a political centre and an ideological glue within the women's movement." Stuart (1990:40) underlines this point in arguing that if professional and popular feminism choose not to work together; it is very unlikely that they will ever manage to cope with the practical problems that women are facing. Klein (1984:124) follows the same line of argument in stating that: "Despite the value that is ordinarily placed on self-help and the conventional channels of getting ahead, people with feminist sympathies needed to recognize that collective action rather than individual achievement was the best strategy to fight discrimination if the women's movement was to be successful." Individual effort can be an option, but only in the instance that equal opportunity exists not only in the structures of society but also in the lived reality of women's lives.

Even then it is likely that individual effort will lead to individual gain and this denies the aim of the feminist movement in working to better the lives of all women. The existence of discrimination on whichever level of women's lives can only be eradicated through collective action. The denial of equal opportunity and access, which is inherent to any discriminatory practice, will block opportunities for equal achievement (Klein, 1984:128). When we look at how feminism has evolved from a white middleclass movement to a movement, which tries to accommodate women from vastly different backgrounds with

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different interests, the need for collective action is once more underlined. Stuart (1990:38) states that feminism used to serve a community which was privileged enough to find individual rather than collective solutions appropriate. With the changing face of feminism, it is needed to start changing the strategies for addressing the problems faced by women. A new movement with a different support base will need new strategies to combat inequality and discrimination. Discrimination against women and the struggles they experience due to inequality is not a case of limited instances aimed at a few individuals. It is a collective discrimination that requires collective action as an answer. The fact that collective action and a certain degree of unity is the best path to solving the problems faced by women does not imply a denial of difference. The task here is to see how unity or at the least shared sentiments can be achieved in the face of difference.

The uneasy fellowship of unity as the ideal situation and difference as the obstacle to getting there must be redefined in order to make difference and unity exists side by side. The denial of difference and along with that the suppression thereof, is not the answer to this tricky question. The answer to the unity/difference dichotomy, lies in the confrontation of difference and the questioning of the effects that tit has on our lives as women. There need to be an acceptance of the responsibility to deal with difference (Moodley, 1993:16). If we want to establish unity, it is important to look at factors that are relatively free of political connotation and will unify women, having their base in shared sentiments. The answer here might lie in the creation of a new ideology or an unearthing of an already existing one, along with a focus on issues that cuts across lines of race and class.

On an ideological level, it is needed that women start to share their ideological convictions and in doing so, build a new ideology out of shared ideas. Unity implies ideological commonality and visa versa and for this reason, the forging of a common ideology, might be the first positive step in dealing with difference. Even though ideology can be a unifying force, it might feel to some women that it is a construct out there in the sphere of philosophising and debate and that it doesn't touch the reality of their lives. An alternative on the path to unity is that of shared sentiments on issues. Stuart (1990:41) states that certain issues, such as reproductive rights, equal pay for equal work and violence against women belong to all women, regardless of race or class. In this instance, it will be more useful for women to focus on those issues which are of importance to all of them and where they agree on the nature of the problem and because it is a problem for all, work

together to try and resolve it. It is a fact that the feminist movement is made up out of much more than a mere focus on issues, but to find unity, this might be a starting point.

2.6) The link between solidarity and feminist identity

One aspect that all women inside the feminist movement have in common is some degree of either feminist consciousness or feminist identity. For this reason, it is important to see how women become aware of feminism and how this awareness translates into an involved feminist identity. The fostering of an understanding of how women are drawn to feminism and then how this interest becomes strong enough to motivate action is an important aspect in understanding the working of the feminist movement. Once there is a clear understanding of how this works, it will be easier to deal with problems surrounding unity, cohesion and collective action. When we start to look at women as a group, sharing a gendered identity, it is easy to assume that this shared identity implies at least some awareness of feminism and the basic assumptions inherent to the movement. This is however not the case.

Awareness of feminism is a product of exposure to the movement that usually takes place through education, employment or personal experience. Many women never had this exposure to the feminist movement, along with the assumptions and the convictions it implies, and have no point of reference with regards to the feminist movement. Joseph and Lewis (1981:24) refer to the feelings of a correspondent in stating that: "She is really saying that the movement has played no part in her consciousness; is irrelevant to her; hasn't been explained to her; is simply not part of her reality; and is a rather meaningless phrase." If we had the resources to conduct the same type of study in the South African context, my prediction is that the majority of women will respond in the same way. This does not mean that women do not have opinions on the personal struggles in their lives, it simply implies that the feminist movement and the possibility of its problem solving capacity does not feature as a viable option in the lives of many women. The reality of the situation is that women do identify with and involve themselves in issues that pertain directly to the feminist movement, but there is no direct identification with feminism (Joseph and Lewis, 1981:30).

The implication of this for the vitality of feminism is not good. The implication here is that activism concerning the welfare of women is issue-driven and does not originate within feminism. The importance of this statement for feminism lies in the fact that issues can be used, not only to draw women to feminism, but also to unify women already involved in the movement. If the issues that women mobilize around are in keeping with the general goals and ideas of feminism, these women can be valuable in terms of a support base, without being actively involved in the movement (Klein, 1984:125).

The possibility of using issues as a tool in the expansion and unification of the feminist movement, calls for a redefinition of the basis of the movement. The implication here is that feminism needs to add more praxis to their ideological base. This strategy might be the more viable option for feminism in South Africa. The nature of the South African environment and the characteristics of the population, asks for a movement catering for the practical needs of all women and not for the whimsical ideologies of only a few. This is not to say that there is no place for an ideological base within feminism, but if ideology and issues can indeed exist side by side, it is the latter that must get precedence for the time being.

Moodley (1993:16) states that women have to fight for some things collectively, such as access to employment, sexual harassment, violence and rape. Even though these issues fit into the ideology of feminism as a movement for equality and the eradication of discrimination, it brings it down to smaller parts that can be handled more easily, with visible results. Issues can be seen as the practical manifestations of the bigger ideology that marks feminism. When women as a group starts to reject the status quo, of for instance unequal pay, and accept a new image of women as equal and able to change the situation, we find the emergence of group solidarity (Klein, 1984:5). This is an important first step to the development of a feminist consciousness. Klein (1984:5) further explains that when the new behaviour is rewarded, for instance by the instalment of equal pay, a new group consciousness or definition develops.

The question of whether it is really so important to have a feminist movement that is big in numbers and can work collectively, might arise. The answer to this question is an undeniable yes. It is important not to lose sight of the fact that feminism is a political interest group that aims to put issues on the political agenda and then push it through in order to bring about social change. For this effort it is needed to have feminist

representatives reflecting the diversity of women in South Africa in as many as possible sectors of the society and for these representatives to have the feminist identity and therefore the motivation to actively work towards change. The negative effect of women staying in isolation and the detrimental impact that this can have on the realization of collective concerns, has been mentioned already. The unequal distribution of power within the South African context, underlines the need to establish social contact between women for the purposes of the empowerment of women in disadvantaged situations (Griffin, 1996:174).

This is important for two reasons, firstly because we need to get a comprehensive account of the needs of all women in order not to exclude any person or interest in the process of bringing about change, and secondly because not all women are in the privileged position to influence social change. The function of feminism where this is concerned comes down to the gathering of all the important information concerning the struggles of women and the handing over of this information to the women who are in the positions of power to remedy the situation. Another important function of feminism is the political mobilization of women. Conover (1988:988) states that: "...in the absence of feminist identity a woman's values usually lie dormant beneath the male-orientated values of the dominant culture." Some might argue that this statement is dated, but within the South African context, it still holds true for a big part of the female population. The fostering of a feminist consciousness, at least, is needed for women to realize that their issues are of importance and that it is possible to make an effort to change the circumstances of their lives. The important role that feminism can play in the lives of women is to a large extent dependant on the strength of the movement. Women only get involved in the movement once they have developed a feminist identity or consciousness. For this reason it is needed to tap into the existence of feminist identity along with the ways in which women acquire the identity.

Experience is an important factor in the formation of identity. Klein (1984:165) states that women are not responding to the theoretical discussion of injustice, but to practical concerns such as economical equality, work at home and in their place of employment and a myriad of other issues that they experience in their lives. When women start to see that their situations are marked by inequality or unfair practice, they look for means to change the circumstances of their lives. It is here where the feminist identity or consciousness comes into play.

For many women the road to a feminist identity will start with the personal experience of struggle in their lives, rather than an ideological exploration. It is important to remember in this instance that the lives of women and their experience thereof differ. The implication of this fact is that not all women are going to identify with the same issues and not all women are going to have the same experience of any given situation. Where the occurrence of sexism within the workplace may be an issue for one woman, another may site the effects of racism and exploitation as a more important concern. Even though the issues and the experience thereof differ, women who choose to change their situations have two things in common: First, the awareness that they are being treated unfairly and second the will to do something about the situation. If women find their individual oppression within the fact that they are female, this becomes a base for feminist identity.

Klein (1984:120) underlines this fact in stating that is a woman's views on gendered issues is rooted in personal experience, rather than ideology, they develop a feminist consciousness. She continues along this line of argument in saying that feminist sympathy based on ideological concerns is not conducive to long-term political action, but that women need to develop a feminist consciousness or identity to become involved in feminism (Klein, 1984:137). The development of a feminist identity does not imply a homogeneous group of women who mobilize around the same interests. There are different roads to feminist identity for every women and once they have acquired the identity, there are no guarantees that they will be able to effortlessly work across the differences that still marks their lives, but in understanding the nature of the one aspect that draw women together, might lie the answers to some of the problems that plague the structure and the effective functioning of the feminist movement.

Kitzinger and Wilkinson (1996:22) share this sentiment in stating that: "…the current emphasis on the extent to which women are the same as, or different from, each other may shift to an exploration of the ways in which those sameness and differences are constructed, the purpose they serve, and their material effects on the world." In turn this will enable us to start solving the problem from the bottom up working with smaller pieces and not from the top down faced by bigger problems. The first step in the process of unravelling feminist identity is an acknowledgement of difference and the power relations that this can imply. The need to look at the power relations here arises from the history within the South African context, as well as the current distribution of access and resources.

Griffin (1996:172) states that resentment can be a product of the power inherent in representation and not necessarily based on difference. It must be ensured that we are working with the real occurrence of difference and the problems that it poses and that it doesn't degenerate into a power-struggle under the guise of difference. The acknowledgement of difference, while being a needed task, is not as straightforward as it seems to be.

Kitzinger and Wilkinson (1996:23) states that:

> Oppression can operate through the refusal to acknowledge the differences of those in relation to whom we occupy position of privilege, whether this refusal is expressed either in the liberal insistence on 'colour-blindness' or in the post-modern insistence on the dazzling diversity of experience within and between socially constructed and constantly shifting categories, such as that no one 'difference' is afforded any more significance than any other. Equally, however, oppression can operate through the affirmation of differences because this affirmation serves to underwrite and to re-affirm distinctions between people- distinctions which are not essentially real, but which are constructed precisely in order to provide rational and justification for oppressive practices.

In light of this statement the affirmation or denial of difference ceases to be the only issue at hand and both these courses of action can, if handled wrongly, add to oppression on grounds of difference.

The most viable option for feminism in South Africa is to acknowledge the existence of difference and to deal with them in due course. Meintjes (1993:42) underlines the importance of this in stating that: "On the basis of having dealt with them (differences), then a stronger foundation will exist for moving forward. If we don't do this things will explode." In dealing with difference there need to be a redefinition of the possible effects that it may have. We need to move away from the idea that difference is a concept that implies division, conflict and misunderstanding. Once we are aware of differences they can be both useful and empowering. When women start to feel secure enough to speak openly about their differences, it can become a tool of education within feminism in the sense that it brings new information and value to old contested areas and issues.

Chapter 3: Identity formation

The question addressed in this thesis is how feminist identity develops around other markers of identity and in the face of the negative connotations that the feminist label has acquired and what implications this holds for feminist solidarity. The primary focus of this thesis, therefore, is the development of identity. Identity development is closely related to the environment that it functions in, since both the initial formation of identity and the subsequent changes and developments in identity are to a great extent dependent on stimuli from the context the individual experience. Identity is not an easy concept to work with. This is due to the fact that both identity formation and the negotiation of identity are internal processes. In the social sciences the only way to gauge the nature and impact of identity is to observe the outward manifestations thereof in the form of actions that we believe are motivated by identity. The problem with the concept of identity is that it is often used in a careless fashion, without the needed conceptualisation to clarify what it entails. The same is true for feminist identity. In order to clearly establish what feminist identity entails, it is initially needed to deconstruct the concept.
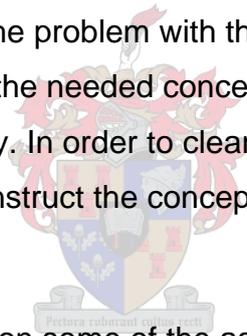
The following discussion will focus on some of the aspects of identity as a concept within the social sciences and a focus on feminist identity as a specific variety of identity will follow later. Weeks (1990:88) states that identity is in essence about belonging. We find this sense of belonging through establishing what we have in common with other individuals and what differentiates us from other individuals. This is in line with Woodward's (1997:14) notion that identification rests on either a lack of awareness of difference or is a result of perceived similarities. The assumption here is that we look to the social environments we function in to find similarities or difference to our own subjective positions and then form identity on grounds of these perceived similarities or direct differences. Inherent in these assumptions are two dimensions of identity. First, a personal dimension of core beliefs and convictions and second a social dimension, dependant on our interactions with other individuals and the environment. Gilroy (1997:301) incorporates both these dimensions in stating "identity provides a way of understanding the interplay between our subjective experience of the world and the cultural and historical settings in

which that fragile subjectivity is formed." Identity seems to be a product of interaction between the personal self and the environment the self operates in. Even though this is a valid point that starts to unravel the complexity that is identity, it doesn't really bring us closer to what identity is. It is essential to establish what the concept entails before we start looking at how it functions. In the absence of clear definitions of identity, the best route to take might be to look at the origins of identity. How does it form and once it is established, how does it change?

There are two dimensions to any identity an individual ascribes to, namely the personal aspect and the social/group aspect. The same goes for feminist identity. Even though the personal dimension is in constant, changing interaction with the environment, it is the base from which identity formation start. The first part of the discussion will focus on personal identity formation, with reference to how the social environment influences this. The second part of the discussion will then focus on how we develop social or group identity. Personal identity is closely related to the notion of subjectivity. Subjectivity includes our conscious and unconscious thoughts and emotions, which constitutes our sense of who we are, and coupled with that the feelings that we bring to different positions within society. Subjectivity allows for an exploration of those feelings, which are brought to specific contexts, along with the personal investments we make in positions of identity and the reasons why we are attached to a particular identity (Woodward, 1997:39).
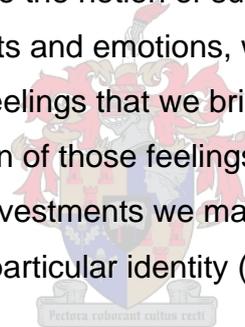
Subjectivity can be seen as a tool of positioning. It determines our assessment of various social contexts and how we will conduct ourselves within these contexts. Apart from subjectivity, there are two other components to identity, namely the ego and the super ego. Woodward (1997:44) sees subjectivity as the unconscious side of identity, the super ego as a "conscience" representative of social constraints and the ego as a tool to mediate between these personal and social sides of identity. An exclusive focus on the personal side of identity seems not to be the answer though.

Even though all humans construct a certain sense of self, this self does not stay in isolation. Personal identity is subject to continuous input from the social environment, which impacts on it in such a way that we need to move away from the notion of static, fixed identity toward a position where identity is handled as fluid and changing. This fluidity

is not only applicable to our personal identity, but works through to social situations where we identify with the context and individuals to such an extent that personal identity translates to group or social identity. Identity can be seen as a social process rather than the property of individuals (Gilroy, 1997:315). The link between personal and social identity operates in such a way that apart from personal convictions and prejudices, the individual will identify with other individuals on ground of perceived similarities. Both Kotze (1997:4) and Campbell (1993:51) see social identity as "… (that) part of an individual's self concept which derives from her/his knowledge of being a member of a social group/s, together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership." Inherent in social identity, we find a notion of attachment to a group. Group identity can be described as "… (the) perception of sharing interests in common with other members of the group and the realisation that one's own group is different from other social groups" (Kotze, 1997:5). Harris (1995:238) adds to this by stating that: "group identity is a result of positive in-group sentiments and negative out group orientation." The overriding factors in in-group identity seem to be an awareness of similarity with the group and difference from other groups. For social identity to translate into group identity a realisation of perceived difference is needed.
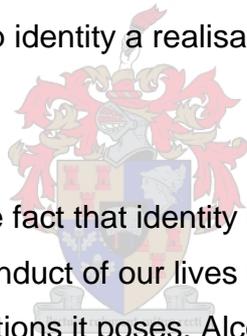
It is impossible to get away from the fact that identity is gendered. One of the dichotomies most prevalent in the day-to-day conduct of our lives is that of male-female and the socially constructed limitations and expectations it poses. Alcoff (1988:431) states that "…gender is not a given, but a construct formalizable in a non-arbitrary way through a matrix of habits, practices and discourses." This implies that the boundaries for gendered behaviour are set on a number of levels prior to the individual entering into the social situation. This puts serious constraints on the identity formation of women in the sense that they have to deal with a set of rules on gender-appropriate behaviour, apart from their subjective experience of any given situation. If they fall prey to social constructions such as the domination of men in interpersonal relations and the privileged access men have to social power, it might lead to a mere reproduction of existing power relations in the formation of identity (Campbell, 1993:57).

Gender identity cannot be equated with feminist identity. Gender can be seen as a category of identity that is assigned to women on bases of their biological characteristics, while feminism implies an awareness of the socially constructed restraints that gender

might pose and a willingness to actively address these restraints. With the development of a feminist identity, we find a reshaping of values originally formed by early socialization experience and adult social location (Conover, 1988:996). Along with this we find the notion of the creation of a new identity through tactics such as replacing negative images with positive ones and refuting the justifications behind traditional role behaviour (Klein, 1984:99). This leads to the claiming of specific issue positions and carries with it an active approach to the addressing of these issues where the issues are perceived to be discriminating or not desirable. Feminist identity is an important tool in that it serves as a platform for political mobilization. Woodward (1997:24) refers to identity politics where the claiming of identity as a member of an oppressed or marginalized group, is used as a point of political departure. When we start to focus on the political aspect of feminism, it becomes clear that feminist identity cannot exist in isolation and that it carries with it the notion of belonging to a group.

Feminist identity cannot be packed into a neat little box where all women fit regardless of background or experience. There is a definite notion of difference within feminist identity, despite the group membership. Campbell (1993:62) points to three platforms of difference. First the specific situations that women move in and out of in their daily lives. Second the broad repertoire of group memberships available to women as resources for identity construction, and third the web of crosscutting power relations such as race, class and age in which women are located. Campbell (1993:45) picks up on the same notion when she writes about three types of difference in identity. First intra-subjective, where the identity of an individual changes as they move from one social context to another. Second within-gender, where there is a difference in identity within the category of women, due to categories such as race, class or sexual orientation and third between-gender which entails the difference of identity for males and females. Feminist identity can be handled as a group identity, on the condition that we never lose sight of the individual experience of women within the group.

3.1) <u>Ways of constructing identity.</u>

After analyzing the literature on identity formation, three broad categories or pathways concerning the construction of identity were identified. The first grouping of pathways across the levels of identity can be termed as passive ways of forming identity. The

individual resigns her- or himself to either the social environment they are functioning in, or to identities subscribed to them by others. Keefe (1992:39) refers to this method of forming identity as given identity. In this case, identity is based on inherent aspects of ones life, such as physical attributes or the social class one is born into. Fierlbeck (1996:21) points to the fact that if identity is merely accepted in a passive way, great value is often assigned to belonging to a specific group. This group membership has its roots in the difference between groups, along with the notion of exclusion and opposition. Without the group as a "safety net" the individual's identity is in danger of collapsing. Identity is not drawn from the individual's ego, but from sources outside of the individual. It is also not a matter of choice, but rather a case of the dictation of acceptable conduct by individuals already established in the social environment. This is closely related to the notion of imposed identity. To impose identity upon an individual entails forcing the acceptance of a pre-constructed identity without the individual having power to alter the situation. It is possible for an individual to "play out" an assigned role or identity, without being aware of the fact (Narayan, 1997:122). Since the assigned identity makes it easier for the individual to survive in the particular social environment, they never question the basis for their identities. They believe that this is the way 'things are supposed to be' and reason personal dissatisfaction away through drawing on coping mechanisms they observe in those who assigned the identity to them in the first place.

If an individual adopts an identity, which is not personally constructed, the consequences are threefold (Smiley, 1993:92). Firstly, no space is left to develop their own identity, since to them they already have an identity. If they are not exposed to alternatives to this given identity they may not even realise that other options of relating to the world are available. Secondly, there is no space to resist the imposed identity, since such an action may alienate them from the social environment that they must function in. As mentioned already, individuals with a given identity is often reliant on a group and will want to conform to this group and not risk alienation from it. Lastly there is no assertion of control over identity. Since they do not decide their own identities, the danger exists that they keep on looking to others to model their behaviour when new or challenging experiences may arise in the environment. This leaves the individual in a position where the reality of their experience is in conflict with their identity and they may experience unease, but do not know how to remedy this.

Russell (1996:90) states that if no attention is paid to the lived reality of the individual's life, it is easy to fall into the trap of believing that individuals share convictions on grounds of shared physical attributes. Individuals stop questioning the platforms from which others experience their lives and assume characteristics on easily identifiable attributes and often-stereotypical views. The result of this is that preconceived ideas become a guideline for communication (Parmar, 1990:109). Social interaction may become forced, with individuals communicating what they believe to be appropriate, rather than their convictions or experiences.

Imposed identity carries with it the very real threat of oppression. Individuals are denied the opportunity to establish their own point of view in social interaction since they have to start from a place where they need to change perceptions before being able to participate from their frame of reference. This is a very real problem when we look at the attributes imposed on women as a group. Mohanty (1988:78) points to the fact that women are often treated as having a coherent group identity, prior to their entry into social relations. The fact that women all come from different backgrounds with very diverse experiences is left out of the equation. This may prove to be problematic, especially if women find themselves in a space where they feel intimidated or unfamiliar. They might fail to assert their own identity, but rather try to fit into the restricted space of the imposed identity.

Alcoff (1988:415) refers to this as the reproduction of oppression. Essentialist formulations of what it entails to be a woman, will tie the individual to her identity as a woman. Not only is there a denial of other forms of oppression, but also it is harder to step outside of the preconstructed framework to engage with the oppressive practice. Another term related to passive identity, is that of exclusive identity. Identity becomes exclusive when emphasis is placed on only one aspect of the individual's life. This is often based on physical attributes and is context bound. The danger in the adoption of exclusive identity is that identity becomes static and that the individual will find it hard to move from one social context to another. Kottler (1996:59) warns against isolating, for instance, race as the base of identity. In modern society an exclusive identity based on race might lead to an exclusion from the society in which the individual has to function. In the assignment of only one identity, there is a denial of the other experienced identities (Caraway, 1992:12). To limit identity to only one aspect of a person's life, denies both multiplicity of experience and diversity of context.

The second grouping of pathways across levels of identity can be termed as active ways of forming identity. The individual takes an active part in the formation of identity. Both context and experience start to play a part in the formation of identity. Self-identification leads to a unique, idiosyncratic manifestation of identity (Fierlbeck, 1996:21). The individual takes into account all the personal peculiarities of mind, habit and behaviour in the construction of identity. Keefe (1992:39) refers to this way of forming identity as situational. This entails that the individual assesses the primary contexts in which they function, along with a critical appraisal of experience of the self in the particular context. Identity is then formed as a result of what is needed to survive on a day-to-day basis.

The notion here is not one of an uncertain identity that is dependant on context. The individual uses context along with remembered experience as a guideline in the construction of identity. Once identity becomes fixed, it is possible to move from one social context to another, using identity as a base of communication. The active formation of identity does not imply the adoption of one identity that then becomes static as soon as the identity is formed. As mentioned before, identity formation is a constant process. Active identity formation entails a continuous assessment of context and personal experience. The result of this is that identity is changed in small ways to accommodate new information and experience, without discarding the basis of the individual's identity. Rutherford (1990:10) refers to this type of identity formation as fluid identity. Identity is seen as unfixed, interdependent and relational in nature. For identity to be productive it needs to be in a state of constant transformation, marked by an interchange between self and structure.

The last grouping of pathways can be termed as "false" ways of forming identity. Identity that is formed in this way is to a great extent dependant on the context in which the individual functions in any given point in time. We can also describe this type of identity as shifting. Keefe (1992:39) terms this type of identity formation as forced. This happens when the individual assesses a social situation and then decide which identity will be most appropriate for the situation at hand. The sense of self that the individual has is weak and uncertain and her /his actions will be dependent on the social situation that they are confronted with. This entails that the individual is forced to adopt a certain identity and that failing to do so, will lead to social disadvantage. The nature of the social environment is of great importance here. This way of constructing identity may be seen as a result of modern society. Individuals constantly move from one situation to another. The difference in the

types of situations they have to deal with is vast and movement from one context to another happens frequently. This results in a situation where there is no time or guideline to build a coherent identity. The more viable option is to keep on adopting the identity most suitable to the situation at hand. Even though this aids to the emotional survival of the individual, this is a highly stressful way of negotiating identity. The individual is faced with a number of identities, which they adopt at will, without attempting to merge all the aspects into a coherent whole. This specific problem is evident in literature with terms such as multiple, fragmented, shifting and conflicting identity, littering the work on identity. In essence all the terms address slight variations to the same problem.

Woodward (1997:1) attempts to engage with the formation of fragmented identity. Modern society poses a plurality of centres from which identity can be constructed, for example, nationality, ethnicity, class, community, gender, sexuality and a myriad of other options. The reality is that these centres do not exist in isolation, but that they have a simultaneous impact on the individual. The social constraints inherent to each of the centres are all in effect at the same time. The result of this is that the individual is torn in all directions in an attempt to conform to more than one identity at once. This leads us to the concept of multiple identities. Multiple identities refer to all the separate parts the identity will split into during fragmentation. It is a result of all the contexts that the individual needs to negotiate.

Rutherford (1990:24) states that a lack of personal, collective and moral boundaries can lead to the fragmentation of the self. There is truth in this statement, but the boundaries are not lacking, there are simply too many. As an individual moves from one context to the next, they have to deal with a new set of boundaries every time. In the absence of a coherent identity, this proves to be difficult in the sense that the boundaries often are in conflict. Added to this, Weeks (1990:89) points to the fact that as soon as value judgement are added to the equation, there will also be a conflict of beliefs, needs and desires within the individual. The simultaneous identification with more than one identity causes the individual to shift from one to the next, depending on the context (Edross, 1997:32 and Magubane, 1997:21).

The result of this is a tension, both within the individual and a tension between the individual and the environment. Even though multiple identities are problematic, it is a phenomenon that can't be solved or moved out of the way. The best possible course of action will be to form an understanding of how it develops and how it influences both action

and reasoning in individuals. Parmar (1990:25) holds that we need more than one base for identity, since division and multiplicity, exist within society. By implication if we have a fairly rigid identity, we can only optimally function within a certain limited number of sections in society, not knowing how to conduct ourselves in those that do not form part of our identity We have to recognise that identity can be both a construction and a point of departure (Alcoff, 1988:432).

The construction of identity is more of an inward process that manifests itself in the platforms from which we move when engaging in social contact. It is evident that identity cannot be discussed separate of the social environment. The next part of the discussion will focus on the role the environment plays in how identity is formed and how it is manifested in interaction.

We can look at identity in two possible ways. First that identity is based on a shared history and culture and secondly that it is a changing construct due to the constant transformation of the environment. The history of South Africa, especially where factors such as race, human rights and political interests are concerned, centres on the implementation and the consequences of apartheid. The distinction that we need to make when working in South Africa though is that although we do have a shared history, we do not share experience of the history. The composition of the South African population is of such a nature that we find a wide variety of races and ethnic traditions within the borders of one country, implying different experiences of the past. The implementation of apartheid underlined these racial differences even more. Woodward (1997:15) states that "…different meanings are produced by different symbolic systems and that these meanings are contested and changing." This statement is very true for South Africa. Even though we can look at apartheid as a system with certain characteristics, there are vast differences in the experience from person to person.

Race serves as a great dividing line in the experience of apartheid. The system that created a favourable environment for one part of the population, simultaneously created an environment of struggle, oppression and denial of rights for the majority of South Africans. Where identity is concerned, we will find a number of very different and distinct identities wrought by the experience of the environment of apartheid. If we imply a national base for

identity formation in terms of a shared history, this is not true in the South African scenario. The shared histories in South Africa happened within the boundaries of race.

The second way of looking at identity, focuses on the changing nature of the environment. As mentioned before, identity is not a static construct, but changes constantly in response to the environment and new personal experiences. An individual will assess the boundaries put there by the environment along with their personal experience of this environment. This is a constant process and causes the individual to make slight changes in identity in order deal with both the environment and personal experience in the least stressful manner. The liberation from apartheid created a major transformation in the environment in which individuals within the South African context function. Even though the current environment leaves equal opportunity for all, the legacy of apartheid still plays a role in the construction of identity. Identities that have been in place for a number of years, now needs to be questioned. The need for survival mechanisms inherent in "old" identities fall away, and new challenges are posed by the need for new skills. Even though the environment is becoming more favourable, it doesn't imply that the transition needed in identity is going to be just as easy.

Campbell (1993:51-57) attempts to tackle the issue of identity construction in a changing environment. She identifies three components of identity construction, along with three steps in the formation of identity. The components of identity construction are life challenges, group membership and recipes for living. They are connected in the following way: the individual perceives certain challenges in his or her environment that are shared by other members of the same society or community, from this there develops a sense of group membership. Groups are composed of a number of unique individuals with their own personal agendas. The different needs and expectations that this implies, may lead to tension within the group. To deal with this, the individual forms recipes for living that will enable her or him to choose the group environment optimal for personal satisfaction and growth. The notion here is not one of established group identification, but rather of a group membership.

Earlier we defined group identity as result of the sharing of interests, positive in-group sentiments and negative out-group orientation. This is not the case in this instance. Identity here is constructed in a way that focuses on the individual and her/his needs. Membership of the group is not an identity, but a tool in minimizing the stresses of the environment. The

focus falls on the interests of the individual and not the group. Life challenges can be divided into three dimensions (Campbell, 1993:53). The first dimension is networking. Networking entails that establishment of systems of social support concerning things such as material and emotional support, educational assistance and political affiliation. This largely rests on shared values and problems. The second dimension focuses on planning for the future. Here the individual assesses what it is that he or she is working towards, both on personal and community levels. The last dimension is concerned with the construction of a code of conduct. This is needed to deal with situations where tension and conflict might arise. It ranges from interpersonal relations to political conflict to community crime and how the individual will react if confronted with these tensions. Since the life challenges are concerned with group relations, the individual establishes a sense of group membership in working through the life challenges. Once the individual associates him- or herself with a group, they start to adopt the appropriate recipes of living associated with the group.

Campbell (1993:53) defines recipes for living as possibilities of and constraints on behaviour, along with interpretative frameworks to make sense of the world. The individual will assess all possible group memberships and will choose the one that has the highest perceived adaptive success. It is very possible that there will be a slight redefinition of identity to enable the individual to draw maximum benefit from the affiliation with the group. Apart from the components of identity construction, Campbell (1993:56) also identifies three steps in identity construction. First the individuals are constantly in a state of fashioning and refashioning their identities. For this they draw on raw materials provided by their socially constructed group memberships, along with the associated recipes of living.

Second, identity is constructed within the context of specific life challenges posed by the social and material worlds. This implies that individual identity cannot be understood independently of the environment the individual is functioning in. Here there is a movement away from group membership, and attention is paid to the individual experience of the environment and the personal challenges it poses. The last step concerns the fact that identity construction is based on socially and historically specific criteria for perceived adaptive success. This entails that the individual looks to remembered and current experience and identify those factors that will ensure personal success. Identity is then

constructed through a merging of the factors identified with the personal need and goals of the individual.

3.2) <u>Feminist identity.</u>

Before we can start to work with the concept of feminist identity and attempt to find some way in which it can be measured, it is needed to stipulate exactly what the concept entails. Even though the term 'feminist identity' is frequently used in writing, there is a striking absence of clear definitions on what exactly is meant by feminist identity. One possible reason for this failure to clearly define the concept might lie in the nature of the writing. When feminist identity is used on the levels of discursive, philosophical, ideological or theorized writing, there might be the assumption that the writer is catering for an audience that will grasp the meaning of the term even in the absence of clear definition. Since this literature will not focus on the actual measurement of the concept of feminist identity, the need to conceptualise feminist identity, may not be of such great importance. Another possible explanation is that the term feminist identity is used in connection with other concepts or issues and is therefore not the focus of these writings.

Research conducted on the existence and the nature of feminist identity is virtually non-existent and even more so for the South African context. This leaves us with a very limited pool of existing literature to draw on in trying to define feminist identity. Alcoff (1988:431) does refer to gendered identity, but only mentions that it is a socially constructed concept formalized through habits, practices and discourses. How it is constructed and what exactly the habits, practices and discourses entail, stays open for discussion. Conover (1988:990) comes closer to defining feminist identity in stating that it is a form of social identity with two components namely, 1.) a sense of membership in a category or group and 2.) a sense of psychological attachment to the group. Conover (1988:996) continues to state that "the development of a feminist identity constitutes a re-socialization experience for a woman; it directly influences her values, and through her values it indirectly affect her specific issue positions." Even though this is by no means a comprehensive definition, it serves as a good starting point in the process of defining feminist identity.

In order to build a definition from scratch, it is needed to look at the terms of identity and feminism separately. Giddens (in Campbell, 1993:46) defines identity as "a reflexive

project that has to be routinely created and sustained, constantly having to be explored and constructed as part of the reflexive process of connecting personal and social change." Woodward (1997:301) says that the function of identity is to help individuals understand "…the interplay between our subjective experience of the world and the cultural and historical settings in which this fragile subjectivity is formed." Weeks (1990:88) refers to identity as a sense of belonging, 'about what we have in common with some people and what differentiates us from others.' He also points to the fact that while identity is the core of your personal location it is also subject to your complex involvement with social relations. The formation of identity and the subsequent modification thereof seem to be an interactive process between the individual and the environment. From the above definitions it is clear that identity is not static and that it is used as a tool in dealing with the individual's subjective experience of the given social environment.

When we look at any form of identity, it is impossible to separate it from the social sphere and this is also true for feminist identity. In order to try and build a definition of feminist identity, we need to look at the term feminism as well. Griffin and Phoenix (1994:289) see feminism as the 'political theory and practice to free all women.' Mama (1995:7) states that feminist perspectives imply a new understanding of the world and a 'making sense of women's experience of conflict, contradiction and oppression.' Klein (1984:2) defines feminism as 'a political ideology, which argues that men and women should have equal roles in society and that women have been denied support within the home and access to the marketplace because of discrimination and inadequate social institutions.' From the definitions above, we can define feminism as a political movement, which seeks equality of the sexes along with the eradication of discrimination and oppression for all women in all areas of life.

Inherent in both the first and second definitions used by Conover concerning identity are a few terms that need further clarification and clear definition. Conover (1988:990) refers to both the social and group aspects of feminist identity. For this reason, it might be of use to take a closer look at the nature of both social and group identities. Gilroy (1997:315) states that the project of identification cannot be separated from the social sphere. Identification becomes a social process, rather than individual property, since identity is formed through relationships with others, usually marked by conflict and exclusion. Tajfel (in Kotze, 1997:4) defines social identity as: "…that part of an individual's self-concept which derives

from his knowledge of being member of a social group (or groups) together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership."

Kotze (1997:5) continues to define group identity as: "…the perception of sharing interest in common with other members of the group and the realization that one's own group is different from other social groups. Harris (1995:238) says that theory suggests that group identity is a result of positive in-group sentiments and negative out-group orientation. Jackson et. al. (1991:239) mention five constructs of group identity specifically pertaining to group identification among black Americans. When we look at the similarities between blacks and feminists as political interest groups fighting discrimination and marginalization, the constructs can be applied to feminism with relative safety. One aspect that we need to keep in mind, however, is that racial identity is far more politicised than feminist identity and that the American context differs vastly from that of South Africa.

The constructs mentioned here can only serve as a rough guideline and when applied to the group aspect of feminism, it should be done so with care. Jackson (1991:239) names the following as constructs of group identity: 1.) closeness to the mass group, defined as emotional bonds to one's group, growing out of a sense of common fate, 2.) closeness to elites, reflecting an individual belief that one's political self-worth and that of the group can be best served by supporting the leaders of the group, 3.) positive stereotypic beliefs, indicating the extent of assignment of positive values to group traits, 4.) negative stereotypic rejection, reflecting one's dismissal of negative images of the group and 5.) autonomy, reflecting one's ideological beliefs that members of the group should build independent institutions based on the interests of the group. The concepts of social and group identity are closely linked and it is difficult to define the one without referring to the other. Taking into account all the definitions on group and social identity, we can state the following concerning the social and group aspect of feminism:

1.)   Knowledge of being a member of the group
2.)   Support of the values of the group
3.)   Emotional attachment to the group
4.)   Common interests and ideology with other members of the group
5.)   Knowledge that one's group is different from other groups
6.)   Affirmation of positive traits and the rejection of negative stereotyping

From the above discussion on all the respective aspects of feminist identity, we can define feminist identity as the knowledge of belonging to, being attached to and supporting the values of a group that seeks equality between men and women along with the eradication of discrimination and oppression for all women in all areas of life.

We cannot assume that all women will have a fully-fledged feminist identity. Women may have been exposed to feminism at some stage or may have had experiences that lead to the development of an awareness of feminism. This awareness might lead to other manifestations, such as a feminist consciousness or an involvement in feminist activism. It is possible that these women might maintain consciousness and involvement or that the consciousness might translate into a feminist identity through further exposure or personal experience. When we start to look at the occurrence of feminism, it is also needed to tap into dimensions of consciousness, which implies a lesser degree of support and attachment. This is needed since feminist consciousness or involvement in activism can serve as a potential base for identity as well as a motivation for action even in the absence of feminist identity.

Cook (1989:74) defines feminist consciousness as 'a specific type of gender consciousness which represent a gendered consciousness based upon a set of political beliefs about equality of the sexes.' From Cook's definition, it is clear that a feminist consciousness does carry with it a political aspect in the sense that 'political beliefs' imply action to establish 'equality of the sexes.'

Klein (1984:3) lists three stages in the rise of feminist consciousness as a political consciousness. First, there must be recognition of group membership and of shared interests. Second, there must be a rejection of the current status of the group and a redefinition of what the group entails. Finally, they must ascribe to a sense of injustice and work towards group solutions. Consciousness by this definition is not a construct that will develop in the individual without outside stimulation and can be seen as a reaction that women have to their given environments.

The sharing of interest, dissatisfaction and the will to take actions on these issues must be present along with a favourable environment. Klein (1984:70 supports this line of argument in stating that: "… consciousness refers to an internalised political perspective derived

from personal experience." Even though the consciousness component of dissatisfaction with the status quo starts with the personal experience of women, it is doubtful that it will develop to a full consciousness motivating action in the absence of group sentiments. Since feminist consciousness carries with it, apart from the political aspect, a definite referral to the group aspect, I will discuss the concept of group consciousness.

Cook (1989:71) defines group consciousness as: "… a politicised identification with a group of which one is an objective member and implies an orientation toward collective action to achieve the group's goals." Kotze (1997:5) defines group consciousness as: "… a politicised awareness, or ideology, regarding the group's relative position in society, and a commitment to collective action aimed at realising the group's interests." In both of these definitions, we find references to politicisation and collective action. Klein (1984:2) states that group consciousness constitutes the belief that one's personal problems result from unfair treatment because of one's group membership and is not a result of lack of personal effort and ability. When group identity and consciousness are compared, it appears that group identity focus on the individual's personal knowledge of belonging to a group and supporting the group, while consciousness focus on the political realization of this identity through collective action.

Gurin (1985:146-147) identifies four components of group consciousness: 1.) Collective orientation, which is a result of subordination or dominance, 2.) Individual discontent about the power of their social category, 3.) Disparities that are experienced are perceived to be of an illegitimate nature and 4.) Identification in the sense that there is recognition of shared values and interests.

Consciousness seems to be the result of perceived discrimination on the ground of one's specific group membership along with the willingness and the ability to remedy this through action. Collective action is manifested in the form of feminist activism. Klein (1984:132) states that there is a mutually reinforcing relationship between feminist consciousness and activism. Even though the feminist consciousness preceded the start of the feminist movement, we find that the visible efforts of the movement in turn can facilitate the growth of feminist consciousness, broadening the base of the feminist movement. For consciousness to successfully translate into action, women need an organizational base, resources and leadership, which can be provided by the feminist movement. The success of activism can be measured in terms of two dimensions, namely access and influence

(Klein, 1984:11). Access requires that political decision makers recognize women's rights organizations as representative of legitimate interests, while influence require the attainment of concrete new advantages. Once again these dimensions cannot be realized without the active involvement of a political interest group, in this case of the feminist movement.

When we take into account all the components discussed above, we can determine certain criteria for feminist identity. This is needed since women might not label themselves as feminists, but still ascribe to some of the factors that are at play within the feminist arena.

Criteria for feminist identity:
1.)   Women must have a psychological attachment to feminism
2.)   Women must support the values of feminism i.e.) equality of the sexes and the eradication of discrimination
3.)   Women must feel that they should collectively mobilize to bring about political change
4.)   Women must be able to see feminism as one identity among others.

A feminist identity will not exist in isolation. For this reason, it is needed to also pay attention to the existence and the relative strength of other identities. This will not only enable us to determine the influence that other identities may have on feminist identity, but it can also be useful in addressing the occurrence of multiple identities. Other identities that may prove to be of importance in this instance, includes race, class, motherhood, sexuality and political ideology. Since the notion of women as one homogeneous group is essentialist and outdated, we also need to gather data on demographic variables such as age, level of education, race, marital status and employment. This will enable us to determine the levels of diversity within the sample as well as the influence of these variables, if any, on feminist identity. Once we have established the existence, nature and intensity of feminist identity, we need to look at the paths that women took to develop these identities.

Klein (1984:7) states that personal experience and solidarity with the experiences of other women have strong links to the development of a feminist identity. Abstract ideology and exposure to alternative lifestyle also have a link to feminist identity, but the connection is

weak and cannot be sustained for a long period of time. In the South African context women are exposed to such wide range of experiences that I would like to categorize experience into two categories, namely 1.) experience within the personal sphere and 2.) experience of a more political nature in the social sphere. Personal experiences of women's lives constitute those roles and attributes that they acquire through the demographic aspects of their lives as well as personal choice. For instance, marital status plays a role in that women who are single or divorced are more likely to develop a feminist identity.

Klein (1984:106-107) discusses the role that being married or not can play in the development of a feminist consciousness or identity. In the traditional sense marriage held two implications for women. Firstly it marked the beginning of her adult life and the first step to motherhood and secondly it implied economic security. In the event that a woman divorces or separates from her husband, she must start to take on the obligations traditionally assumed by men and may find difficulty with this due to the restrictions of the social environment. This state of affairs will lead a women to question the traditional roles assigned to women and may lead to the tentative exploration of feminist convictions. There is also interplay between the age that a woman marries and the formation of feminist identity. If a woman decides to marry at a later stage and is therefore forced to look after herself both economically and emotionally, she is more likely to have personal experiences that might lead to the development of feminist identity.

Another attribute of the society that we are living in is that marriage has become 'outdated'. Many women choose relationships of co-habitation over marriage. Even though the couple will share financial and emotional responsibilities, the security of a marriage contract is absent. In a situation such as this the woman maintains a better sense of independence. The South African situation differs from the normal married or not equation, in the sense that many women are married, but they 'lose' their spouses to migrant labour, or a host of other factors. The effect of this is that women for all intents and purposes run female-headed households and can only depend on themselves for their financial and emotional survival. Within the South African context it is not sufficient to ask women whether they are married or not, it becomes a question of living arrangements and whether the spouse makes a financial contribution to the running of the household.

Another factor that might influence the development of a feminist identity is that of activity in the labour force. The link here is that a woman who are active in the labour force or has a high occupational status is more likely to develop a feminist identity. The traditional profile of the working woman used to be young, single and childless. In the current economic and social climate, this is not the case anymore. Women from all ages, married or not and with or without children are joining the workforce. Klein (1984:108) says that being active in the labour force brings women into contact with new information and opportunities that they would not have experienced as homemakers. She continues to state that this may not be the case for all women and that attention needs to be paid to both the type of employment as well as the reasons why women joins the labour force.

If women need to work for economical survival in jobs that are not rewarding, they will not see their jobs as a vehicle to new opportunities and self-empowerment. The fact that they have to work outside of the home may become a source of resentment and a burden in their lives. When we try to establish a possible link between employment and the development of a feminist identity, it is important to pay attention to the individual experiences.

In the South African context this is especially important since a great deal of women in the labour force is working in menial jobs to secure the economic survival of themselves and their families. This does not imply that women in this situation are less likely to develop a feminist identity. Dissatisfaction with work-related issues such as wages, working hours and pregnancy leave, can be a common base for women to mobilize around. If they feel that they are experiencing difficulties on these issues as a result of their gender, this may lead to the development of a feminist sentiment. In the South African context employment status and the experience of the working environment are both of importance in establishing a link between feminist identity and employment. This is a good example of how the South African environment should be treated within context and not according to international assumptions that we find here in Klein's study.

Level of education is another characteristic that might influence the development of a feminist identity. The relationship between level of education and feminist identity is of such a nature that the likeliness of developing a feminist identity increases as the level of education increases. Klein (1984:111) states that the utilizing of educational opportunities has a liberalizing effect in the lives of women and that this might lead them to be more

open to feminist arguments. In gaining a higher education, women develop concrete skills that serve as a doorway to upward mobility, higher income and higher status in society as well as exposing them to new ways of interpreting their world. An education implies better jobs and better pay and enables women to be financially more self-sufficient. It challenges the traditional pattern of the women being dependant on the male for financial support and therefore serves as a source of independence for women. In the South African context it is important to keep in mind that all women will not have equal structural or financial access to opportunities and institutions of education. Demographic variables such as class and race can influence whether women are able to gain a higher education. When working with the link between education and feminist identity, it must be kept in mind that higher education is not merely a personal choice, but that it is dependant on access to opportunity.

Another factor that can influence the development of feminist identity is the size of the community that women live in. Klein (1984:112) states that residence in a larger community, such as urban areas as opposed to rural areas, is more conducive to the fostering of a feminist identity. Larger communities will expose the individual to a greater range of both ethnic traditions and social and economic opportunities. The implication of this is that the individual will have a greater pool of non-traditional role models to draw on, resulting in fewer adherences to traditional arrangements, which will in turn make women more susceptible to feminist arguments.

Levels of religious attachment are another factor that can influence the development of a feminist identity. The link here is that the stronger the religious attachment, the less likely women are to develop a feminist identity. Inherent in any religious practice is some degree of adherence to traditional roles of the male as the 'keeper of the home'. Religious conviction provides both males and females with a sense of order and self-worth that is not easily countered by the changing definitions of what it entails to be a woman (Klein, 1984:114).

The focus here seems to be on the Christian religion and that is not sufficient since there are a host of other religions available to women, for instance Hinduism. For religion to have a negative relationship to the development of feminist identity, the principles thereof must dictate that men are seen as more 'worthy' than the women. Before we can make this assumption, there must be clarity of what exactly the religion entails. Another factor here is

development within the Christian churches, where they adopt a more liberal attitude concerning women and use women in positions of power. The proposed relationship here must be put under scrutiny, since it seems to be outdated. The rise of secularity also implies that fewer women will have bonds with religion. Here it is needed to establish attachment to religion and the strength of the attachment before we can draw any conclusions as to feminist identity. It may also be needed to listen to the self-reported accounts of women on this issue in order to confirm this proposed relationship.

Liberal political ideology also fosters a feminist identity. This is a result of the fact that liberal political views will leave people more open to a redefinition of the roles of women and all that it might imply. Klein (1984:115) states that when working with liberal political ideology, it is important to draw a distinction between feminist consciousness and feminist sympathy. Feminist sympathy can be a result of ideological concerns, coupled with exposure to alternative lifestyles and does not suppose any involvement in or supporting the values of the feminist movement. Feminist consciousness on the other hand almost presupposes personal experience and struggle and a will to change discriminatory practice through action. For this reason, it is more likely that males from a liberal background will have feminist sympathy, while women from a liberal background will form a feminist consciousness across a wider base of ideological concerns. When looking at ideological motivations for involvement in feminism, it is imperative to establish whether the attachment to feminism is mere sympathy or whether it can be classified as an identity.

Two factors that are traditionally seen as not conducive to the development of feminist identity are motherhood and poverty. In the South African context, these factors must be handled with more care, since they can serve as a base for solidarity and common experience amongst women. The traditional view of motherhood is that it can be oppressive since the role of the woman becomes dictated by her biological ability to have children. In the current social climate this view seems to be outdated, since motherhood has become a choice and not a given responsibility for many women. The availability of contraception, the legalization of abortion and better sex education are all factors that make it possible for women to take control of her reproductive status.[3] If women choose to have children, the structures of childcare that are available along with the support base that we find in the instances of extended families, makes it easier for women to have

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[3] It is important here to keep in mind that this is true for the women included in the sample, but it is not generalizable to all women in the South African population.

children and not sacrifice involvement in other areas of their lives such as activity in the labour force. The flipside of the coin for feminism is that motherhood can serve as a common base for many women who share no other experiences in the daily living of their lives. Here it is important not to assume that motherhood is either oppressive or empowering, but to rely on the specific narratives of women to determine the how motherhood is perceived within the South African context. The individual relation of each woman's experience does not imply that no categories can be established as to the effect of motherhood on the development of feminist identity, but rather puts us in a position where we have to redefine what motherhood has come to mean in the current social circumstance within South Africa.

Another factor that is traditionally seen as negative for the development of feminist identity is poverty. Poverty implies working in non-rewarding jobs for financial survival, no access to higher education, double work in both the public sector and at home and many other hardships that women have to overcome. The possibility of using these common oppressions as a base for female mobilization has been mentioned already. Traditionally women who had to live under circumstances of poverty did not have the 'luxury' to be exposed to or get involved in feminist efforts. This has changed in the sense that the communal experience of poverty and the shared concerns that it implies has now become a common base for many women. Organic feminist organizations such as the New Women's Movement sees poverty as a material base around which they can share experiences and mobilize for change. The redefinition of formerly 'oppressive' factors such as poverty and motherhood holds implications for feminism in South Africa. It signifies a moving away from the old schools of thought within feminism to new ideas and bases that are found in the real lives of women.

Apart from the personal experiences in the lives of women, it is also needed to pay attention to the political experiences in the social sphere. This is of special importance, since in the South African context women have and still do function under a politically charged environment. The occurrences of politically related experiences in the South African context is abundant, but for the purpose of establishing possible pathways to feminism, I would like to look at two categories of politically related experiences, namely oppression and violence.

First we will look at the occurrence of oppression and how the experiencing thereof might lead to the development of a feminist identity. The oppression that women suffered as a

result of the political institution of apartheid should not be taken to be one dimensional and focusing on race only. Women were oppressed, and some still are, on the grounds of a variety of identities that they ascribe to, such as race, class, religion and culture, which was not necessarily dictated by their race, nut was linked to it. Ramphele and Boonzaaier (1988:166) states that the multiple nature of oppression can partly be explained by the fact that if oppression is operational in one domain of an individual's life, it is easily transferable to other domains, in the sense that one form of oppression can serve as a paradigm for another. It will be short-sighted to assume that women experienced only racial oppression as a result of apartheid and the structural inequalities that it implies. The oppression that women experienced as a result of apartheid attacked integral concepts of self such as race, colour and culture. Women were discriminated against on grounds of their physical attributes and therefore were powerless to change their circumstances. The only avenue open to them was a resistance of the negative connotations ascribed to them by the rule of apartheid.

Apart from the fact that the wider social environment was marked by racial oppression, racial segregation also had the result of confining women to their racial group and culture. This confinement resulted in a forced subscription to the norms and traditions of the cultural practises peculiar to their races, regardless of the fact that they might have perceived it to be oppressive in term of their gender. Ramphele and Boonzaaier (1988:166) make a valid point in stating that the domination of women, and especially black women, was reinforced by an appeal to the African tradition and culture. They were not only subjected to racial dominance from outside their culture, but also to male dominance from inside their culture. Narayan (1997:55) points to the fact that the West can use culture as a tool of oppression on grounds of race, while men can use culture as a tool of oppression in the gendered sense. Women found themselves in a position of double jeopardy where they had to stay inside their race as a safe space against racial discrimination while being subjected to male domination under the guise of 'cultural practice'.

The implication of this for the development of a feminist identity lies in the fact that women can find a common base not only in their oppression as women, but also in their oppression on the grounds of their race and the communal experience of the intersection that this implies. Oppression can be used as a base for identification. Rutherford (1990:17)

states that identity can be affirmed by whatever category of oppression an individual suffers.

If women can manage to find solidarity in their common oppression on the grounds of their gender, it may serve as a road to feminist identity. This road will not be an easy one though, since race is a strong identity for many women in South Africa and the presence of white women in the shared space of gender may lead to weariness and feelings of anger. Joseph and Lewis (1981:40) make a valid point in stating that even if black and white women do have common interests around certain issues or oppressions, it is still important to recognize the differences in the ways that they suffered their respective oppressions. In the South African context it is of special importance that while we can use oppression as a pathway to feminism, we must not loose sight of the fact that gender was and is not the only ground for oppression. It is important to foster a type of feminism that takes into account all the experiences of the lives of women and not focus only on the gendered aspect.

Another political experience that might lead to the development of feminist identity is that of violence. Violence can be divided into two categories, namely violence against society and violence against the individual. Violence against society constitutes events such as bomb explosions, hijacking or political unrest, while gender-based violence against the individual constitutes occurrences of abuse, assault and rape. The experience of violence in the South African context can be so diverse that it is impossible to guess at possible categories without the respective narratives of the lives of women. The experience of violence can lead to the development of a feminist identity in the sense that feminism can serve as a vehicle to foster awareness of the violence that women suffer and the effect that it has on their lives. It can also serve as a tool of putting issues on the agenda and creating a space in which women can work together towards the changes that needs to be made socially to improve the situation.

Finally we have also need to look at the nature of the environment in which women function. Although we can take personal experience as the starting point of identity formation, we need to realize that women do not exist in a vacuum. The environment may either contribute to or inhibit the formation of feminist identity. Klein (1984:79) identifies two types of circumstances in the environment conducive to the formation of feminist identity. First there must be public support for sexual equality and second in times of social or

economical change we find a challenging of tradition, which can lay the groundwork for the formation of new identities.

The relevance of this to the South African situation has been discussed already. Identity formation cannot be seen as a once off process that produces a static construct. Identity formation is an ongoing process, part a result of individual change and part as a response to the nature of the environment. For this reason the nature of the environment and the possible effects that it may have on the formation of feminist identity must be included when we start to look at how women find their respective ways to feminism.

Chapter 4: Methodology and Research design

4.1) Method, methodology and epistemology

Feminism can be seen as a discipline within the bigger arena of social science. What differentiates feminism is that it has developed a specific way of conducting research, a variation on the standard procedures followed in social sciences. The reason for this shift, in essence, was that traditional research method and methodology did not address the lives of women from their own perspective and experience, but rather attempted to 'fit' women into a male paradigm or to omit the experience of women altogether. As an answer to this feminism has moved away from the notions of objectivity and 'value-free' research to a place where both the researcher and the research subject with their respective experiences and individual values become an integral part of the research process. The focus within feminist research falls on experience, subjectivity, positionality and context of both the researcher and the researched. In doing this feminism redefined the notions of science and objectivity. Mama (1995:9) says that feminism is "...transformative in that it changes the whole idea of knowledge, taking it away from the notion of disembodied value-free truth and arguing that knowledge production can be enhanced and greater objectivity achieved if we recognise that knowledge cannot be absolute and universal." The feminist challenge to traditional, objective research came through a focus on the notion of subjectivity.

Mama (1995:2) defines subjectivity as follows: "Subjectivity is used to refer to the conscious and unconscious thoughts and emotions of the individual, her sense of herself and her relation to the world." The focus shifted from the objective observation of the unitary, universal subject to the subjective experience of women and the true depiction thereof. Through using subjectivity as a research tool, we can give a more true depiction of that which is observed, ultimately furthering objectivity.

Griffin and Phoenix (1994:289) states that: "There is increasing agreement amongst feminists working in social and psychological research that there is no one feminist method or any one form of feminist research." The whole debate concerning the

appropriate way of doing research within feminism started with the 'feminist critique' of then traditional, male dominated methods of doing research. The feminist critique centred on the following issues: 1.) Feminist research was defined as a focus on women, in research carried out by women who were feminist, for other women, 2.) A perceived distinction between 'male' quantitative method and feminist qualitative ones and 3.) Feminist research was overtly political in its purpose and commitment to changing women's lives (Stanley, 1996: 21). The matter, however, was not as simple as this and the initial critique on the traditional research method and methodology sparked a whole debate within the feminist arena on what was the 'correct' feminist method and was it even possible to pin one specific method down at all. The result of this was a focus on method, methodology and epistemology and the intricate relationship that holds it together.

Method is seen as specific sets of techniques or research practices, for example surveys, interviews and so forth, which is used to collect data or information on the lives of women. Methodology is seen as a perspective or a broad theoretically informed framework, for example functionalism and may possible dictate its own specific type of method or technique. Epistemology is the theory of knowledge and is concerned with matters such as: who is the knower, what can be known, what constitutes and validates knowledge and so forth. Harding (1987:2-3) defines the same concepts as follows. Method is a technique of gathering evidence and can be divided into three categories, namely 1.) Listening to informants, 2.) Observing behaviour and 3.) Examining historical traces and records. Added to this is also the use of surveys to gather data. Methodology is a theory and analysis of how research should proceed and focuses on how the general structure of theory finds its application in particular scientific disciplines. Epistemology is a theory of knowledge and addresses such issues as, who can be the knower, what tests beliefs must pass in order to be legitimated as knowledge and what kinds of things can be known. When we compare the two sets of definitions, it seems that method refers to the practical gathering of data, methodology suggests how research should be conducted within different social scientific disciplines and epistemology questions the basis of knowledge and whether it can be seen as legitimate or not.

Methodology attempts to make a valid connection between ideas, experience and material and social realities. The feminist approach to methodology is not unified.

Ramazanoglu and Holland (2002:10) state that "[D]isputes over how, or whether, connections can ever be made, and social reality ever actually known, provide the methodological context within which feminist approaches to methodology have developed." Apart from the fact that there is division within feminist circles concerning methodology, feminists have also been subjected to critique from the scientific community. Ramazanoglu and Holland (2002:3) summarizes the following three challenges to feminist methodology:

1.) Feminists have been criticized for failing to produce adequately rational, scientific or unbiased knowledge with the result that feminists in some academic institutions are being treated as marginal or inferior where the production of knowledge is concerned.

2.) Western feminists, especially, have been criticized for taking women to be an undifferentiated category, with not sufficient attention paid to the varied experiences implied by cultural difference, social divisions and power relations.

3.) Feminists have been criticized for not properly questioning the distinction between 'women' and 'gender' as a product of ideas as opposed to a product of embodiment, patriarchy or social construction.

Ramazanoglu and Holland (2002:11) deconstruct methodology in stating that: "Each methodology links a particular ontology (for example, a belief that gender is social rather than natural) and a particular epistemology (a set of procedures for establishing what counts as knowledge) in providing rules that specify how to produce valid knowledge of social reality (for example, the real nature of particular gender relations."

They continue to list that feminists can use different ontological beliefs, epistemologies, rules for validation of knowledge, theories of power, ethical and political positions and strategies for ensuring accountability. Keeping all of this in mind, it becomes clear that no definite rules are in place concerning the application or the nature of feminist methodology. The one factor that can be seen as common ground though is a "…shared political and ethical commitment that makes them accountable to a community of women with moral and political interests in common (Ramazanoglu and Holland, 2002: 16). Since this thesis explores dynamics within the feminist movement, it is important that the research methodology should reflect a

feminist approach. The general disagreement on what an accepted feminist methodology may entail makes it necessary to explore the differing views on methodology more closely before deciding on a specific methodology to adopt in the gathering of data for this thesis. Edwards (1990), Ramazanoglu and Holland (2002) and Riger (1992) attempt to put down certain guidelines in the practice of a 'feminist methodology'.

Ramazanoglu and Holland (2002:10-11) do not specifically refer to feminist methodology, but states the following characteristics of methodology in social research in general:

1.) A social and political process of knowledge production.
2.) Assumptions about the nature and meanings of ideas, experiences and social reality and how/if these may be connected.
3.) Critical reflection on what authority can be claimed for the knowledge that results
4.) Accountability (or denial of accountability) for the political and ethical implications of knowledge production.
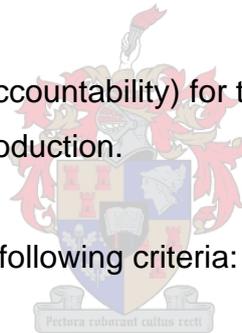
Edwards (1990:479) stipulates the following criteria:

1.) Women's lives need to be addressed on their own terms and should start with the examining of their own experiences.
2.) The object of research should not be to extract information, but to 'provide for women explanations of their lives which can be used as an instrument to improve their situations'.
3.) The researcher must be put into the process of knowledge production and should explain both the reasoning procedures in carrying out the research as well as the effect that she will have on the process of research in terms of her class, race, sex, assumptions and beliefs.

Riger (1992:736) continues along the same line of thought in stating that the following should be the 'central tenets of feminist method (ology?)':

1.) Recognizing the interdependence of the experimenter and the subject.

2.)   Avoiding the decontextualizing of the subject or experimenter from their social and historical surroundings.

3.)   Recognizing and revealing the nature of one's values within the research context.

4.)   Accepting that fact do not exist independently of their producer's linguistic codes.

5.)   Demystifying the role of the scientist and establishing an egalitarian relationship between science makers and science consumers.

The above criteria that have been specified for feminist methodology seems to have its focus on one point and that is the location of both the researcher and the researched. Coupled with this is the importance of ongoing communication between the researcher and the researched, starting at the onset of the research and continuing throughout the research process and culminating in the representation and practical application of the research results. Both parties need to be placed according to their specific characteristics and the beliefs that this implies prior to entering into research and they must continue to assess the effect of these characteristics throughout the research process. Apart from this the research situation and the application of the result should be beneficiary to both the parties and one must not benefit at the cost of the other.
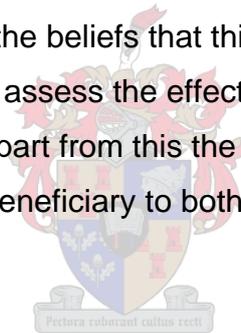
In keeping with the above guidelines, I attempted to place myself as researcher and encourage open communication in the research process in the following manner: The questionnaire was accompanied by a covering letter explaining who I was and why I am conducting this research. I continued this process during the following interviews by conducting the interviews myself and honestly answering any questions the respondents had about the research or about my personal feelings on issues discussed. With the culmination of the research I plan to send a copy of the thesis to the organizations included in the sampling for the research in the hope that some of the findings will encourage better understanding across the lines that divide women.

Epistemology can be seen as a wider concept than methodology. While methodology can be bound to discipline, epistemology questions the very basis of knowledge and the truth of knowledge-claims. While academic writing within a certain discipline can be free from critique on methodological bases, it is always open to the challenge of

epistemology. This fact gives epistemology a very important place within feminism. If it can be used in the correct manner epistemology can serve as a powerful tool against the misrepresentation of women.

Harding (1991) identifies two different, but not entirely opposing methods, within feminist epistemology, namely feminist empiricism and feminist standpoint. In moving away from the traditionally accepted 'rules' of empirical research, feminists had to develop new ways of enquiry that ensured that both the research they conduct and the results that they represent, are more representative of women and free from the domination, oppression and misrepresentation that marked 'gender-blind' research.

The first method of enquiry that developed within the feminist arena is that of feminist empiricism. The basic assumption of this method is that biases and prejudices that exist in the social context finds its way to the research process, either in the formulation of the research problem or in later stages such as the collection or interpretation of data. The result of this is that 'bad science' is practiced as a result of an ignorance of prejudices and biases. The bias that is referred to here is based on gendered stereotyping or gender insensitive research. Rigir (1992:732) states that bias is "considered error in a basically sound system' and that 'once neutrality is restored, scientific methods, grounded in rationality, will give access to the truth."
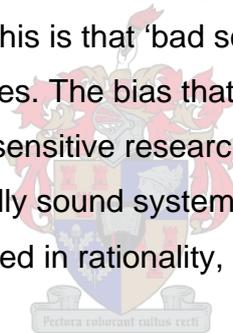
The answer to this problem according to the feminist empiricist is a stricter adherence to the methodological norms of scientific enquiry (Harding, 1991:111). The starting point of feminist empiricism is not to change the existing method of enquiry, but merely to apply it differently. The only difference between traditional social enquiry and feminist empiricism is that the latter fosters an awareness of possible biases, prejudices and inequalities and makes an allowance for that at the onset of research and throughout the research process. Feminist empiricism does not challenge the norms of science, but rather advocates that science is practiced in an incomplete manner, not paying attention to all the factors that are at play within the research process.

This method of enquiry can result in a more true depiction of the lives of women, but it fails to deal with the fact that the traditional modes of scientific enquiry can be riddled with sexism. Even if the researcher manages to 'gender-sensitise' the traditional

methods of enquiry, sexism can still sneak into the equation through personal values of both the researcher and the researched, sexist notions entrenched in already existing theories and with the selection of the *kind* of research problem. Traditional scientific enquiry was designed by men to serve the male purpose. Rigir (1992:732) justly argues that: "…traditional methods do not reveal reality, but rather act as constraints that limit our understanding of women's experiences." This fact makes it unlikely that a mere different application of the same oppressive method of enquiry will heed different results if handled in a feminist manner. The more likely resolution of the problem is to try and find a method that challenges the dominant way of enquiry in that it is different from the traditional.

The second method of enquiry mentioned by Harding, namely feminist standpoint seems to be the more likely option. Feminist standpoint argues that all knowledge is socially situated (Harding, 1991:119). Ramazanoglu and Holland (2002:60) state that feminist standpoint can assist in "…connecting feminist knowledge and women's diverse experiences to the realities of gendered social situations." The implication of this for feminist research is that the specific experiences of women in their day-to-day lives are used as the starting point of research. Feminist standpoint goes beyond the information that they 'require' to address a certain research problem and take into account all the experiences of women together with the social and political environment that they function in. Harding (1991:120) states that: "The feminist standpoint theories focus on gender differences, on differences between women's and men's situations which give scientific advantage to those who can make use of the differences." This is a very important distinction to make, since men and women do often live in 'different' worlds and even if men and women respectively find themselves in exactly the same situation, their experience of the situation will still differ on grounds of their gendered identities.

The concept of gendered identities proves to be ontologically difficult in the sense that gender can be natural or socially constructed. That is a whole different debate however. For the purpose of this discussion the important issue is that *experience* will differ across gendered lines as a result of a personal (socially constructed?) sense of the gendered self coupled with the constraints or possibilities that the given, specific social context implies. The implication of this for research is that we cannot use the same analytical categories for both male and female respondents. Harding

(1991:121-132) identifies a few differences between men and women that we need to take into account in the process of conducting research.

1.) Women's lives have been erroneously devalued and neglected as starting points for scientific research and as the generators of evidence for or against knowledge claims.

2.) Woman is a valuable stranger to the social order in that they are excluded from the design and direction of both the social order and the production of knowledge.

3.) Women's oppression, exploitation and domination are grounds for the transvaluing of women's differences because members of oppressed groups have fewer interests in ignorance about the social order and fewer reasons to invest in maintaining or justifying the status quo than the dominant groups. They have less to lose from distancing themselves from the social order; thus, the perspective from their lives can more easily generate fresh and critical analysis.

4.) Women's perspective is from the other side of the 'battle of the sexes'. The implication here is that constructing a story from the perspectives of the lives of those who resist opposition generates less partial and distorted accounts of nature and social relations.

5.) The perspectives from women's everyday activity are scientifically preferable to the perspective available only from the 'ruling' activities of the men in the dominant groups.

6.) Women's perspectives come from mediating ideological dualisms: nature vs. culture. This manifests in the polarity of intellectual work on the one hand and emotional or manual work on the other hand.

7.) Women are working on both sides of the gendered divide and can therefore see the relation between the dominant beliefs and activities and those that arise on the other side (that of the women).

The mentioned differences between men and women are in no way comprehensive, but it point to some valuable reasons why it is important to exercise care in research done on the lives of women.

4.2) The measuring instrument.

 The choice of a method of doing research is much more practical than the value-laden issues of methodology and epistemology, but this does not put it above discussion in literature regarding feminist research. In literature we find some references to and debate on the 'best' method of inquiry to be used within the feminist paradigm. In keeping with the epistemological focus on experience, the way in which information is gathered, also contributes to the production of 'true' knowledge. To neglect the investigation of the advantages and disadvantages of both the methods of inquiry is to leave a gap in the research process and by implication to produce knowledge of lesser value. Before we can start to work with the concepts, it is needed to clearly define what each method entail. Creswell (1994:1-2) defines as follows:

1.)   A qualitative study is defined as an inquiry process of understanding a social or human problem, based on building a complex, holistic picture, formed with words, reporting detailed views of informants, and conducted in a natural setting.
2.)   A quantitative study is an inquiry into a social or human problem, based on testing a theory composed of variables, measured with numbers, and analysed with statistical procedures, in order to determine whether the predictive generalizations of the theory hold true.

 The mode of enquiry for qualitative research, usually is interviewing, while quantitative research focus on the use of surveys. If we had to assess the methods respectively, the qualitative approach seems more suited to the feminist focus on experience and the epistemological base of starting research from the lived reality of women's lives. It differs from the quantitative approach in that the researcher does not start the research with preset ideas based on, often questionable, theory or preset categories that women need to 'fit' their experiences into. Research is started with a 'clean slate' and the researcher attempts to build a comprehensive picture of the research subject, not assuming attributes or omitting relevant information.

 To address the research question posed by this thesis, I am going to use a combination of qualitative and quantitative research and the following discussion will serve as a motivation of why this method was chosen. The decision to include both

modes of research is possibly best explained with reference to both the research problem addressed in this thesis and the objectives identified.

The research problem was defined as follows:

a) how women develop a feminist identity with specific reference to the impact of other markers of identity such as race, motherhood, etc.

b) if and how the negative connotation of the label feminist plays a role in feminist identity development

c) what implications the current nature of feminist identity, as determined by the sample, holds for feminist solidarity

The research problem stemmed from literature on difference and division in the feminist movement, with many references made to the lines dividing women. Along with this there has evolved a trend of unwillingness to take the feminist label, possibly threatening feminist solidarity.

The objectives identified to address this problem, can be summarized as follows:

a) to explore the impact of demographic variables along with the experience of apartheid on the formation of feminist identity.

b) to explore the impact of race as a dividing factor within feminism

c) to explore perceptions of the efficiency of the state as a formal structure to provide for the needs of women

d) to explore how women perceive themselves as a group along with their potential for politically motivated activism

e) to explore the ground level manifestations of the negative connotation of the label "feminist"

f) to explore the degree of existing feminist sentiments even in the absence of self-identification as feminist

g) to determine the applicability of measuring instruments developed outside the South African context to the South African context.

Even though most of the objectives mentioned above have been the object of discussion in literature, both locally and internationally, the literature especially for the South African context is speculative, with very little (if any) field research to back the

sweeping statements made with reference to how women are divided. An added problem is that literature and measuring instruments form outside the South African context are being made applicable to the South African context, without critical appraisal of the feasibility of such a course of action. In the light of this, the research proposed for addressing the problem in this thesis is of an exploratory nature aiming to lay some groundwork as to the nature of the South African feminist movement and the (divisive?) dynamics within the movement and the applicability of internationally produced arguments and measuring instruments on the South African context.

In the light of the earlier discussion focussing on the importance of starting research from the lives of women, the decision to include a quantitative method of enquiry in this thesis did not come easily. The main reason was the unexplored nature of the research question and the need to establish some base for further research on the topic. Reinharz (1992: 80) comments on how statistical research can be useful when seeking information on a perceived problem: "Survey-based prevalence data are useful in demonstrating that a problem is distributed in a particular way throughout a population. This distribution may suggest factors that contribute to the problem, and these factors, in turn, provide hints as to how the problem may be prevented or remedied through particular forms of action." Since no data exists on the problem addressed in this thesis quantitative research can better assist in building an overall picture of women involved in gender and will be more conducive to the formulation of practical solutions to the problem. Reinharz (1992:80) supports this stating that: "Advocates of survey and the gathering of statistical data argue that basing our practical efforts on behalf of women on qualitative research will, by contrast, lead to errors." Another motivation for including this method of enquiry is that it will provide us with some comparison across racial lines, in order to see if racial differences do play a role in division or whether we have to look elsewhere.

The questionnaires were administered to women who already have some degree of feminist identity or consciousness. The sample was drawn from three institutions, namely, the University of Stellenbosch (US), the Provincial Administration of Western Cape (PAWC), GETNET and The Social Change and Assistance Trust (SCAT). The US part of the sample was drawn from the Women's Forum, an internal but independent organization that focuses on the status of women at the university. The PAWC was used because women who work at this organization have been through a gender-training program and

for this reason will be more aware of prevalent gender issues. SCAT and GETNET are a gender training organizations and the women there, through their work does have knowledge of gender specific issues. Unfortunately the four organizations mentioned above did not have a very good response rate and after three waves of questionnaires, I completed the rest of my sample (12 questionnaires out of 50) through snowball sampling using women who have already completed the questionnaire as contacts. The questionnaire was compiled as follows:

Section A of the questionnaire concerns the gathering of demographic data. The type of information asked from the respondent here included such attributes as race, marital status, level of education, income, age, geographic location, language and religious and political affiliation. The function of this section is threefold. The first function is to enable us to build a demographic image of the sample, while the second function is to establish, from the demographic information, the likelihood of the strength of feminist identity that the respondent may have. This measurement is based on the work done by Klein (1984). The relation that the various demographic attributes may have to feminist identity has already been discussed in the section on feminist identity in Chapter 3. Klein's work is not of South African origin and the same findings or assumptions may not hold for the South African context. Whether the same measures can be applied in the South African context, or how the South African case will differ, will become apparent through the measuring of the strength of feminist identity in the other sections of the questionnaire. The last function of the demographic information is to serve as control variables for feminist identity. Both Dolan and Ford (1995) and Cook (1989) cite certain demographic variables as having a positive or negative correlation with feminist identity.

 Section B of the questionnaire measures the existence and strength of a feminist identity, if such an identity is present. The nature of the sample strongly suggests that the respondents will be aware of feminism, but this does not imply a feminist identity. Chapter 3 contains a discussion on the possibility of women only having a feminist consciousness or choosing to become involved in feminist activism, but does not subscribe to a feminist identity as part of their concept of self. Section B includes, on the basis of this, items measuring both feminist identity and feminist consciousness and the relative strength of both.

The first item in Section B measures sense of membership that women share with a variety of groups. Both Conover (1988) and Dolan and Ford (1995) use this item to determine group membership. Dolan and Ford however only used this item along with the demographic control variables to determine feminist identity. Conover, on the contrary, states that self-identification only measures the sense of membership of a group and neglects to measure psychological attachment to the group. Using a feeling thermometer, measuring feelings of 'closeness' to women, the women's movement and feminists respectively, did the measuring of psychological attachment. Conover also includes two further items measuring group consciousness and interdependence amongst women, since these factors were also proven to correspond to feminist identity. Gurin (1985) approaches gender consciousness as a group consciousness and identifies four components of group consciousness, namely collective orientation, individual discontent, legitimacy of disparities and identification. Each of the mentioned components are measured individually and then in the end interpreted as a whole. To a certain extent this is the same approach used by Conover where more than one item is used to measure the same concept, ensuring greater levels of reliability and validity.

The remainder of the items in Section B focus on whether the respondent's subscribe to the values of feminism and whether they are willing to identify with a movement that support the values of feminism. An item measuring the support for women's and not necessarily feminist issues was also included. This section of the questionnaire measures both the group aspect inherent to feminist identity, as well as the respondent's individual opinion of the feminist movement. Both of these dimensions are important, since a respondent may feel an affiliation with other women, but not with the feminist movement as such. They may support the values propagated by feminism, but may still feel that they do not want to be part of the feminist movement. It is important here to make a distinction between personal attachment, the supporting of feminist values and a willingness to be involved in the feminist movement, since all these different 'stages' point to different varieties and strengths of feminist identity. This section then serves to establish the existence of a feminist identity or consciousness and how women feel about the women's movement.

As been discussed already, all women cannot be taken to have the same level of feminist identity and this notion has been touched on briefly in the discussion of Section B of the questionnaire. Section C was based on the work of Fischer et al (2000) concerning the

development of a feminist identity. They refined the stages in the development of feminist identity more and developed a valid and reliable scale to tap into such stages. They drew on the work of Downing and Roush (1985) who outlined five stages in the development of feminist identity. The five stages are defined as follows:

1.) Passive acceptance: characterized by an acceptance of traditional gender roles, the belief that traditional roles are advantageous, and the belief that men are superior to women.

2.) Revelation: preceded by one or several crises that result in a questioning of traditional gender roles, feelings of anger toward men and dualistic thinking. Women in this stage may also feel guilt over ways that they have contributed to their own oppression in the past.

3.) Embeddedness- emanation: marked by feelings of connectedness with other women, cautious interaction with men and the development of a more relativistic perspective.

4.) Synthesis: a positive feminist identity is developed and a 'flexible truce' is made with the world. Women in this stage are able to transcend traditional gender roles and evaluate men on an individual basis.

5.) Active commitment: characterized by a deep commitment to social change and the belief that men are equal to, but not the same as, women.
   (Fischer et al, 2000:15-16)

They then continued to construct a scale measuring the respective stages in the development of feminist identity. The scale they constructed included seven items measuring each stage of development. All the items from the original scale was not included in the questionnaire, but the three items for each stage of development factoring the highest were chosen and then put together randomly in a new scale to avoid a response set. The information gathered here will be used along with the information from Section B to determine the stage of feminist identity development that the respondent is at. Determining the stage of feminist identity development the respondent is at, can assist in explaining why they choose to support values of feminist identity, but is reluctant to become involved in the feminist movement, for instance. It can assist in building an image of the composition of the group of women subscribing to feminism.

The last section of the questionnaire, Section D, measures pathways to feminist identity. It contains a variety of items tapping into a few different dimensions of feminist identity development and how the respondent experiences feminist identity. The first few items in this section serves as a refined measure of some of the demographic items measured in Section A, as proposed by Klein (1984), and focus on religious and political convictions and the respondent's feelings concerning parenting. This items all form links with the possible formation of feminist identity. The next group of items in this section measure the respondent's feelings on the intersection of racial and gendered identities and whether they experience their racial or gendered identities to function in the public or private spheres. The remainder of this section focus on how women experience their gendered identity, especially in relation to society and the constraints that this may imply as well as some items measuring women's feelings towards the feminist movement. In an attempt not to get a response set from the questions measuring the same concept the questions were randomly mixed and put together in one Likert-type scale.

The items measuring the experience of gendered identity, taps in to three possible dimensions. Firstly, women were asked how they perceive the influence of the society on their development of self-concept as a woman and if they experience society to pose constraints to them because of their gender. Secondly they were asked how they feel about their own identity as a women and thirdly how they experience the attitudes of other individuals concerning their gendered identities. The experience of gendered identity, when measured in this manner includes the individual experience, experience in a group and experience of the context. The items measuring women's feelings towards the feminist movement, includes their perceptions on how effective the feminist movement is in working change in their lives, whether women within the feminist movement can work together across barriers of difference and if women feel comfortable with the feminist movement and if not, why they are apprehensive. This information is needed, since women may support the values of feminism, but for some reason feel that the feminist movement as such excludes them in some way or another.

In the last part of Section D women were asked, through a self-identification item, whether they see themselves as feminists or not. This item was only included at this stage, since earlier inclusion may have sensitised the respondents and influenced how they answered the previous questions concerning their self-concept as a woman or their feelings towards the feminist movement. This item is of great importance,

since it serves as a check for the previous items measuring feminist identity and is instrumental in testing the applicability of such items. If the respondent identifies herself to be a feminist, the following items measure how she became aware of the feminist movement, perceptions on the best strategy for solidarity within the feminist movement and whether the history of apartheid and political convictions influence the type of feminist issues that the respondent perceives to be of importance.

The quantitative data was then carefully analyzed through using SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences), laying a grounding for better understanding of women with feminist sentiment.

In keeping with the feminist focus on starting with the experience of women, the questionnaire as a research tool was clearly too blunt to tap into the experience of certain more complex issues. Here it was necessary to personally interview respondents, drawing on the principles of feminist standpoint. Ramazanolgu and Holland (2002:65) identifies five characteristics of feminist standpoint:

1.)   A feminist standpoint explores the relations between knowledge and power.
2.)   A feminist standpoint deconstructs the knowing feminist
3.)   A feminist standpoint is (albeit problematically) grounded in women's experience,

   including emotions and embodiment
4.)   A feminist standpoint has to take account of diversity in women's experiences and

   the interconnecting power relations between women.
5.)   Knowledge from a feminist standpoint is always partial knowledge.

The importance of feminist standpoint lies in the fact that through taking the experience of women as a starting point, researcher will be able to better grasp the reality of social situations and therefore be more practical and successful in addressing the imbalances. Researchers will also be more aware of how their own convictions, ideas and experiences may impact on the production of knowledge and make allowance for this.

Andersen (1993:41) argues that subordinated groups will have unique viewpoints on both their own experiences and that of society as a whole. This implies that identities such as race, class, gender and the intersections thereof are the origins of social knowledge. Reflecting on the South African context, we must keep in mind that women are exposed to inequalities on grounds of gender, race, class, sexual orientation and access to resources, but to name a few. The implication of this is that in doing research we do not only deal with different experiences on the grounds of gender, but with difference on a much wider level. This places the researcher within the South African context in a difficult position since we need to allow for difference across the boundaries of many identities. Feminist standpoint with its focus on experience and the social situation of knowledge turns the research relationship around in that it becomes a two-way process instead of the usual one-way volunteering of knowledge. The scope of the research problem for this thesis was too big to only gather data through interviews in the tradition of standpoint. The quantitative part of the research played an important part in that it enabled me to identify issues in need of further more personal explorations in order to build an even more comprehensive picture of the sample. Such issues were identified in working through the data gathered by the questionnaire and a structured interview was compiled.

The interview situation lent itself to in depth analysis of the following dimensions: 1.) feelings of apprehension toward the feminist movement, 2.) the influence of motherhood and religion on the development of feminist identity, 3.) the experience of apartheid and the influence of such experiences on the development of feminist identity, 4.) experience of race as a dividing factor, or not, 5.) willingness to politically become involved in the gender struggle and 6.) perceptions on access to institutions both formal and informal to assist women in their struggle against gendered oppression.

The interviews were then transcribed and used in discussion to give a more comprehensive explanation of the issues identified through the quantitative research.

The first item in the questionnaire concerned membership to the respective organizations which where targeted for the completion of the questionnaire.

. The four organizations represented are the University of Stellenbosch (US), the Provincial Administration of Western Cape (PAWC), GETNET and SCAT. The reason why I chose these organizations is that all of the women involved have had either gender training or work actively on issues concerning the status of women. The distribution of the data with respects to the four organizations can be seen in graph 1.
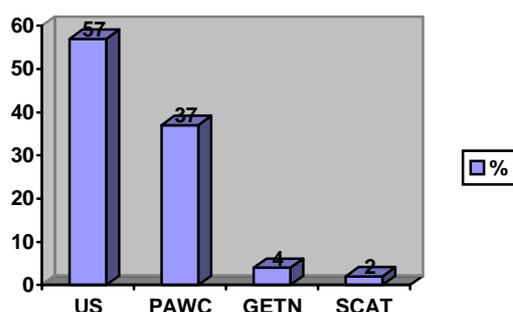
Graph 4.1: Organizations represented

The US is best represented partly because it is a larger organization and the response rate for the women I contacted here was very good. Questionnaires were sent to gender focal persons in all the departments of the PAWC, with the request to distribute it to the women in their departments who have had gender training. The best response was from the Department of Housing, while response from the other departments was limited to a few individuals. Shortly after the completion of the questionnaires I had an interview with the gender focal person for the Department of Housing to try and determine the reason why the response rate form this particular department was so good and was told that during the time I sent out the questionnaires there was a lobby for women to be able to own houses independently of their spouses. As a result of this lobby, gender at that stage was a very salient issue for most of the women working there and this may have contributed to the fact that they deemed it important to partake in research concerning gender issues. SCAT and GETNET are both small organizations, but the response rate here was satisfactory, especially taking into account the workload that these women have to negotiate.

Before the discussion of the data is started, it is needed to clarify one fact. The initial aim of this thesis was to conduct research on women with some degree of feminist identity or

consciousness. To comply with this aim the women who were included in the sample have all been through gender training or work within organizations especially focussing on gender equity, and have by implication an awareness of feminism. However, when asked to identify themselves as feminist or not, some women chose the latter option. In the discussion of the data, I chose to also use the responses of the self-identified, non-feminist women in a comparative manner. This is not to move away from the original aim of only including feminist women, but is an attempt to give the data and the possible ways of developing feminist identity more depth. It must also be kept in mind that the classification of feminist/non-feminist was based on self-identification and does not wholly exclude the possibility of some form of feminist identity or consciousness, especially when kept in mind the reluctance of some women to take the label of feminist.
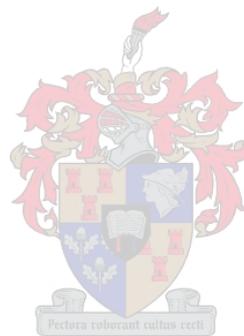
Chapter 5: Analysis of data concerning demographics and pathways to Feminism.

The aspect of the research problem addressed in this chapter is how women develop a feminist identity with specific reference to the impact of other markers of identity such as race, motherhood, etc. and the objective satisfied is as follows:

> a) to explore the impact of demographic variables along with the experience of apartheid as pathways to feminist identity.

This chapter focuses on the demographic pathways to feminist identity, largely resting on the research done by Klein (1984). Since race is such an important marker of identity In the South African context, attention will also be paid to the racial distribution on the demographic variables.[4] Where relevant and where the differences are significant, reference will be made to the impact of race on the research items, or broader issues, under discussion.

 Before starting the discussion of the data, it may be useful, as motivated above to look at the racial distribution of the sample. The racial distribution of the sample can be seen in graph 5.1.

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[4] Some aspects of the research focus on the social climate prior to 1994 and the developments that took place as result thereof. Coupled with this, racial categories are still used today as a measure of affirmative action. For these reasons, it was necessary to include racial categories for later use in the analysis of the data.

Graph 5.1: Racial distribution
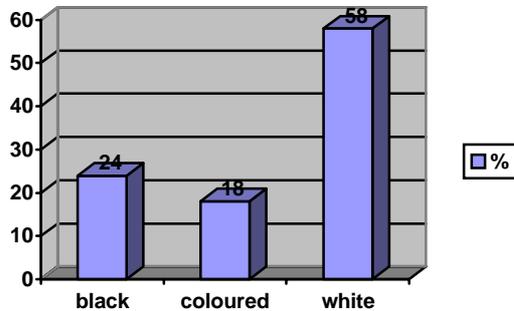
Only three of the four major race groups in South Africa are represented, since no Indian respondent completed the questionnaires. The racial composition of the sample is linked to the organizations included. The biggest proportion of the sample comes from women at the University of Stellenbosch (the reasons for this have already been mentioned), which is still a predominantly white university; hence the bigger number of white respondents.

To simply list the demographic composition of the sample is not necessary for the object of this thesis. Demographic variables and other significant variables as identified by Klein as possible pathways to feminist identity will be the focus of the following discussion. The demographic variables will be cross tabulated with the item "Do you see yourself as a feminist" in order to establish the relationship between the demographic status and the likeliness of this influencing the development of feminist identity. The reasoning behind Klein's pathways to feminist identity have already been discussed in Chapter 3, so this chapter will focus on the reporting of the data with comment where necessary. The discussion of each item will be preceded by a short summary of the relationships proposed by Klein, just to ensure clarity of the interpretation. The discussion will also refer back to racial differences in the pathways, where such significant differences may arise. In discussing the pathways earlier on, I divided the pathways into personal pathways and pathways linked to external factors. This discussion will only apply to the personal pathways.

The first demographic variable to be discussed is marital status. Klein (1984: 106-107) discusses the role of marital status in the development of a feminist identity. The basic assumption here is that women who are not married will be more likely to develop a feminist consciousness or identity. The reasoning behind this has been discussed already. When we look at the data gathered here, this does not seem to hold true for the South African scenario. This is indicated in table 5.1

Table 5.1: Cross tabulation: Feminist identity and marital status.

	Single	Married	Divorced	Co-habitating	Row totals
Feminist	42% (N=13)	39% (N=12)	6% (N=2)	13% (N=4)	100% (N=31)
Non-feminist	44% (N=8)	39% (N=7)	17% (N=3)	0% (N=0)	100% (N=18)
All groups	43% (N=21)	39% (N=19)	10% (N=5)	8% (N=4)	100% (N=49)

Approximately sixty percent of both married and single women identified themselves as feminists, so we can safely say that being married or not does not hold any predictive value for the development of feminist consciousness or identity. This may be the case since women fail to see the relationship between the possible oppressions they may experience in the institution of marriage and the gender oppression they experience from day to day, for instance in their places of work. Here the notion of the personal is political may be applicable in that women are reluctant to take the issues they experience in the private space of their home to the more open and hence political space of discussion and ultimately activism. What is significant however is that all of the women co-habitating identified themselves as feminist. This can be explained by the fact that co-habitation suggests more liberal values, coupled with a less strict adherence to the norms set by traditional society. By implication co-habitating women may also be more open to exploration of their rights as women, and therefore more likely to be exposed to feminist sentiments and to identify with feminist ideas. Race does not play a role in the marital

status of women, except for white women. The results of this relationship can be seen in table 5.2.

Table 5.2: Cross tabulation: Race and marital status.

	Single	Married	Divorced	Co-habitating	Row totals
Black	58% (N=7)	25% (N=3)	17% (N=2)	0% (N=0)	100% (N=12)
Coloured	67% (N=6)	11% (N=1)	11% (N=1)	11% (N=1)	100% (N=9)
White	28% (N=8)	55% (N=16)	7% (N=2)	10% (N=3)	100% (N=29)
All groups	42% (N=21)	40% (N=20)	10% (N=5)	8% (N=4)	100% (N=50)

Women are more or less equally distributed across the four categories of marital status, except for white women, where the greater percentage is married. This may be a result of cultural pressure to be married or it indicates an affiliation with the traditional Christian focus on marriage. It may be useful to examine the relationship between marital status and religious status in this instance.

Table 5.3: Cross tabulation: Marital status and religious status.

	Religious	Not religious	Row totals
Single	95% (N=20)	5% (N=1)	100% (N=21)
Married	85% (N=17)	15% (N=3)	100% (N=20)
Divorced	80% (N=4)	20% (N=1)	100% (N=5)
Co-habitating	75% (N=3)	25% (N=1)	100% (N=4)
All groups	88% (N=44)	12% (N=6)	100% (N=50)
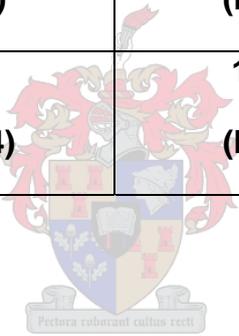
When we look at table 5.3 it becomes clear that being religious does not influence marital status, so the argument that traditional Christian values cause a greater number of white women to be married, is not valid.

Another possible explanation for the distribution of marital status may not lie in race or religious attachment, but in age. Before we can move on from this variable, it is necessary to look at the age distribution of the sample, since older women are more likely to be married. The relationship between age and marital status is summarized in table 5.4.

Table 5.4: Cross tabulation: Marital status and age.

Age	Single	Married	Divorced	Co-habitating	Row Totals
20-30	59% (N=10)	29% (N=5)	0% (N=0)	12% (N=2)	100% (N=17)
31-40	35% (N=6)	41% (N=7)	18% (N=3)	6% (N=1)	100% (N=17)
41-50	22% (N=2)	56% (N=5)	22% (N=2)	0% (N=0)	100% (N=9)
51-60	43% (N=3)	43% (N=3)	0% (N=0)	14% (N=1)	100% (N=7)
All groups	42% (N=21)	40% (N=20)	10% (N=5)	8% (N=4)	100% (N=50)

From table 5.4 it becomes clear that age does play a role in marital status and clear generational differences can be observed as you move from one age group to the next. The age group from 20-30 is the only group where the greater percentage of women is single (fifty nine percent) and the comparative percentages for single women further decreases from 31-40 and from 41-50. The percentage of women who are divorced also increases from no women in there twenties to eighteen percent of women between 31 and 40 and then further from 41 to 50. No woman between the ages of 51 and 60 is divorced. This may be explained by the fact that younger women, through gender consciousness and the structure of society find divorce more acceptable. Also the possibility of alienation from society is fewer than three decades back.

The next demographic variable that Klein (1984:108) refers to as being important for the development of a feminist consciousness or identity is activity in the labour force. All the

women who completed the questionnaire are employed, but only sixty three percent of women identified themselves as feminist. See graph 5.2 underneath.

<u>Graph 5.2</u>: Feminist identity
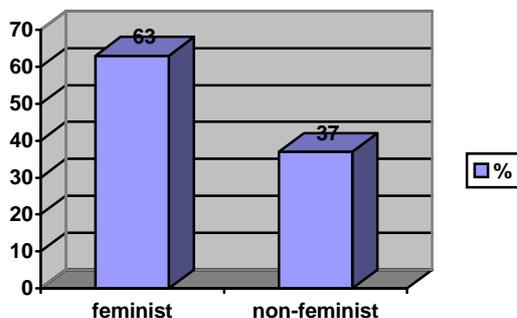
This implies that we cannot use activity in the labour force alone to predict the presence of feminist consciousness or identity. Klein (1984:108) continues to discuss activity in the labour force, by stating that women with a higher occupational status will be more likely to be feminist. In the questionnaire women were asked what their status in their jobs is and this was recoded into three categories, high, middle and low status. This prediction of Klein's seem to hold truth in the South African context, since no category for job status shows significant difference with concern to feminist identity, except for women with a high job status where fifty percent of women identified themselves to be feminist. See table 5.5.

Table 5.5: Cross tabulation: Feminist identity and job status.

	High status	Middle status	Low status	Row totals
Feminist	50% (N=15)	23% (N=7)	27% (N=8)	100% (N=30)
Non-feminist	44% (N=7)	31% (N=5)	25% (N=4)	100% (N=16)
All groups	48% (N=22)	26% (N=12)	26% (N=12)	100% (N=46)

Women with a higher job status are in position of more responsibility and power. This may lead to a stronger sense of self worth and a more critical examination of fairness within the workplace. These attributes make women more likely to be aware of discrimination on grounds of gender and more able to actively resist such discrimination, thereby fostering feminist identity or consciousness.

The influence on activity in the labour force was examined further still. An item concerning the type of work women do was included in the questionnaire. This was an open-ended item asking women what type of work they do. The results from this item were recoded into five categories, namely: 1.) academic, 2.) administrative, 3.) information technology, 4.) finance, 5.) gender work and 6.) other. The following table shows the relationship between type of job and the likelihood of feminist identity or consciousness.

Table 5.6: Cross tabulation: type of job and feminist identity

	Feminist	Non-feminist	Row totals
Academic	**75%** (N=9)	**25%** (N=3)	**100%** (N=12)
Administrative	**72%** (N=13)	**28%** (N=5)	**100%** (N=18)
Info technology	**100%** (N=4)	**0%** (N=0)	**100%** (N=4)
Finance	**33%** (N=1)	**67%** (N=2)	**100%** (N=3)
Gender work (NGO sector)	**67%** (N=2)	**33%** (N=1)	**100%(N=3)**
Other	**14%** (N=1)	**86%** (N=6)	**100%** (N=7)
All groups	**64%** (N=30)	**36%** (N=17)	**100%** (N=47)

 All the categories of jobs show a significantly higher percentage of women identifying themselves as feminist, except for the finance sector and for the other category. Women working in information technology, the academic sector and administration have the highest percentage of self-identified feminists. When we closely look at the nature of these fields the reasons for this may vary from field to field. Information technology is a relatively new field and therefore less plagued by traditional gender stereotyping. It is highly competitive and rests on merit. Women functioning in such a working environment will have a strong sense of self-worth, making it more conducive to the development of feminist identity or consciousness. Women working in the academic field on the other hand are, through the nature of their jobs, critical thinkers. This makes it more likely for such women to become aware of gendered discrimination and to engage with the issue. The

administrative sector is traditionally female dominated. This fosters an environment where women can openly discuss the discrimination that they experience on grounds of gender and through this reinforce their gendered identities.

Only sixty seven percent of women working in gender identified themselves to be feminist. This is an interesting fact, but may be explained by the trend that women are apprehensive about labelling themselves as feminist, even though they work towards gendered equality. In Chapter 1 reference was made to the tendency of women to prefer the label of "gender activist" to that of "feminist". To summarize the argument here: there are a number of women who, while they support the values propagated by traditional feminism, feel that feminism does not cater for the lived reality of their lives. This is a direct consequence of trying to apply first world feminism in a third world context. Such women see themselves as gender activists, since this label has come to entail more than traditional feminism and there is an element of practical change that is of importance to them.

The last two categories are those of finance and other. Only one women (constituting 33% of the sample) working in finance identified themselves to be feminist. This may be a result of the fact that the finance sector was traditionally male dominated and even though women may experience discrimination on grounds of gender, do not feel comfortable to take issue with it. The environment is not conducive to the fostering of feminist consciousness, since women may have very little support from other women or may feel that they will disadvantage themselves by putting gendered issues on the table. The last category, with the lowest score on feminist identity is "other". When we look at the type of jobs grouped together here, most women are self-employed or have such a position at work that they function independently. Some of the jobs these women do included fashion design, independent engineer consultant, law consultant, sports trainer and student. Women working independently may be less exposed to gender discrimination in their workplace. They also have a strong sense of independence and purpose. The absence of other women to discuss gendered issues with may also play a role here. To conclude, it is safe to assume that both job status and the type of job that women do can be used as a predictive variable for feminist identity.

When we look for a relationship between race and job status, the distribution of job status shows some interesting facts. See table 5.7 underneath.

Table 5.7: Cross tabulation: Race and job status

	High status	Middle status	Low status	Row totals
Black	18% (N=2)	27% (N=3)	55% (N=6)	100% (N=11)
Coloured	67% (N=6)	22% (N=2)	11% (N=1)	100% (N=9)
White	56% (N=15)	26% (N=7)	18% (N=5)	100% (N=27)
All groups	49% (N=23)	26% (N=12)	25% (N=12)	100% (N=47)

It seems that white women hold mostly high status jobs, but when we look inside race, the percentage of coloured women is higher. Sixty seven percent of coloured women hold high status jobs, compared to fifty six percent of white women and only eighteen percent of the black sample (N=2). This distribution can be attributed to two facts. First, coloured women were not excluded from education to the same degree as black women under apartheid, so they may have a higher level of education, giving them better access to higher status jobs. If we couple this with the effect of affirmative action, it may explain why the percentage exceeds that of white women.

To see if we can substantiate the above claim concerning education, we can have a deeper look at the level of education of the sample, with regards to race.

Table 5.8: Race and level of education.

	Matric	Diploma	Bachelors	Honours	Masters	Doctorate	Row totals
Black	0% (N=0)	42% (N=5)	33% (N=4)	17% (N=2)	8% (N=1)	0% (N=0)	100% (N=12)
Coloured	11% (N=1)	33% (N=3)	23% (N=2)	0% (N=0)	33% (N=3)	0% (N=0)	100% (N=9)
White	14% (N=4)	10% (N=3)	20% (N=6)	14% (N=4)	21% (N=6)	21% (N=6)	100% (N=29)
All groups	10% (N=5)	22% (N=11)	24% (N=12)	12% (N=6)	20% (N=10)	12% (N=6)	100% (N=50)

All the women included in the sample have a matric or higher level of education. When we narrow it down to having at least a bachelors degree, however, black and coloured women only differ marginally, with fifty eight percent of black women having at least a bachelors degree or higher, compared to fifty five percent of coloured women. The assumption that black women find themselves in lower status jobs due to lower levels of education does not hold true. It seems that access to higher status jobs, rather than education explains the difference in job status here. The white sample is very well educated with a high number of women holding masters and doctorate degrees. This may once again be a result of the questionnaire being distributed with the Women's Forum at the US and not a statement that can be generalized to the South African population as a whole.

Apart from the racial aspects, Klein (1984:110) states that level of education may also have an effect on the likeliness of women developing a feminist identity. The sample proves this, sixty three percent of educated women identify themselves as feminist. When we disaggregate the data further, it becomes clear that higher levels of education definitely play a role in feminist identity development. This only becomes evident when we look at women having an honours degree or higher. Fifty four percent of women identifying

themselves as feminists fall into this category, as opposed to only twenty seven percent of women saying that they are not feminist. The results are summarized in table 5.9.

Table 5.9: Cross tabulation: Feminist identity and level of education.

	Matric	Diploma	Bachelors	Honours	Masters	Doctorate	Row totals
Feminist	10% (N=3)	12% (N=4)	23% (N=7)	13% (N=4)	23% (N=7)	19% (N=6)	100% (N=31)
Non-Feminist	5% (N=1)	39% (N=7)	28% (N=5)	11% (N=2)	17% (N=3)	0% (N=0)	100% (N=18)
All groups	8% (N=4)	22% (N=11)	24% (N=12)	13% (N=6)	20% (N=10)	13% (N=6)	100% (N=49)

According to the sample, it is safe to say that the likeliness of feminist identity will increase as the level of education a woman attains increases.

The next demographic variable that can be indicative of feminist identity is the size of the community that a woman lives in. To summarize, the bigger the size of the community, the more likely women are to develop a feminist identity. The results can be seen in table 5.10.

Table 5.10: Cross tabulation: Feminist identity and community size

	Rural	Small town	Large town	City	Row totals
Feminist	6% (N=2)	26% (N=8)	26% (N=8)	42% (N=13)	100% (N=31)
Non-feminist	6% (N=1)	11% (N=2)	39% (N=7)	44% (N=8)	100% (N=18)
All groups	6% (N=3)	20% (N=10)	31% (N=15)	43% (N=21)	100% (N=49)

Community size does not have an effect on the development of feminist identity, since the distribution is fairly equal. It is needed to note that most of the women who completed the questionnaire are from the city. This may be explained by the development of technology and the notion of the global village. The social climate in the time that Klein did her research was of such a nature that community size still had an effect on the exposure women had to information. Also her research was conducted in the United States of America. The women in this sample do have access to information through the Internet, television and publications, regardless of where they are living, in effect exposing them to information and broadening their frames of reference. This finding may also be a result of the sample, since very few women who completed the questionnaire are from rural areas or small towns. Even though the possibility is strong that community size will not influence the likeliness of feminist identity, this cannot be said with absolute certainty.

This concludes the focus on demographic variables with regard to their predictive value for feminist consciousness or identity development. Even though the research of Klein provides valuable guidelines, it becomes clear from the discussion that the relationships she found between demographic variables and feminist identity development does not apply to the South African context. The variables that have predictive value mainly focus on level of education and going along with this a higher status in the working environment.

We can argue that this is a result of exposure to different ideas and environments. If women find themselves exposed to new ideas that challenge their preconceived notions of society, it fosters a critical assessment, both of personal development and of their environments. This in turn may be conducive to questioning their gendered identity, implicating a certain degree of gender consciousness. The other demographic variable that seems to be predictive of feminist identity is co-habitation. The underlying notion here is a challenging of traditional values and a more liberal attitude.

The next section of the chapter also focuses on predictive variables for feminist identity as defined by Klein. Although these variables are demographic in nature, they determine certain levels of commitment the respondent exercises concerning life choices such as religion, politics and motherhood and the challenges that this may pose in the lived reality of the women's lives. The variables are not merely descriptive on demographic level.

The first variable that Klein mentions here is levels of religious attachment. Her argument in short is that the changing role of women posed serious threats to personal and family relationships based on male dominance and that religion with it's specifications as to the 'role of the woman' can be used to counter this. (Klein, 1984:114) In the earlier discussion in Chapter three, the pitfalls of this argument have been discussed already. In summary, Klein only focuses on the Christian religion and more liberal development within churches is also not taken into account. In chapter three I stated that the rise of secularity implies that fewer women will have religious bonds. This is not true for this sample. See graph 5.3.

<u>Graph 5.3</u>: Religious status
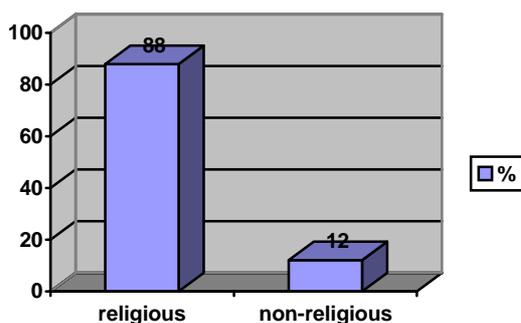
Eighty eight percent of the respondents state that they have a religion. The distribution of women according to type of religion indicates a strong affiliation with the Christian religion.

Graph 5.4: Religious preference

Key: 1.) **English protestant**

2.) **Afrikaans protestant**

3.) **African churches**

4.) **Catholic**

5.) **Pentecostal churches**

6.) **Other**
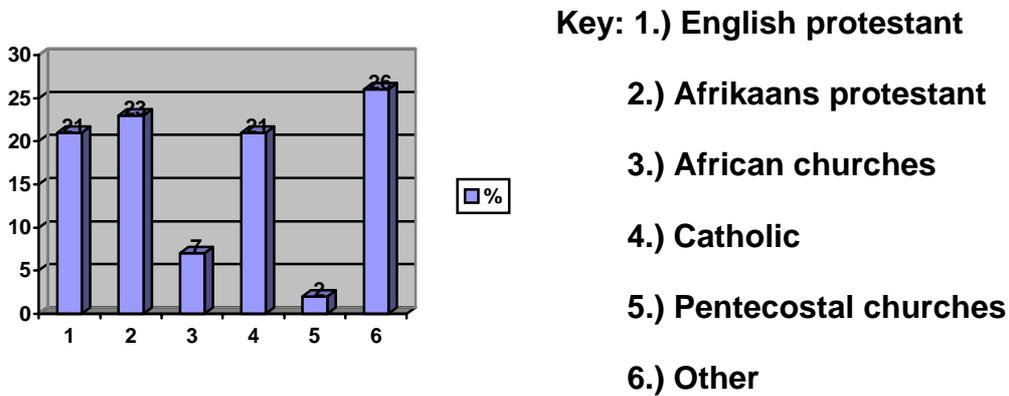
Seventy four percent of women who identify themselves as having a religion belong to Christian churches. In the sample none of the respondents ascribed to Hinduism, Islam or the Jewish religion. The rest of the respondents classified themselves as having 'other' religion, presumably spiritual movements, rather than churches. Traditionally the Christian religion propagates the man as superior to the woman, implying that this will negatively influence the development of a feminist identity. There may be a difference between having a religion and seeing yourself as a religious person, so in the questionnaire this distinction was made.

Graph 5.5: Are you a religious person?
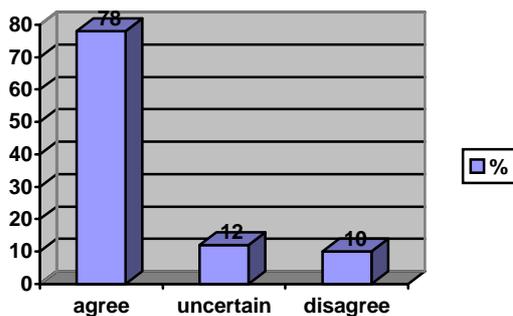
When the item is collapsed into agree, disagree and uncertain, seventy eight percent of women see themselves as 'a religious person', twelve percent is uncertain and only ten percent replied in the negative. The relation of this to the item measuring feminist identity gives the following results. The table below cross tabulates self-identification as feminist with the response to the question "Are you a religious person?"

Table 5.11: Cross tabulation: Feminist identity and religiosity.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Row totals
Feminist	26% (N=8)	45% (N=14)	13% (N=4)	10% (N=3)	6% (N=2)	100% (N=31)
Non-feminist	22% (N=4)	67% (N=12)	11% (N=2)	0% (N=0)	0% (N=0)	100% (N=18)
All groups	25% (N=12)	53% (N=26)	12% (N=6)	6% (N=3)	4% (N=2)	100% (N=49)

The relationship as predicted by Klein is weak at best. Seventy percent of women, who see themselves as religious, also identified themselves as feminist. While eighty eight percent of the women identifying themselves as non-feminist see themselves as religious. The proposed relationship between the variables can be explored further by determining the strength of religious attachment. In the questionnaire this was determined by asking women how often they prayed. See the results in table 5.12

Table 5.12: Cross tabulation: Feminist identity and regularity of prayer.

	Seldom	Often	Several times a week	Once a day or more	Row totals
Feminist	19% (N=5)	50% (N=13)	8% (N=2)	23% (N=6)	100% (N=26)
Non-feminist	6% (N=1)	55% (N=10)	17% (N=3)	22% (N=4)	100% (N=18)
All groups	14% (N=6)	52% (N=23)	11% (N=5)	23% (N=10)	100% (N=44)

If the categories seldom and often are indicative of relatively weaker levels of religious attachment than the categories several times a week and once a day or more, the sample as a whole does not have very high levels of religious attachment, with seventy percent of women who are feminist and sixty percent of women who are not feminist falling in the first category. Even though there is a difference, it is too small to be significant.

According to the data religious status or attachment cannot be used to predict the likeliness of feminist identity, the profile being the same for feminist and non-feminist women. In chapter three I stated that this relationship may be outdated, but I cited the wrong reason. It was expected that feminists will be more secular, but that is not the case. Feminists have attachment to religion, even if it is not very strong, but it seems to have very little influence on the development of feminist identity. This may be the case since women are not critical of the institution of religion and fail to make the connection between the often-patriarchal practices and their feminist identities or consciousness. Another explanation may be that because the levels of religious attachment are weak, women do not adhere so strictly to their traditional religious principles and therefore do not experience religion to have a limiting effect on their gendered identities.

Since the above reasoning is speculative, a question was included in the interviews to determine how women experience the relationship between feminism and religion. Women were asked to respond to the following question: "If you have religious attachment, do you feel that this will influence your development of feminist identity and visa versa? Please explain how." The response to this question was varied, but a definite underlying theme is that of the redefinition of religion, regardless of whether the women defined themselves as religious or not. There is acknowledgement of the possible restrictive attributes of religion, but most women feel that they can individually decide how they choose to practise their religion, even taking issue with what they perceive to be discriminatory or restrictive. Two of the respondents defined themselves as spiritual and not religious, pointing to a move a way from traditional religion. One respondent stated the following: "I felt very agitated because it's very male dominated but now I have made my peace with that. My reason for going to church is for my own spiritual fulfilment and I just go for that." This statement summarizes the general response of women to the question. They do not experience religion as an institution, but rather as a personalized choice, co-existing with the other aspects and identities of their lives such as feminism.
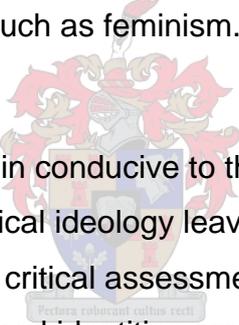
 The next attribute mentioned by Klein conducive to the development of feminist identity, is liberal political ideology. Liberal political ideology leaves people open to exploration of new and different ideas and as a result a critical assessment of the norms of society. This applies to women where their gendered identities are concerned. The cross tabulation for feminist identity and liberal political ideology is summarized in table 5.13. Political ideology was measured by asking respondents how they would describe their personal political convictions. They had to choose between the following categories: 1.) very conservative, 2.) conservative, 3.) in between, 4.) liberal and 5.) very liberal.

Table 5.13: Cross tabulation: Feminist identity and political perspective

	Very conservative	Conservative	In between	Liberal	Very liberal	Row totals
Feminist	3% (N=1)	14% (N=4)	28% (N=8)	45% (N=13)	10% (N=3)	100% (N=29)
Non-feminist	6% (N=1)	11% (N=2)	44% (N=8)	33% (N=6)	6% (N=1)	100% (N=18)
All groups	4% (N=2)	13% (N=6)	34% (N=16)	40% (N=19)	9% (N=4)	100% (N=47)

Here there is a significant difference between feminist and non-feminists. Fifty five percent of women, who see themselves as feminist, are politically liberal as opposed to thirty eight percent of non-feminists. The percentage of women who see themselves as conservative is small and almost even for both feminist and non-feminist. What is interesting here is that forty four percent of women who identify themselves as non-feminist falls into the uncertain category, being neither conservative nor liberal. This may point to a reluctance to commit to a specific political stance. Liberal political attitude can be used as a predictive variable for feminist consciousness, though not a very strong one.

The last attribute that Klein mentions as having an effect on the development of feminist identity is motherhood. The argument here is that being a mother will have a negative influence on feminist identity development. The fallacy of this argument for the current social climate in South Africa has been briefly discussed already, but since motherhood may prove to one of the most important bases for the mobilization of women, it warrants further discussion here**.** Motherhood was traditionally seen as oppressive within the discipline of feminism, since it links women directly to the sphere of the family. This was not true for all schools of feminism, however, and both cultural and maternal feminists saw motherhood as a strong, shared base to mobilize from. Traditionally motherhood implied responsibility for childcare, unpaid labour and restrictions on mobility for women. However, in African contexts motherhood has transcended its oppressive roots and has become a

common base for women to mobilize around, evolving into an attribute implying political strength. Wells (1991 in Fester 1997:46) states care should be taken not to refer to motherism as a manifestation of feminism and that motherism cannot be taken as a measure of political maturity. Fester (1997:46) continues to argue in agreement with Drew (1995 in Fester 1997:46) that the female consciousness (as is inherent in motherhood) may become politically activated into feminist consciousness under certain conditions.

Motherhood, especially in the South African context, is not implicitly linked to feminist consciousness, but may be seen as a favourable circumstance for both development of feminist sympathy or even consciousness. This is the direct opposite of Klein's (1984) prediction that motherhood will have a negative influence on the development of feminist identity. The traditional view of motherhood as linked to the private spheres of women's lives also comes under attack in the new focus on how motherhood may be linked to feminist consciousness. Lister (1997:149) states that: "It is primarily as mothers that these women have transgressed the public-private divide in their struggle to protect their families and communities." Women are progressively moving away from the notion of motherhood and the family being relegated to the private sphere and choose to publicly engage over these areas, taking a political stance to address the difficulties they experience in their (until now) private lives. Keeping this in mind the data on motherhood in South Africa cannot be treated according to the traditional Western feminist view. If we fail to acknowledge this, we open ourselves to the exact misrepresentation that has invited so much critique from Third World feminism.

 Where motherhood is concerned the sample is spilt in half where fifty percent of the women are mothers and fifty percent childless. Motherhood was measured by first determining motherhood status, by asking "Do you have children?" When this is compared to the self-identification of women as feminist the results look as follows:

Table 5.14: Cross tabulation: Feminist identity and motherhood status

	Have children	No children	Row totals
Feminist	45% (N=14)	56% (N=17)	100% (N=31)
Non-feminist	56% (N=10)	45% (N=8)	100% (N=18)
	49% (N=34)	51% (N=25)	100% (N=49)

Motherhood seems to have no effect on the development of feminist identity. The difference between feminists and non-feminists are so marginal that it is not even worth mentioning.

As discussed in Chapter three motherhood is no longer seen as oppressive since it is not forced on women by society and mothers are no longer in a position where they have to 'stay at home' to care for their children. Becoming a mother and the responsibility of caring for children became less restrictive for women, but it must be kept in mind that this holds true for the women included in the sample and can not be generalized to the whole South African population of women. Many women are still struggling with the added responsibilities that motherhood implies. When we look at the racial dimension of motherhood, something interesting comes to light, as summarized in table 5.15.

Table 5.15: Race and motherhood status

	Have children	**No children**	**Row totals**
Black	83% (N=10)	17% (N=2)	100% (N=12)
Coloured	44% (N=4)	56% (N=5)	100% (N=9)
White	38% (N=11)	62% (N=18)	100% (N=29)
All groups	50% (N=25)	50% (N=25)	100% (N=50)

For both white and coloured women more women are childless, if only marginally. On the other hand, only seventeen percent of black women are childless. This issue will be explored later in more detail in the discussion on the information gathered through the interview process.

The questionnaire did not only determine the status where motherhood is concerned, but an item to measure, to a certain extent, the experience of motherhood was also included. Women were asked if parenthood takes up a lot of their time. The reasoning behind this question is to determine whether women experience motherhood as being more difficult than being childless. For this item there is some difference between feminist and non-feminist women.

Table 5.16: Feminist identity and parenting takes a lot of my time

	Agree strongly	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Disagree strongly	Row totals
Feminist	33% (N=5)	60% (N=9)	0% (N=0)	0% (N=0)	7% (N=1)	100% (N=15)
Non-feminist	10% (N=1)	60% (N=6)	20% (N=2)	10% (N=1)	0% (N=0)	100% (N=10)
All groups	24% (N=6)	60% (N=15)	8% (N=2)	4% (N=1)	4% (N=1)	100% (N=25)

All the women who identified themselves as feminist said that motherhood takes up a lot of their time, while only seventy percent of non-feminists feel this way. This may imply that women with feminist identity experience motherhood as more limiting than non-feminist women or simply that they are more active in the labour force and therefore have less time available to spend with their children. The racial dimension is not much different. All white women feel that mothering takes up a lot of their time, while seventy percent of black women feel this way and seventy five percent of coloured women. One aspect that cannot be neglected when discussing motherhood is that of the double burden. Women who are mothers have the responsibility of being active both in the workforce and as mothers. They have to shoulder more responsibility, fulfilling both roles. The awareness of this may also contribute to the development of feminist consciousness, since women start to realize both the difficulty of the situation and that they are experiencing such difficulty because they are women and mothers.

Table 5.17: Cross tabulation: Race and parenting takes a lot of time

	Agree strongly	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Disagree strongly	Row totals
Black	0% (N=0)	70% (N=7)	10% (N=1)	10% (N=1)	10% (N=1)	100% (N=10)
Coloured	0% (N=0)	75% (N=3)	25% (N=1)	0% (N=0)	0% (N=0)	100% (N=4)
White	50% (N=6)	50% (N=6)	0% (N=0)	0% (N=0)	0% (N=0)	100% (N=12)
All groups	24% (N=6)	62% (N=16)	8% (N=2)	3% (N=1)	3% (N=1)	100% (N=26)

In chapter three I have briefly touched on the idea that motherhood may be used as a material base for women to mobilize around, since it is a shared experience for women who have very little in common with regards to the other experiences of their lives. In light of the previous discussion the shared experience of motherhood may have a more powerful unifying force for black mothers than that of other racial group. Even though this is a very superficial measure of the experience of motherhood, the data is encouraging. It points to an area where women share the same environmental stress, regardless of income, job status or race.

In the light of the possibility that motherhood can serve as a base for women to mobilize around and even foster gender consciousness, its warrants more in-depth exploration. In the interviews three questions on motherhood were included, exploring different dimensions of the experience of motherhood. The first question included simply asked whether the respondents perceived motherhood to be a unifying factor for women, just focussing on the experience of motherhood and not presupposing any gender or feminist dimension. All the respondents felt that motherhood can be a unifying factor for women.

What became very clear however is that the women perceived it as one among a variety of factors that may unify women. Three respondents specifically referred to childless women and how not being mothers should not take away any aspect of their identity as women. The response to this question does show differing sentiments across race. White women perceive it to be a more emotional, shared experience. One respondent states: "It's a shared experience, its shared understanding of emotions". Black and coloured women on the other hand are more concerned with the practical issues that come with the choice of motherhood, such as the ability to still be active in the labour force, women as the primary caretakers of children and so forth. For black and coloured women there seem to be a much greater awareness of the possibility of the double burden that motherhood may imply.

The next dimension of motherhood that was explored through the interviews was the potential of motherhood to foster gender or feminist consciousness. The following question was asked:" Can the experience of motherhood lead to increased gender consciousness or even feminist sentiment and if so, how?" The response to this question was tentative, with only one black woman stating that in her opinion the experience of motherhood will not be conducive to feminist consciousness or identity. For the rest of the respondents, the general feeling is that it makes one more aware of the sacrifices you have to make as a woman, being the primary caretaker of your child. It highlights how men and women still have different responsibilities when it comes to taking care of the children. One respondent stated the following: "It can also make you accept your traditional role, but I think it differs depending on experience." Here there is a notion of motherhood limiting the woman, as predicted by Klein, but it is limited to the perception of only one of the respondents.

One of the coloured respondents answered the question as follows: "I have two sons and three daughters and I teach my sons to respect their sisters. To respect their bodies, to respect who they are, as much as I teach my daughters to respect their brothers." This is a very interesting dimension that often goes unnoticed. Women with a feminist consciousness are not limiting their beliefs to themselves and will also raise their children to be aware of gendered differences and to challenge such differences, fostering gender awareness in their children. From the responses to this question, we can deduct that motherhood leads to awareness of gender differences rather than feminist consciousness. However, this is still encouraging since feminist consciousness as a political

consciousness starts with awareness of difference and if that difference is perceived to be detrimental to the individual, it can be activated to encompass a more political dimension.

The last dimension of motherhood included in the interviews links with the item in the questionnaire determining whether motherhood takes up a lot of time. The reasoning behind this item in the questionnaire was to determine whether women experience motherhood as being more difficult than being childless. Here the notion was further expanded through asking women the following: "Do you experience motherhood as restricting your experiences to home life, or is it part of your experience of the public domain?" This question focus specifically on the private/public divide as defined in feminism and how motherhood can influence the mobility of women in comfortably moving between the two domains. With the response to this question, there is a marked difference across race.

The claims I made earlier in this discussion that black women have a greater sense of community and therefore a better support structure, aiding them with the challenges that motherhood may pose, does not hold true when compared to the responses to this question. White women feel that life does change when becoming a mother, but they clearly state that for them it was a choice and therefore they do not see their status as mothers as restrictive, but rather as entering a different stage in their lives. Only one of the coloured respondents is a mother and she does not view motherhood as being restrictive. On the contrary, she views it an experience to share with other women. She states the following: "I think it is good that you can go out there and share your experiences and ideas with other women and mothers." This statement supports the argument that motherhood may bring women together through sharing of experience. Both black respondents viewed motherhood as restrictive. The one respondent states: "It is tough to be a mother. It does limit your movement." And another: "When you are at work you worry about home and when you are at home you worry about work, it does hold you back. It is a double burden." In contradiction to my argument earlier it seems that black women have less of a support system and therefore experience the double burden of taking responsibility both for their jobs and for their children. From the response to this question it is clear that motherhood does influence the mobility of women, but depending on the unique circumstances of women it may be perceived as either a negative or positive

experience. There is a definite element of individual choice making it easier for women to accept the restrictions being a mother may pose.

Even though the pathways to feminist consciousness or identity suggested by Klein (1984) are of great value, they are not exhaustive where the South African context is concerned. The history of apartheid was accompanied by the struggle for freedom from racial discrimination and oppression. The struggle did not only make people aware of discrimination, but also played a unifying role in that it forced people to cohesively challenge the status quo. Women, especially movements such as the ANC Women's League, played a great role in the struggle, but also in the development of the first grassroots feminism and later the entrenchment of institutions concerned with the welfare of women. Given this history, it is possible that for many women involvement in the struggle may have influenced the development of feminist consciousness or identity.

An item was included in the questionnaire in order to explore such a possibility. Towards the end of the questionnaire women were asked to identify themselves as feminist or non-feminist. Only the women who identified themselves as feminist then completed the remainder of the questionnaire. The question measuring the influence of struggle was included in this last part of the questionnaire. As mentioned earlier in the chapter, sixty three percent of women identified themselves to be feminist, while thirty seven percent identified themselves as non-feminist. The following item that is going to be discussed, is only applicable to the sixty three percent of women who identified themselves as feminist.

Women were asked to report their feelings on the statement "The history of apartheid influenced the development of my own personal feminism" using a five point Likert scale. The response to this statement was summarized in graph 5.6.

Graph 5.6: Influence of apartheid on the development of feminism.

Key: 1.) agree strongly

    2.) agree

    3.) uncertain

    4.) disagree

    5.) disagree strongly
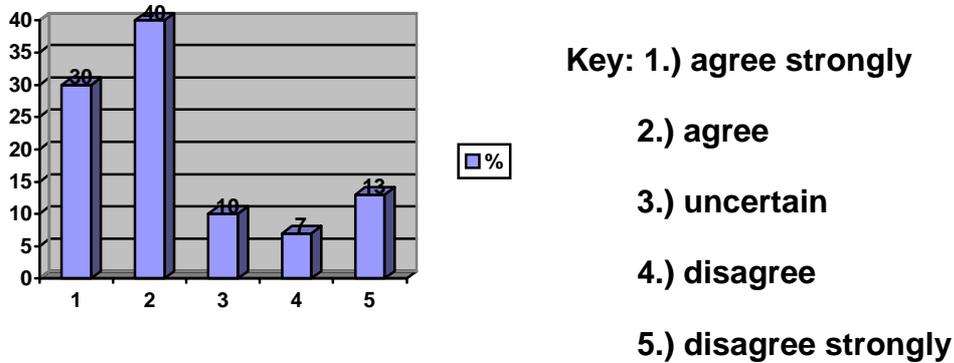
Thirty percent of women agreed strongly with the statement, with forty percent agreeing. In total seventy percent of women who identified themselves to be feminist felt that the history of apartheid influenced the development of their personal feminism. This sheds important light on the development of feminism in South Africa and points to the connectedness of race and gender in the South African context. Even though reasoning about the relationship between the struggle and feminist identity development is speculative in this instance, it is an avenue that warrants exploration. An explanation may be that in confronting racial discrimination, women increasingly became aware of discrimination in other areas of their lives, for instance on a gendered level. Furthermore the social climate during the struggle was one of challenging oppressive practice, making it ideal for the development of a feminist consciousness. Another, more possible, explanation may be that women perceive racial discrimination to be a feminist issue. The reasoning here is that advocating freedom from discrimination for women should include all identities women subscribe to, including race. This may not be true for all racial groups, so in table 5.18 the racial distribution on this item is explored.

Table 5.18: Cross tabulation: Race and the influence of apartheid on

        feminist identity development.

	Agree strongly	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Disagree strongly	Row totals
Black	40% (N=2)	40% (N=2)	0% (N=0)	20% (N=1)	0% (N=0)	100% (N=5)
Coloured	33% (N=2)	50% (N=3)	17% (N=1)	0% (N=0)	0% (N=0)	100% (N=6)
White	26% (N=5)	37% (N=7)	11% (N=2)	5% (N=1)	21% (N=4)	100% (N=19)
All groups	30% (N=9)	40% (N=12)	10% (N=3)	7% (N=2)	13% (N=4)	100% (N=30)
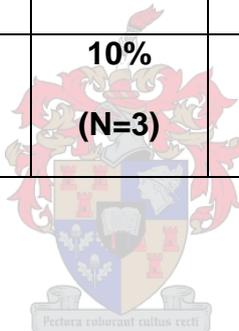
When the categories are collapsed into agree, uncertain and disagree, eighty eight percent of coloured women feel that the history of apartheid influenced the development of their feminist identity, eighty percent of black women feel this way and sixty three percent of white women. Even though the percentages are high for all race groups, coloured and black women have significantly higher scores than white women. Under apartheid black and coloured women were the victims of discrimination and as a result were forced to organize collectively against such discrimination. Even though many white women were involved in the struggle, they were not being discriminated against on the same level as black and coloured women. As argued above, apart from the fact that discrimination on racial level made women more aware of discriminations on other levels, the feminist movement may have been perceived by women to aid them in their racial struggle. Or in the very least to provide a space where they, as women, could talk about the discrimination they were experiencing, also on a racial level, laying the groundwork for the

development of feminist consciousness or identity. In the South African context it is safe to say that involvement in or experience of the struggle can also be a pathway to feminist identity, but more so for coloured and black women than for white women.

The importance of the history of apartheid has been discussed at length in this thesis. For this reason it was needed to include some questions on the experience of apartheid in the interview stage of the research in order to build a more comprehensive picture of how the feminist identity development of women was influenced by this experience. The first question posed to women was whether they were involved in the struggle against apartheid. If they answered yes the next question was whether it contributed to their feminist identity development and if so, how?

All women said that they were involved in the struggle, except for one white respondent and one coloured respondent. Before I continue this discussion it is needed to briefly look at the responses of these two women. The white respondent stated that she was out of the country in her high school years and only really came face to face with the consequences of apartheid as she came back to study at the University of Stellenbosch. Still at this stage she did not get involved and summarizes her experience as follows: "It's easy enough to say that you were not exposed or that you don't know, but I do think that we were particularly predisposed to not wanting to see. That I feel personally ashamed about and I would not want to do that again. It\s almost the sin of omission, not wanting to see, not wanting to notice." She continued to state that because of her not being involved this did not influence her feminist identity development. The coloured respondent said hat she grew up in a protected environment and that it "..wasn't advisable to become involved." Even in the light of this she still feels that the environment that apartheid created did influence her feminist identity development. She feels however that her race had to take precedence over her gender. se states the following: "You know, first you're a human being, then you're the colour that you are and then your gender comes into play. So it was important for us to get our liberation first and then after that you can look at other things such as gender equality." This statement clearly underlines he fact that for some women gender took a back seat to race during the struggle years.

The rest of the respondents were all involved in the struggle. While two of the respondents only answered yes to the question. One coloured and one black respondent elaborated on how they were involved and how this influenced them. The coloured respondent tells of burning tyres and being shot with rubber bullets, but continues to say that she realizes that it was the spirit of the times and that she feels that as a nation we have moved past that and are doing well in healing the past. The black respondent says that she struggled as a teenager with nightmares about police barging into her house and only as an adult did she come to realize that the nightmares were a result of the violent circumstances in her neighbourhood at the time. Stories such as these points anew to how traumatic apartheid must have been for many women and how apartheid was experienced in different ways.

The issue was further explored in asking respondents how their involvement in the struggle contributed to their feminist identity development. One theme that emerges prominently is that the racial injustices observed during the struggle made women more aware of other injustices, such as injustice on a gender level. The notion is one of awareness of discrimination on racial level and then extending this awareness to a gendered level. Even though women share this same sentiment, their pathways to the realization differ across race. The coloured respondent specifically mentions that during the struggle she became very aware of men always being in top positions and that this urged her to develop a gendered dimension in her struggle against discrimination. The black respondents focussed more on the racial dimension and state that they had to deal with racial discrimination and from the base of that confronted gender discrimination. The white respondent shares a somewhat different experience in stating that gender and race are very connected, pointing to a perception of racial and gendered discrimination on a more equal level, as opposed to seeing racial discrimination as the more prevalent injustice. She continues to state that she was, during this time, exposed to many women in power and leadership fighting gendered oppression, in direct contrast to the coloured respondent mentioning the presence of men in positions of power. Here it becomes clear that even though women walked away from the experience of apartheid with similar sentiment that they took different roads to arrive at the convictions they share today.

How women experienced apartheid was further explored through asking them whether they can identify specific aspects of apartheid that influenced their feminist identity development. Here there is once more a certain degree of racial difference. Both white

respondents said that they can not single out any specific aspect of apartheid that influenced their feminist identity development, possibly pointing to a less direct experience of personal injustice during the apartheid years. The coloured respondents both mention how it influenced them personally, rather than any specific aspect. The one respondent said: "it is and integral part of who I am… it moulded me into the person that I am". The other respondent mentions that for her it was a realization of gendered difference and that women have a different needs and a different role to play. It seems that their feminist identity was influenced by the questioning of the dynamics that marked apartheid rather than specific hardships or experiences.

Both black respondents reported a more politicized, issue-driven experience of the development of their feminist identity during apartheid. The one respondents specifically mentions the inability of married black women to get a bank account or own a home and states that black women were dominated first by apartheid and then by men. She continues to say the following: "I could not just get involved in the fight for women's rights because we were still struggling to get their rightful place". The other respondent said that her feminist identity development was only really activated during the last years of apartheid and then more fully during the post-apartheid years. She summarizes her experience as follows: "During the preparations for the elections my gendered identity was heightened when we looked at the statistics of men vs. women. I think then I knew that women could carry more power than men." Even though there is a definite acknowledgement of gender discrimination, both women saw the racial struggle as primary and it served as a platform to further their gendered interests. The racial difference with regards to this question points to the different levels of intensity of experience that separated women during the apartheid years. It underlines the fact that even though women are working together now to eradicate gendered discrimination their motivations at the onset of the process were different.

The main aim of this chapter was to determine to some extent the applicability of Klein's pathways to feminist identity within the South African context. Even though results varied, it is safe to say that the pathways as mentioned by Klein cannot blindly be applied to women in the South African context. No only are some of the pathways not applicable, but where pathways are applicable, it is due to different reasons than those mentioned by Klein. The results of the research as discussed here clearly point to a need for specifity in

research and the fostering of an indigenous feminism for the South African context, with attention paid to history and difference of experience.
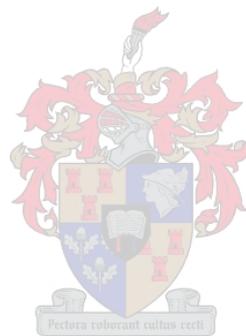
Chapter 6: Analysis of data concerning the racial dynamics within feminism.

In this chapter, race as a very important concept within the South African context, is thoroughly explored and the objective satisfied is as follows:

a) to explore the impact of race as a dividing factor within feminism

One of the main focal points of this thesis is the racial dynamic within the women's movement. Race has become a dividing factor both on international level and in the South African context. The debates that raged both in journals and at conferences have been referred to already in the discussion on literature. Race, especially in the South African context, is a loaded concept with a myriad of dynamics, seen and unseen, at play. Despite paying attention to race and trying to incorporate women from all races, the women's movement in South Africa has failed in the past to successfully negotiate the racial issue. Efforts that have been made go as far back as the formation of The Federation of South African Women, followed by a variety of other coalitions and culminating in the Women's National Coalition shortly before the 1994 liberation election. Taking into account all the efforts that have been made by women over the years, the problem does not seem to be an unwillingness to address the situation of women in South Africa. The question at hand is why women involved in such organizations cannot sustain the ideological ideals that brought them together in the first place?

The answer to this question may be twofold. Firstly women in positions of power and privilege attempted to use Western feminism as a blueprint without paying sufficient attention to the South African dynamics. Second women did not realize the importance of racial identity and the difference in experience that this implies. They tried to start working on national issues without laying the groundwork for reconciliation within their own movement, thinking that shared gendered identity will override differing racial identities. This, however, was not the case, as becomes clear with the disintegration of such coalitions and the debates the have since originated around issues of race and representation.

Three issues in this thesis seem to be of importance when the racial dimension within the feminist movement is closely scrutinized. First there is the issue of racial identity and how the experience of this identity differs for women involved in the feminist movement. The next issue centres on the ability of women to work together and achieve results concerning the status of women, despite their experienced differences. The third issue concerns the attitude of women towards the feminist movement and where feelings of apprehension exist, the reasons for such feelings.

The following discussion of the data collected will focus on exactly these issues. To accomplish this it is necessary to focus on the self-selected racial identities of women, in order to see how women differ and if indeed they do differ. If difference on these issues is not the problem, it is perhaps necessary to look outside of the South African feminist movement for the reasons of dissent.

The first issue focus on how women experience their own racial identity. The following question was posed to women in the questionnaire: "People ascribe to different identities in life, which all co-exist at the same time. If you had to prioritise would you identify race or gender as the more important identity, or do you see identity as context bound?" The results of this can be seen in graph 6.1.

Graph 6.1: Importance of different identities
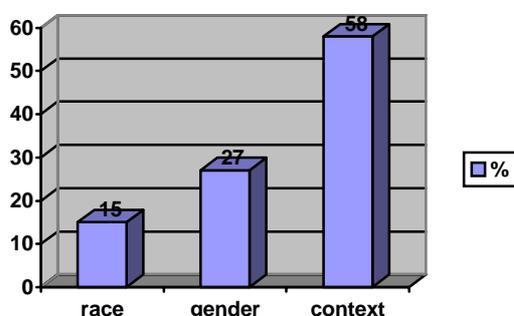
Only fifteen percent of women said that race was their most important identity, compared to twenty seven percent of women who chose gender. What is interesting is that the biggest number of women sees their racial and gendered identities to shift according to

context. This confirms that identity is not static. The importance of context and the influence it can have on individual experience have been discussed. Women who see their racial identity as most important makes up the smallest percentage of the sample seems encouraging at first. This is the case since race then looses some of its dividing potential where gendered issues are concerned. This is cancelled, however, if we look at the amount of women whose identity will shift according to context. In the preceding chapters attention has been paid to women prioritising different identities dependant in the social context they were confronted with. The basic argument here is that women will find their racial identity to be more salient in one context, for example their place of work, and their gendered identity to take precedence in another context, for example discussing childcare options with their peers.

In Chapter three on identity formation, shifting identity was discussed. Moving from one social context to the next can be stressful for the individual. They then adopt different identities to make it easier to negotiate the specific situation. There is also an absence of clear boundaries or confusion resulting from conflicting boundaries. This does not only create tension within the individual, but also tension between the individual and the environment. This may be the case for women working in gender across racial barriers. Their main concern is gender, proved by their involvement in the women's movement. They perceive themselves to be in a 'gendered' context. If racial issues confront them however, the racial identity becomes salient, bringing with it the power of division. This is a very difficult scenario to deal with.

Earlier in this thesis the notion of 'safe spaces' was discussed where women can work within their racial groups and find solutions to problems before going into the multi-racial environment. The danger of renewed segregation does exist with this option however. The better option seem to be a fostering of an awareness that race is a dividing issue and that it should be treated with care and respect whenever it arises. What is encouraging though is that there are a percentage of women, although not big that sees their gendered identity as the most important. This implies that their gendered identity is more coherently developed with a better sense of boundaries.

When race is cross tabulated with the self-reported importance of racial versus gendered identity, we see the following results:

Table 6.1: Cross tabulation: Race and identity importance

	Race	Gender	Context bound	Row totals
Black	41% (N=5)	25% (N=3)	34% (N=4)	100% (N=12)
Coloured	0% (N=0)	44% (N=4)	56% (N=5)	100% (N=9)
White	7% (N=2)	22% (N=6)	71% (N=19)	100% (N=27)
All groups	15% (N=7)	27% (N=13)	58% (N=28)	100% (N=48)
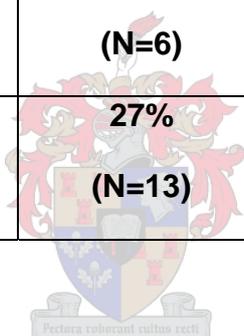
There is a definite racial difference concerning this item. Forty one percent of black women see their racial identity as most important, which makes them the group with the strongest racial identity. One explanation of the salience of their racial identity is that women were oppressed on grounds of this specific identity, more than on grounds of other identities such as gender. Therefore they consider it to be of greater importance and will not easily compromise it. No coloured women value their racial identity the most, possibly because they were not totally excluded under apartheid and did not have to fight to the same extent as black women for racial inclusion. Only seven percent of white women value their racial identity the most. White and coloured women both scored highest on their identities being context-bound. They feel that as they move from one social context to the next, they will sometimes experience their racial identity to be most important and sometimes their gendered identity. No racial group as a whole have gendered identity as their most salient identity.

When all the race groups are taken as a whole, one can see how interaction may be difficult. Seventy percent of white women and fifty five percent of coloured women will shift their identity according to context and black women with a high racial saliency will advocate the racial side of gendered issues, drawing on the racial identities of the other groups, effectively making race the issue of debate and not gender.

The next question that was asked to measure the experience of racial identity is whether women experience their racial identities to be of a public or private nature. The feminist notion of the public versus the private sphere in the lives of women has been discussed earlier in this thesis. In summary some issues or identities are relegated to the private sphere of the lives of women not engaging such issues politically while other issues are engaged within the public sphere added political value to these issues. The same notion applies to this question, basically whether women will take a political stance concerning their identities (public) or experience their identities to be personal, non-political matter (private). The result is a follows:

Graph 6.2: Distribution of racial identity
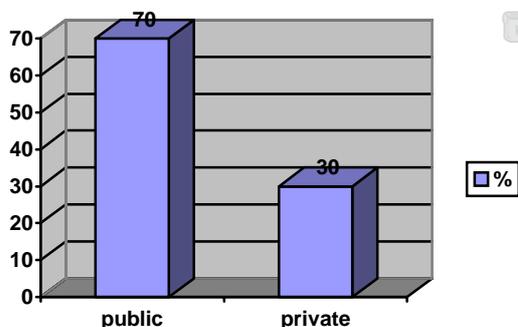
Seventy percent of women perceived their racial identity to be public, compared to only thirty percent who perceived it to be private. This statistic is not surprising in the South African context. With the liberation from apartheid, individuals found themselves in an environment where race became a very salient identity and where they had to question, to differing degrees, what their racial identities meant to them personally. Race was no longer a concept to be hidden but to be taken out in the open and scrutinized, so it is to be expected that the respondents will feel their racial identity to be public. For the resolving of racial issues within the women's movement, this is a positive point. It implies that women

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are willing to speak about their race and publicly engage with their racial identities. It is not something they perceive to be private and therefore feel uncomfortable to discuss. The only difficult area is that this openness should not be accompanied by antagonism. This links up with the feminist notion of the private /public divide. The basic notion here is that women experience some issues in the private sphere of their lives, such as in the home or personal live. Opposite to this women choose to take some issues into the public arena of discussion and in doing so act on such issues to establish change where they perceive change to be needed. The fact that women see racial identity as more public is therefore also positive when seen in the light of the feminist private/public divide.

The racial division on this item is summarized in table 6.2.

Table 6.2: Cross tabulation: Race and nature of racial identity.
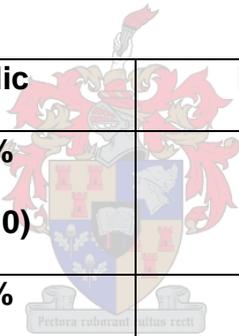
	Public	Private	Row totals
Black	83% (N=10)	17% (N=2)	100% (N=12)
Coloured	75% (N=6)	25% (N=2)	100% (N=8)
White	61% (N=16)	39% (N=10)	100% (N=26)
All groups	70% (N=32)	30% (N=14)	100% (N=46)

Even though all of the racial groups score the highest on their racial identity as being public, the difference is more pronounced for black and coloured women. Eighty three percent of black women see their racial identity as public, seventy five percent of coloureds and only sixty one percent of white women. Exclusion on grounds of race made race a more salient identity for non-white women. The struggle for recognition of rights on

grounds of race took place in the public arena and therefore it is to be expected that women will perceive their racial identities to be of a public nature. Non-white women will, to a certain degree, continue on this path when confronted with racial issues, since in their experience this is the best strategy to bring about change. The implications of this for the feminist movement are both positive and negative. On the positive side this implicates that racial issues will be engaged with as they arise and will not become a quiet source of resentment complicating interaction. On the other side however, gendered issues may be sacrificed for the racial debate. Women may become stuck on racial issues and on finding ways to resolve this while important gendered concerns may be pushed to the back burner. As discussed above, the best strategy to combat this is the creation of awareness. Women need to become aware of the dangers of making the feminist movement a racial rather than a gendered space. Even though this is of importance for ensuring cohesion in the movement, this task is not so simplistic. Gendered and racial identities are very seldom two separate and distinct identities and can intersect. The concept of intersecting identities is very difficult to accurately measure on an empirical level. Even though women may ascribe to more than one identity simultaneously, it is becomes a case of one identity being salient and on the foreground. Racial identity will then become a foreground identity in a gendered space.

The second issue that is of importance with regards to the racial dimension in the feminist movement is that of women working together across experienced differences. The questionnaire measured two dimensions of women working together across difference. The first dimension focuses specifically on women working across racial barriers, while the second dimension moves away from looking purely at race and focus on women working together across barriers created by demographics.

Women were asked "Do you feel more comfortable discussing gendered issues within your racial group, across racial barriers or doesn't it matter?" The results for this question look as follows:

Graph 6.3: Discussion of gendered issues across race
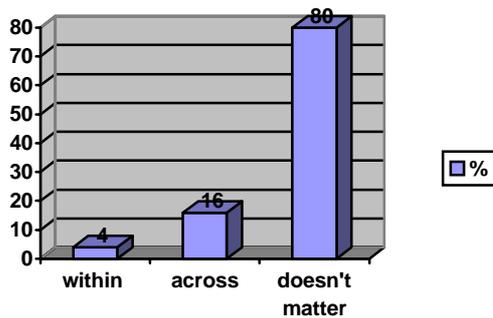
An overwhelming part of the sample (eighty percent) said that it doesn't matter whether gendered issues are discussed within race or across racial barriers, so according to the sample this does not seem to be a problem for women. What is significant in the results of this question is that when we look at the remainder of the sample, sixteen percent of women prefer to discuss gendered issues across race and only four percent prefers to keep it within their racial groups. This statistic is very encouraging for the feminist movement, since it implies that a small number of women are starting to see the importance of being able to talk about gender across race. The reason why women would prefer this option is not clear, but it may be that women are starting to realize that cross-racial discussion may yield new answers to problems that they were not able to solve within race. Before this is further discussed, it may be useful to look at the racial distribution of this question.

Table 6.3: **Cross tabulation: Race and discussion of gender across**

racial barriers.

	Within race	Across race	Doesn't matter	Row totals
Black	8% (N=1)	8% (N=1)	84% (N=10)	100% (N=12)
Coloured	0% (N=0)	33% (N=3)	67% (N=6)	100% (N=9)
White	3% (N=1)	14% (N=4)	83% (N=24)	100% (N=29)
All groups	4% (N=2)	16% (N=8)	80% (N=40)	100% (N=50)

For all race groups the biggest percentage of women say that it doesn't matter whether they discuss gender across or within race. When we look at the small percentage of women who did pick one of the two spaces, black women score the highest on staying within their race group. This may be indicative of feelings of apprehension towards the (multi-racial?) women's movement, possibly due to past misrepresentation or because they feel that the women's movement are not catering for their specific needs. This issue will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter. Coloured women score the highest in their willingness to discuss gendered issues across race, followed by white women with black women scoring the lowest. This may be a result of the fact that they feel less threatened on grounds of their race, due to less exclusion in the past. Even though these statistics are interesting, most women do not perceive the space in which gendered issues are discussed to be a problematic issue. This is encouraging since even though women see their racial identities as important, they are willing to step out of the safe spaces of race to engage with gender.

The next statement that women had to respond to with reference to working together across racial barriers was: "Black and white women in South Africa can work together." The measure was taken on a five point Likert scale, but for the purpose of this analysis, the categories were collapsed into agree, uncertain and disagree.

Graph 6.4: Working together across race.
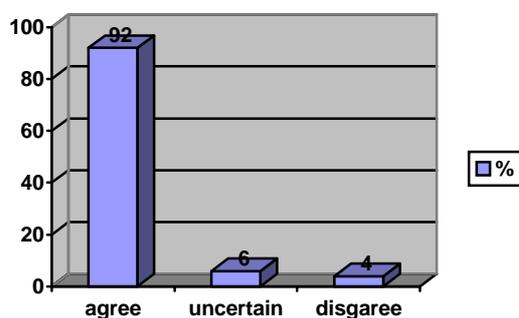
According to the results of this question working together across racial barriers poses no problem whatsoever to women. Ninety two percent of women agreed that black and white women can work together. For interest's sake, the racial breakdown of this question can be seen below. Here the categories were not collapsed in order to get a better depiction of the feelings of women across race and to see if any differences may arise.

Table 6.4: **Cross tabulation: Race and working together across race.**

	Agree strongly	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Row totals
Black	42% (N=5)	50% (N=6)	8% (N=1)	0% (N=0)	100% (N=12)
Coloured	44% (N=4)	56% (N=5)	0% (N=0)	0% (N=0)	100% (N=9)
White	59% (N=17)	31% (N=9)	7% (N=2)	3% (N=1)	100% (N=29)
All groups	52% (N=26)	40% (N=20)	6% (N=3)	2% (N=1)	100% (N=50)

Some relevant information can be gained from this question, but the significance dwindles in the face of the overwhelming majority of women who saw no problem in working across race. No women from any racial group disagreed strongly with this statement, pointing to a complete lack of strongly motivated feelings not to work across race. The only racial group that foresaw a problem was white women; even tough this was a very low three percent.

In light of the above two questions, it seem puzzling that the feminist movement is plagued by division. The profile of this sample is one of women with identities that can shift between race and gender and who see no problems in working across racial barriers. This leads us to believe that division in the movement is not on grounds of race, but that we have to look elsewhere for the origins of conflict, possibly towards issues of power and representation. Race may have become the scapegoat since in the past the power to represent was assigned along racial lines. A factor that needs to be taken into account here however is the nature of the sample as well as the post 1994 context. As mentioned before the sample consists of a small group educated women with a gender consciousness.

This implies exposure to gendered issues and also a more liberal attitude where race is concerned, since they realize the importance of eradication of discrimination be it on grounds of gender or race. They may be more prone to realize the importance of working with other women regardless of race, but this may not be true for the wider population of women, however. Added to this we have the post 1994 context. Women have been liberated from racial oppression and function in a society where reconciliation is advocated. If the nature of the sample and the social context are coupled, this may explain the fact that the sample does not portray a population where race is seen as problematic.

Even though the data gathered on this issue seems very encouraging, it does not change the fact that in literature there can be identified a certain level of antagonism across race. For this reason it was important to explore this issue further during the interview stage of the research. The respondents were asked whether they feel that race is a dividing factor for women concerning gendered issues. The responses to this question varied, but the underlying theme seems to be one not of antagonistic division, but definitely of an acknowledgement of difference across race. The response of one woman is as follows: "I suppose what is difficult is the fact that experiences may be very different. So the issues that you would want to address would be very different." The same notion is echoed in the following: "Race is still there, you will still find that you have different experiences." Even though there is this acknowledgement of difference, women do not necessarily see this as divisive. One respondent state: "I can't say it divides us as women, we still support each other. We still are there listening and talking to each other." And another: "One way or the other we have both experienced some form of oppression as women, so we have something in common." There is also a notion of racial identity being so inherent to the concept of self that it is difficult to engage across race without acknowledging racial difference. The one respondent summarizes it as follows: "You know in your mind that it (race) is not really important, but it stays a part of who you are." With regards to this question there are no different responses across race. Women realise they are different, but more important than this do not feel that these differences are problematic. The response to this question underlines the findings of the questionnaire in that women do not see race as a problem in working together. What is illuminating about the responses in the interviews, however, is that there is a notion of accepted differences, making it easier to negotiate issues that may arise as a result of different racial experiences.

As mentioned before, there is another dimension of women being able to work across race. This dimension focuses on working across lines of demographic difference. The three areas that were tested here were difference in level of education, difference in geographical location and difference in class.

The statement that was put to women was: "It is not possible for educated and uneducated women to work together." Women were asked whether they agree or disagree with this statement.

Graph 6.5: Education as barrier in working together.
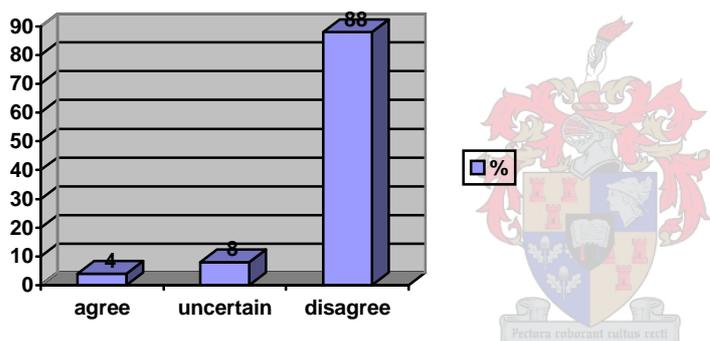
Difference in level of education is definitely not a problem for women when working with other women. Eighty eight percent of women disagree with this statement. The racial distribution is as follows:

Table 6.5: **Cross tabulation: Race and level of education as barrier.**

	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Row totals
Black	0% (N=0)	25% (N=3)	75% (N=9)	100% (N=12)
Coloured	0% (N=0)	0% (N=0)	100% (N=9)	100% (N=9)
White	7% (N=2)	3% (N=1)	90% (N=26)	100% (N=29)
All groups	4% (N=2)	8% (N=4)	88% (N=44)	100% (N=50)

The only race group to perceive level of education to be a problem when working together is white women, but the percentage is so small that it is negligible. Twenty five percent of black women are uncertain about this statement. This may point to a willingness to work together, but also to doubts on whether it will be viable. In all differing levels of education is in no way a point of division for women.

The next aspect that was addressed was geographical location. Women had to agree or disagree with the following statement: "It should not be a problem for urban and rural women to work together."

Graph 6.6: Geographic location as barrier to working together.
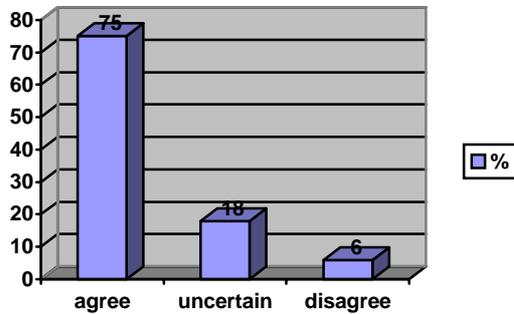
Seventy five percent of women perceive this not to be a problem, with a small six percent saying it may be. Eighteen percent of women are uncertain on this statement. The racial distribution is as follows:

Table 6.6: Cross tabulation: Race and geographic location a barrier.

	Agree	**Uncertain**	**Disagree**	**Row totals**
Black	75% (N=9)	16% (N=2)	9% (N=1)	100% (N=12)
Coloured	89% (N=8)	11% (N=1)	0% (N=0)	100% (N=9)
White	71% (N=20)	21% (N=6)	8% (N=2)	100% (N=28)
All groups	75% (N=37)	18% (N=9)	6% (N=3)	100% (N=49)

Geographic location seems not to be a barrier in working together for women. All racial groups score high on this question.

The next attribute that was tested, was working together across difference in class. The statement that women were asked to agree or disagree with was: "a woman's class will not hamper her ability to work with other women." Women scored as follows:

Graph 6.7: Class as barrier to working together.
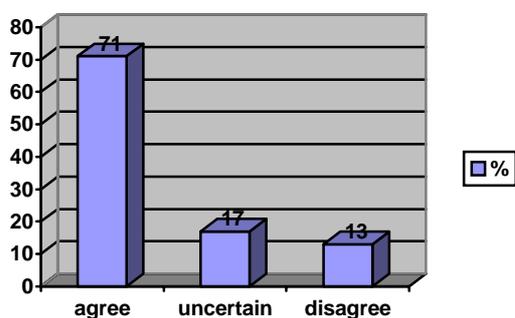
Even though women still agreed with this statement with seventy percent, this question has the highest number of respondents who think that this specific demographic attribute may affect the ability of women to work together. This may be the case since more than difference in education or geographic location women perceive difference in class to imply difference in opinion. This may also be a result of the fact that class was in the past linked to race and therefore seems to be a more loaded in meaning than the other two demographic variables. The racial distribution of response to this statement looks as follows:

Table 6.7: **Cross tabulation: Race and class as barrier.**

	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Row totals
Black	91% (N=10)	0% (N=0)	9% (N=1)	100% (N=11)
Coloured	78% (N=7)	12% (N=2)	0% (N=0)	100% (N=9)
White	60% (N=17)	21% (N=6)	19% (N=5)	100% (N=28)
All groups	70% (N=34)	17% (N=8)	13% (N=6)	100% (N=48)

When we look at the racial distribution on response to this statement the difference in race is much more pronounced than for the previous two demographic attributes. Black women, as a group does not perceive class to be a problem, with ninety one percent agreeing with the statement. Twenty one percent of coloured women are uncertain, but not one coloured women felt that class will hamper the ability of women to work together. White women, however, have relatively high scores on both disagreeing with the statement and being uncertain. Even though the majority of white women (sixty percent) did agree that class will not be an obstacle in working together, the remaining forty percent is significant. White women may be apprehensive of class especially since it is a loaded concept with an apartheid legacy. During apartheid the white population was economically favoured, creating class divisions along racial lines. It is interesting, that class is seen as more problematic than education or geographic location, even though all of the above implies difference.

Difference in class may be perceived by white women as more difficult to overcome than difference in education or geographic location. Both education and geographic location

implies a type of difference that can be remedied by exposure, either to varied geographic locations or institutions of education. Difference in class however is not so easily changed. As mentioned already a skewed class system developed along racial lines during the apartheid years. Black and to a certain extent coloured people were systematically denied access to resources, institutions of higher education and other means of self-empowerment, resulting in a situation where they could not advance to a higher standard of living or a higher class. Even though the discriminatory system is no longer in place, the socio-economic results will take a long time to remedy. Upliftment of previously disadvantaged communities is a slow process involving many aspects, such as education, availability of funds, creation of infrastructure and many more. Because class structure is in essence due to economic conditions, it may be changed, but this remains a very difficult task at present. This perceived rigidity of class as a demographic attribute may explain the different response to this statement.

Since the items include in the questionnaire were not open-ended, we can not assume that the demographic variables mentioned are the only aspects that may make it difficult for women to work together. To counter this, the following question was included in the interview: "In the absence of race can you think of any other factors that divide women?" The responses to this question were so varied that each warrants a short discussion, since it may point to previously unidentified factors that have the potential to divide women. Two out of the six respondents said that they do not think that there are other factors dividing women. The first respondent identified anger as a factor that may divide women. She states that some women are very angry about the past and the injustices that this implies and that it may create a barrier between women since the anger takes precedence over any other factor that may bring women together. This became evident in the literature and women must guard against feelings of anger clouding perceptions and hampering the successful negotiation of current gender challenges. It is useful to keep in mind that this respondent is white and that she may have experienced anger in a gendered context and therefore perceive it to be a possible dividing factor.

The next respondent specifically mentioned economic and educational status as possible barriers that may divide women. She states that if you are working with women from a different economic or educational background, it is necessary to keep the differences in mind in order to prevent misunderstanding and better understand difference in perception.

When we take into account that it was essentially apartheid that created economic and educational difference through selective access to resources, this response is closely linked to the creation of difference through apartheid as previously discussed. Another respondent cited the experience of the struggle as a possible factor that may divide women. This is very closely linked to race, but the essence of her argument is that women will have different experiences of the same history and that this may divide them. The relevance of this argument has been discussed at length throughout this thesis.

The last respondent said that levels of subordination may divide women. Her argument is that in some sectors of society women are still raised and socialized to be subordinate to men and in her view subordinate and liberated women will stand divided. This points to a divide between women with feminist sentiment and women without, since on important issues, they will fail to see eye to eye. For the purpose of this thesis, this observation loses some importance, since the focus is on women with a feminist consciousness, presupposing a certain degree of liberation.

Overall views of the questionnaire items concerning working across difference show that coloured women are the most accepting of difference, followed by black women and then white women. This may be a result of the fact that coloured women were not excluded to the same extent as black women under apartheid and also that coloured women were not seen as the 'enforcers' of apartheid as is the case with white women. When we take into account all the items in the questionnaire measuring the ability to work together across both racial and demographic barriers, the data shows that women do not perceive these areas to be problematic. Differences in race or demographic attributes do not have a big dividing influence on the sample. The information gathered from the interviews points to a definite acknowledgement of difference. Women seem to be aware that they are different from each other and have different perceptions and needs, but do not experience the difference in an antagonistic manner. This is very encouraging for the project of women working together against gender discrimination, since they are not ignoring difference, but rather choose to engage with it in an open manner. As mentioned before, we will have to look towards other avenues to explain the antagonism that became apparent through debate and at conferences concerning the women's movement in South Africa. The last part of this chapter will start to touch on that by analysing the way women feel about the

women's movement in South Africa and to a certain extent discovering the reasons for these feelings where they are of a negative nature.

Central to the debate found in women's journals and at conferences are the issues of misrepresentation, difference in experience and the inability of the women's movement as it functions now, to cater for the specific needs of South African women. This points to dissatisfaction with the women's movement, not necessarily shared by all women, but definitely experienced by some. The last part of this chapter will look into whether women have feelings of apprehension towards the women's movement and if so what reasons they cite for such feelings.

Women had to respond to the following statement: "Sometimes I feel weary of the feminist movement." The overall response for the sample is summarized below:

Graph 6.8: Feeling weary of the feminist movement.
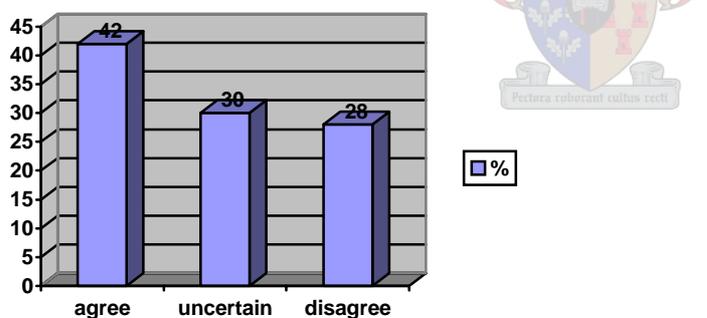
Only twenty eight percent of the sample disagreed with this statement, with forty two percent agreeing and thirty percent uncertain. Even if the part of the sample that are uncertain of this statement is completely disregarded, forty two percent of women are feeling weary of a movement that claims to specifically look after the interests of women. If we take into account that only thirty seven percent of women specifically identified themselves as non-feminist, this implies that some women who are feminist do not feel comfortable with the movement they identify with. This is a worrying statistic if the feminist movement in South Africa wants to be serious about catering for the needs of all women

and ensuring the vitality of the movement. The racial distribution on this statement is as follows:

Table 6.8: **Cross tabulation: Race and feeling weary of feminist movement.**

	Agree	**Uncertain**	**Disagree**	**Row totals**
Black	67% (N=8)	17% (N=2)	16% (N=2)	100% (N=12)
Coloured	22% (N=2)	44% (N=4)	34% (N=3)	100% (N=9)
White	38% (N=11)	31% (N=9)	31% (N=9)	100% (N=29)
All groups	42% (N=21)	30% (N=15)	28% (N=14)	100% (N=50)

Black women are feeling most weary of the feminist movement, which is understandable, since they were systematically excluded from the movement during the apartheid years. Here it is important to make a clear distinction between the feminist and women's movement. The feminist movement during the apartheid years consisted of white women mainly organized in academic spaces, while the women's movement constituted back women on grassroots level. Even tough the feminist movement have come a long way since the end of apartheid it seems that either on structural or ideological level it has not evolved to the extent that black women can feel comfortable in the movement.

Coloured women have a high number of uncertain responses, indicating either limited contact with the movement or feelings of apathy towards the movement. Coupled with this they are the racial group with the highest number of respondents outright disagreeing with the statement, implicating that coloured women, when they have knowledge and experience of the movement may feel the most comfortable in the women's movement.

This corresponds to coloured women being the racial group that is the most accepting of difference. The distribution for white women is fairly even across all categories, but when compared to other race groups, white women score the lowest on feelings of apprehension. This may be explained by the fact that in the past white women dominated the feminist movement. White women had the power to put issues that they deemed of importance on the agenda and see to it that their needs in terms of both structure and ideology were met. As a result of this they may feel that the feminist movement was of value to them and that they felt safe within the space provided by it, something that cannot be said for other racial groups.

When looking at the reasons for apprehension women were asked the following question: "If you agree, which of the following best describes the reason for your apprehension?" They had to choose from a number of options constructed from problems that were cited in literature. The result is as follows:

Graph 6.9: Reasons for feelings of apprehension.
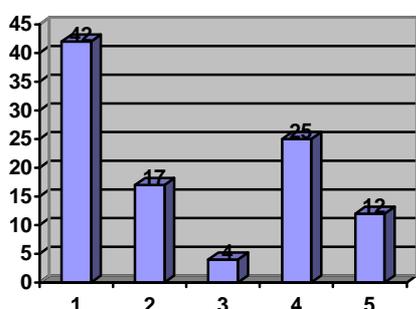
Key: 1.) Possibility of misrepresentation

    2.) Difficulty in working across racial barriers.

    3.) Skewed composition of movement in terms of race and class.

    4.) Inadequate theory to address the reality of your life.

    5.) Not enough possibility of practical change for you personally.

The most important reason that women cited for feelings of apprehension towards the feminist movement was the possibility of misrepresentation. This corresponds to one of the main reasons of dissent cited in journals and at conferences as discussed in length in

Chapter two. To summarize, the main argument is that women feel apprehensive to trust their issues to a movement that in the past have taken such issues out of context and represented it in ways not depicting the lived struggles of women. Even though this happened along racial lines, the racial aspect does not seem to be problematic as we saw from the earlier data. Rather it becomes an issue of power and who is wielding the power to write about the experiences of women.

The second most important reason that was chosen from the options was that the feminist movement does not provide adequate theory to address the reality of women's lives. The two most important reasons women cited for their apprehension are both located in the academic sphere. This implies that the problems women have with the feminist movement are more ideological and epistemological than practical in nature. For women to feel more comfortable with the women's movement theory and epistemology needs to be addressed in such a way that women can both trust the intention behind research and feel that theory has it's origins in their specific experience and therefore will be applicable to the lived reality of their lives. Theory serves as a base of knowledge, intention and action and if women feel excluded from the production of knowledge specifically pertaining to women, merely sustaining such a movement will be challenging. This is not even touching on issues such as growth and dynamic cohesion. Grounded theory with its origins in the South African context is needed for women to be able to identify with the feminist movement. This may serve, as a motivating factor for women to become involved and bring about the change that they feel is needed.

The last three reasons all have their focus on more practical issues. Seventeen percent of women said that they feel apprehensive in working across racial barriers, but when we couple this with the earlier statistics concerning working across racial barriers and the fact that only four percent of women feel apprehensive about the composition of the feminist movement in terms of race and class, this does not seem to be such a worrying factor. Thirteen percent of women did say that they feel apprehension because there is not enough possibility of practical change that can be brought about for them on a personal level. The percentage of women who feel this way is not very high, but the power of visible change due to the actions of a movement that acts in the interest of women, must not be underestimated. Women want to feel that they are justly represented and that their personal experiences are included in the groundwork of the feminist movement. This is the

most important and pressing issue at the time, but if the feminist movement can accomplish this, the next step will be material change

The racial distribution of this item can be seen below. Note that the same key used in graph 6.9 is applicable to the table below.

Key: **1.) Possibility of misrepresentation**

2.) Difficulty in working across racial barriers.

3.) Skewed composition of movement in terms of race and class.

4.) Inadequate theory to address the reality of your life.

5.) Not enough possibility of practical change for you personally.

Table 6.9: **Cross tabulation: Race and reasons for feeling apprehension.**
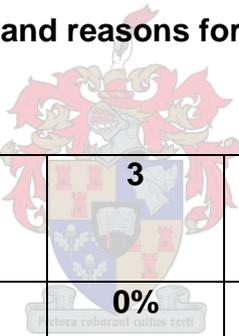
	1	2	3	4	5	Row totals
Black	33% (N=3)	33% (N=3)	0% (N=0)	22% (N=2)	12% (N=1)	100% (N=9)
Coloured	33% (N=1)	33% (N=1)	0% (N=0)	34% (N=1)	0% (N=0)	100% (N=3)
White	50% (N=6)	0% (N=0)	8% (N=1)	25% (N=3)	17% (N=2)	100% (N=12)
All groups	42% (N=10)	17% (N=4)	4% (N=1)	25% (N=6)	12% (N=3)	100% (N=24)

When we look at the racial distribution on this item, a very interesting fact comes to light. Fifty percent of white women say that the feel weary of the feminist movement because of

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the possibility of misrepresentation. This does not correspond to the main drive of the representation debate, which holds that white women had the power to represent and was responsible for the misrepresentation of black women both though the ways and which they conducted their research and by the type of issues they put on the table. Ironically, the reason why white women feel this way may have its origins in the scrutiny of representation over the last few years. White women may feel that they are being accused of misrepresentation, even if this was not intentional. Issues such as the national context and the intentions behind their research may have been sacrificed to the representation debate. They also found themselves practising their feminism in an environment where they had to resist the status quo through research and activism, trying to work for the good of all women, but met with challenges they could not always meet.

Coloured women score the highest on the fact that the feminist movement has inadequate theory to address the reality of their lives, but only marginally. This is also indicative of a lack of indigenous theory, catering for the challenges they will meet in lived reality. Both black and coloured women have equal scores on the issues of misrepresentation and working across racial barriers. A combination of these two issues points to the fact that non-white women experienced exclusion from power in the women's movement. Firstly, they did not have the power to right misrepresentation and secondly they feel apprehensive about being able to work with women that wielded the power. These feelings however are remnants of past injustice and women are able to work towards reconciliation, especially keeping in mind the very favourable sentiments expressed concerning working across racial barriers.

White women do not see working across racial barriers as problematic at all and all the groups score very low on seeing the feminist movement as skewed in terms of race and class. Apart form the misgivings concerning representation all groups score relatively high on inadequate theory, underlining the need for contextualizing South African feminism. There is some concern for practical changes, but the percentages are not too high, pointing to the fact that women experience other issues to take precedence over immediate material change.

Since this is such an important aspect with regards to the vitality of feminism in the South African context, a question touching on this issue was included during the interview stage of the research. Women had to respond to the following question: "Do you feel apprehensive of the feminist movement? If yes, please cite the most important reasons for your feelings." The response to this was very interesting, especially in comparison to the data gathered in the questionnaire. All the women said that they did not feel apprehensive of the feminist movement, except for one white respondent. This is contradictory to the findings in the data that white women are most comfortable with the feminist movement. We need to keep in mind that the sample targeted for interviews only included a small number of women, but even so this still warrants discussion. The reason she gives for her apprehension is that the feminist movement in South Africa did not go through a gender transformation. After the 1994 elections women assumed that we have equality and in her view there is "…an impatience with the idea or notion that there is any need for discussion about gender issues because we have a constitution." This is in line with the argument made previously that South African feminism did not leave space for its own development, but just applied equality principles developed elsewhere to the South African context. Equality feminism became the dominant discourse. This may explain some of the antagonism found in literature, since women are trying to apply gender equality without the needed attention to their own histories and where this places them within the feminist arena. Even though this is important, her response is isolated, since all of the other respondents said that they do not feel apprehensive about the feminist movement.

One theme that emerged in the responses to this question is that the feminist movement needs to make better allowance for the Women's movement. The feeling seem to not be one of apprehension, but rather of perceived shortcoming in the feminist movement as it exists now. The one respondent summarizes her feelings on the issue as follows: "I like the Women's movement more because it enhances women and it recognizes all aspects of society, not only gender." Another respondent communicates the same in the following: "No, I think we need to have policies changed but we also need to have work at ground level." Women do support the feminist movement, but they do feel that there is some room for change and improvement.

To conclude, race does not seem to be the main dividing force within the South African feminist movement. On the contrary women are very accepting of difference and are more

than willing to work across lines of difference. More pressing issues are those of representation and the lack of a body of theory specifically tailored for the challenges the South African context entails. The next chapter will focus on building a profile of the women's movement taking into account the issues of power, satisfaction with government and levels of feminist consciousness and identity.
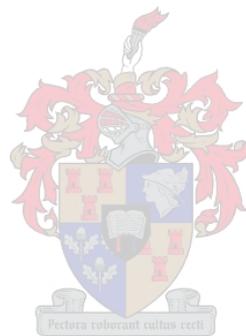
Chapter 7: Perceptions of the status of women and levels of feminist identity development

The aspects of the research problem addressed in this chapter are 1.) what implications the current nature of feminist identity, as determined by the sample, holds for feminist solidarity and 2.) if and how the negative connotation of the label feminist plays a role in feminist identity development and the objectives satisfied are as follows:

   a) to explore perceptions of the efficiency of the state as a formal structure to provide for the needs of women
   b) to explore how women perceive themselves as a group along with their potential for politically motivated activism
   c) to explore the ground level manifestations of the negative connotation of the label "feminist"
   d) to explore the degree of existing feminist sentiments even in the absence of self-identification as feminist
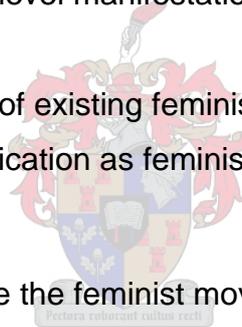
The importance of solidarity to make the feminist movement a politically viable movement has been discussed already. This chapter will focus on perceptions of government in order to establish the status quo the feminist movement is confronted with currently. From there the discussion will move on to the perceptions of the power women have to challenge that which they see as necessary to attain gender equality including measures such as the perceived influence of women on the state, perceptions of women' equality, removing constraints for women and willingness to engage in activist behaviour. An item was also included to measure the perceptions of men as allies in the gender struggle. This item is needed due to the specific dynamic of the South African context. During the struggle for racial equality women did see men as allies and to build a comprehensive picture of the feminist movement today, it is needed to determine whether this sentiment is still important to women.

The chapter continues to explore women's feelings towards women's groups in an attempt to clarify the negative connotation of the label 'feminist' and concludes by measuring levels

of feminist identity development and comparing this to self-identification as feminist in order to shed some light on the unwillingness of women to take the feminist label.

The first dimension explored in this chapter, is how women perceive the role of the government in providing for the needs of women and specifically if there is a difference between feminist and non-feminist women in terms of how they view government. This area was measured in the questionnaire in two ways. Firstly women were asked to respond to a broader statement concerning the responsibility of government to improve the social and economical position of women and secondly women were asked to respond to statements concerning more specific needs such as basic needs (healthcare, housing and water), Aids and violence.

In a broader sense women were asked to respond to the following statement: "Government should make every effort to improve the social and economic position of women." Women were asked to respond using a five point Likert scale. The response to this statement cross tabulated with feminist identity can be seen below.

Table 7.1: **Cross tabulation: Feminist identity and effort of government.**
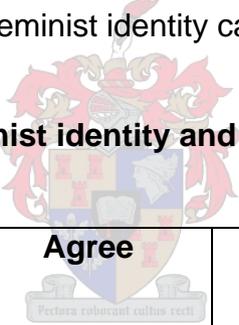
	Strongly agree	Agree	Uncertain	Row totals
Feminist	68% (N=21)	32% (N=10)	0% (N=0)	100% (N=31)
Non-feminist	39% (N=7)	56% (N=10)	5% (N=1)	100% (N=18)
All groups	57% (N=28)	41% (N=20)	2% (N=1)	100% (N=49)

As can be seen by the above table, no women in the sample disagreed with the statement. On the whole fifty seven percent of women strongly agreed, forty one percent agreed and two percent of women were uncertain. When we look at the raw numbers, only one woman out of the sample was uncertain, so that statistic may be disregarded. The marked difference between feminist and non-feminist women can be seen by the intensity of the response. Sixty eight percent of feminist women strongly agreed, in comparison to thirty

nine percent of non-feminist women. Feminist women feel stronger about the statement, which can be expected because they are more politicised. What is encouraging though is that all women agree with the statement, pointing to the fact that regardless of the presence of feminist consciousness or identity, women feels that government is responsible to improve the social circumstance of women. This indicates a base of mobilization for women, even in the absence of feminist consciousness.

Secondly the role of government was also measured by asking women to respond to more specific statements including that the state should provide for basic needs, protect women against gender-based violence and provide drugs for people suffering form Aids. A five point Likert scale was used, but because so few respondents responded using strongly agree or disagree, the categories were collapsed into agree, uncertain and disagree. The item measuring "the state should protect against gender-based violence" was kept in the original form, since there is difference between the categories strongly agree and agree. The responses to these statements cross tabulated with feminist identity are summarized in the three tables below:

Table 7.2(a): Cross tabulation: Feminist identity and the state should
provide for basic needs.
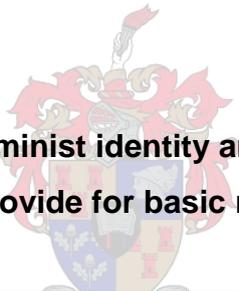
	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Row totals
Feminist	97% (N=30)	0% (N=0)	3% (N=1)	100% (N=31)
Non-feminist	90% (N=16)	5% (N=1)	5% (N=1)	100% (N=18)
All groups	94% (N=46)	2% (N=1)	4% (N=2)	100% (N=49)

Table 7.2(b): Cross tabulation: Feminist identity and the state should protect against gender-based violence.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Uncertain	Row totals
Feminist	84% (N=26)	13% (N=4)	3% (N=1)	100% (N=31)
Non-feminist	78% (N=14)	22% (N=4)	0% (N=0)	100% (N=18)
All groups	82% (N=40)	16% (N=8)	2% (N=1)	100% (N=49)

Table 7.2(c): Cross tabulation: Feminist identity and the state should provide drugs for Aids patients.

	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Row totals
Feminist	94% (N=29)	3% (N=1)	3% (N=1)	100% (N=31)
Non-feminist	90% (N=16)	5% (N=1)	5% (N=1)	100% (N=18)
All groups	92% (N=45)	4% (N=2)	4% (N=2)	100% (N=49)

Even though there were some women that were uncertain or disagreed with the statements the numbers are so small that they not statistically significant. The same argument that was used in the above table, concerning the broader statement on the responsibility of the state, holds truth here. The greater majority of women all agreed that the state should provide for the specific needs cited in the questionnaire, regardless of feminist consciousness or identity. Women with a feminist identity feel slightly stronger on all issues, but the differences are so marginal that it does not warrant discussion. As argued above specific issues seem to be a possible common base for women to mobilize around.

In chapter one in the introduction to this thesis, mention was made of the differences between the feminist and the women's movement. One of the aspects that were mentioned was that the women's movement mobilizes more around specific issues. It is clear form the above data that women in South Africa are sensitive to the issues that women in society face today. The question remains, however, if this is merely sympathy or if women will be prepared to put such issues on the table through collective action. This may be the inherent difference between women with a feminist identity or consciousness and non-feminist women. The fact that feminist women will be more prepared to move past sympathy and politically correct responses and choose to make an effort to change the status quo in the interest of all women.

An area that is closely linked to perceptions on the responsibility of government is that of the status of women. This is important since if women feel that change is needed in government with regards to the needs of women, do they feel that they are in a position of enough strength to bring about the desired change? This is an important dimension to measure since it contrasts the efforts made by the state with individual efforts made by women. In chapter two the need for solidarity and collective action was discussed in order to achieve better results concerning material change in the lives of women. Taken the need for collective change as a known factor, the response to this item can shed light on whether women perceive themselves to have individual shortcomings or whether they perceive structural problems in the mechanisms of the state. The first question that was put to women concerning this issue was worded as follows: "How much influence do women as a group have in South Africa?" The results are summarized in graph 7.2.

Graph 7.1: Perceptions of women's influence on the state.
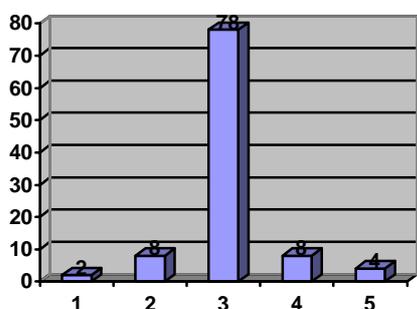
Key: 1.) too much influence

2.) the right amount of influence

3.) too little influence

4.) no influence

5.) don't know

The greater majority of women feel that women have some influence on the state, but too little. Before discussing this statistic it may be useful to look at the relationship between this item and feminist identity.

Table 7.3: Cross tabulation: Feminist identity and the perceived influence of women on the state.

	Too much influence	Right influence	Too little influence	No influence	Don't know	Row totals
Feminist	3% (N=1)	3% (N=1)	84% (N=26)	10% (N=3)	0% (N=0)	100% (N=31)
Non-feminist	0% (N=0)	18% (N=3)	65% (N=11)	5% (N=1)	12% (N=2)	100% (N=17)
All groups	2% (N=1)	8% (N=4)	78% (N=37)	8% (N=4)	4% (N=2)	100% (N=48)

Here the difference between feminist and non-feminist women is once again pronounced. Only one respondent who identified herself to be feminist feels that women have the right amount of influence over the state, compared to three respondents who are non-feminist. The same relationship hold for the category of no influence where three feminists respondents felt this to be the case, compared to only one non-feminist respondent. However, the raw numbers for these categories are very small and do not show enough difference between the statistics to warrant discussion. The one category where the statistical difference is of value is that of too little influence, where eighty four percent of feminist women agreed, compared to sixty five percent of non-feminist women. This difference may be explained by the fact that feminist women are working towards political change and therefore feel stronger about the perceived inability of women to influence decisions of state. It is an integral part of the feminist agenda to bring about change on a political level through the challenging of sexist institutions and practices. Non-feminist women may feel that they would like to have more influence on state level, but the willingness to challenge institutionalised gender discrimination is not as great as with feminist women. By implication the dissatisfaction with the status quo will also be less.

When we look past the differences between feminist and non-feminist women, however eighty six percent of the sample feels that women as a group should have more influence on the state. This is a very encouraging statistic for the vitality and growth of the feminist movement. As mentioned in chapter three on identity formation, certain circumstances were identified where women will be more likely to develop a feminist consciousness. First there must be some notion of sharing membership and interests with the group, in this instance the group being South African women. The second condition is that women must be dissatisfied with the current status quo. The final condition is that they must share a sense of injustice and that they must be willing to mobilize to address this. From the response to this question, it is clear that women feel dissatisfaction with the amount of influence they wield as a group, over government. It is exactly here where the feminist movement can make a meaningful contribution to the lives of many women, in taking such feeling of dissatisfaction and putting it on the political agenda. If women start to perceive the feminist movement as a tool of political change rather than an ideological arena of discussion, division and vitality of the movement could become less pressing issues.

Inherent in feelings of dissatisfaction, there is a notion of inequality. The argument here basically is that if women do not hold the power to influence the state, then someone else does. The traditional feminist explanation here will be that through the structure of society, men will be in position of power. This cannot be assumed however, the opposing argument being that the state as a responsive institution may be inaccessible from outside of the formalized political arena. In an attempt to answer this question women were asked to respond to the following statement: "The situation of women compared to that of men is often discussed nowadays. In your opinion is there a problem about women's equality or not for women in society?" Women were then asked to respond by means of a 'feeling thermometer' where one meant there is no problem and ten means there is a serious problem. The distribution on this question looks as follows:

Graph 7.2: Response to feeling thermometer on women's equality.
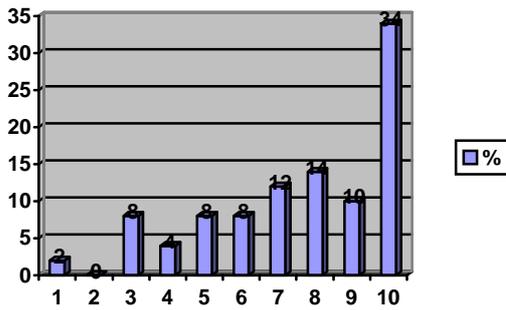
From the response to the feeling thermometer it is clear that women do feel that their situation is not equal to that of men, supporting the traditional point made by feminism. Such feelings reflect no problem with the state as an institution, but rather a sentiment that in terms of representation and access, men will be in a position of greater advantage. If we take the responses from one to five to indicate no to mild feelings of inequality and responses from five up to indicate definite feelings of inequality, eighty six percent of women harbour feelings of inequality to men. This statistic cross tabulated with feminist identity is as follows:

Table 7.4: Cross tabulation: Feminist identity and feeling thermometer for women's equality.
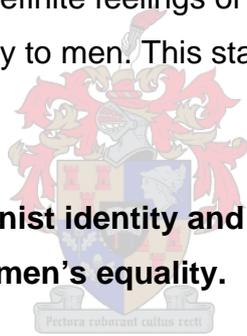
	1	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Row totals
Feminist	0% (N=O)	10% (N=3)	3% (N=1)	3% (N=1)	10% (N=3)	13% (N=4)	10% (N=3)	16% (N=5)	35% (N=11)	100% (N=31)
Non-Feminist	6% (N=1)	6% (N=1)	6% (N=1)	16% (N=3)	6% (N=1)	11% (N=2)	22% (N=4)	0% (N=0)	27% (N=5)	100% (N=18)
All groups	2% (N=1)	8% (N=4)	4% (N=2)	8% (N=4)	8% (N=4)	12% (N=6)	14% (N=7)	10% (N=5)	34% (N=16)	100% (N=49)

When the same principle as above is applied (collapsing categories one to five and six to ten) the difference between feminist and non-feminist women is as expected. Sixteen percent of feminists fall into the category of having no to mild feelings of inequality,

compared to thirty four percent of non-feminist women. Eighty four percent of feminist women fall into the category of having definite feelings of inequality, compared to sixty six percent of non-feminist women. The interesting facts, however, are that for both feminist and non-feminist women the majority have feelings of inequality and that there is distribution in terms of the feeling thermometer, regardless of being feminist or not. In other words all non-feminist women do not cluster at the bottom edge of the scale with feminist women at the top. This implicates that even though feminist identity will have some influence on perceptions of inequality, women experience inequality regardless of the presence of feminist identity.

For the project of eradication of gendered discrimination and oppression, the personal experience of gender inequality is not enough. Feelings of inequality need to be coupled with a willingness to remove the constraints that put women on an unequal footing with men, to make the personal political. Women had to respond to the following statement using a five point Likert scale: "I favour the removal of any legal constraints that prohibit women from pursuing their potential for individual development as fully as men do." This item was then cross tabulated with feminist identity.

Table 7.5: **Cross tabulation: Feminist identity and removing of constraints for women.**
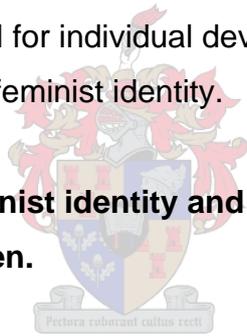
	Strongly agree	Agree	Uncertain	Row totals
Feminist	81% (N=25)	16% (N=5)	3% (N=1)	100% (N=31)
Non-feminist	61% (N=11)	28% (N=5)	11% (N=2)	100% (N=18)
All groups	74% (N=36)	20% (N=10)	6% (N=3)	100% (N=49)

Not one respondent form the sample disagreed with this statement. Again we find that women with a feminist identity will respond with greater intensity than their non-feminist counterparts. This indicates that women experience the need to remove the gendered

constraints they perceive, but even though this is encouraging the same argument as made above still holds. Will women act on the feelings of inequality and make a visible effort to change the social circumstance or will the feelings of dissatisfaction and the support for gendered activism stay in their personal spaces, never being engaged with on a political level?

To determine the willingness to act, women were asked that if they agreed with the removal of constraints (which they all did), whether they engage in behaviour to reflect their beliefs. The response to this question is summarized below.

Table 7.6: **Cross tabulation: Feminist identity and willingness**
to engage in activist behaviour.

	Engage in behaviour	Do not engage in behaviour	Row totals
Feminist	77% (N=24)	23% (N=7)	100% (N=31)
Non-feminist	43% (N=6)	57% (N=8)	100% (N=14)
All groups	67% (N=6)	33% (N=15)	100% (N=45)

Here the difference between feminist and non-feminist women becomes apparent for the first time. Even though both groups do experience feelings of inequality and support the removal of gendered constraints on an ideological level, feminist women choose to practically engage with the feelings and beliefs to a greater extent than non-feminist women. Seventy seven percent of feminist women have engaged in behaviour furthering the removal of gendered constraints, in comparison to forty three percent of non-feminist women. Activism practised by women was also included in the interview stage of the research in order to determine how women act in their personal capacities to promote gender equality.

All of the respondents reported being involved on grassroots level, with only one respondent reporting an effort to challenge governmental structure. The respondents

mostly reported just talking to women about gender equality and creating awareness of injustice. Two of the respondents do volunteer work in community based projects, helping women with basic needs. There is a definite notion of starting with the lives of women before moving on to challenging the bigger structures to promote gender equality.

The profile of the sample considering the removal of constraints for women is one where the greater majority of women experience dissatisfaction with the status quo. By implication one of the circumstances for the development of feminist identity or consciousness is already present. Non-feminist women however have greater difficulty in taking the feelings of dissatisfaction into the public, political space. The will to act on issues that they experience on a personal level is not as well developed as with feminist women. Another possible explanation may be that while women have feelings of discontent they lack the awareness of the fact that such feelings are caused by systematic gendered discrimination and therefore find it difficult to identify the appropriate action to solve the problem. In other words they fail to connect their feeling to the way they are treated as a result of their gender. This awareness must first evolve either through exposure or gender education before women can realise that a feminist or women's movement may hold the tools to address the discrimination that they are experiencing.

One aspect that cannot be neglected when the gendered divide is discussed within the South African context is the possibility of men as allies in the struggle against gendered oppression. As discussed before, especially for black women, the struggle against apartheid and the development of their own personal feminisms went hand in hand. Women worked with men side by side in the struggle against apartheid and it is naïve to argue that the feelings of comradeship and accomplishment that culminated in the 1994 election are now absent in the gendered struggle. Now it becomes a question of when the first battle is won, can men be a part of the second battle for women, despite the fact that their gender puts them in the camp of the oppressor?

Because the racial distribution on this issue is important, the first part of the discussion will focus on whether the perception of men as allies in the struggle against gendered oppression differs across race and if so, to what extent. To measure this, women were asked to respond in terms of a five point Likert scale to the following statement: "Men can be allies for women in the struggle against gender oppression". When cross tabulated with race, the results look as follows.

Table 7.7: **Cross tabulation: Race and perceptions of men as allies.**

	Agree Strongly	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Row totals
Black	33% (N=4)	67% (N=8)	0% (N=0)	0% (N=0)	100% (N=12)
Coloured	22% (N=2)	56% (N=5)	11% (N=1)	11% (N=1)	100% (N=9)
White	30% (N=8)	51% (N=14)	19% (N=5)	0% (N=0)	100% (N=27)
All groups	29% (N=14)	56% (N=27)	13% (N=6)	2% (N=1)	100% (N=48)

The difference between races where this issue is concerned is not so big. The majority of all race groups feel that men can be allies in the struggle against gender oppression. Hundred percent of black women support this statement, compared to seventy eight percent of coloured women and eighty one percent of white women. Black women do respond better to this statement in comparison to other racial groups, if only marginally. This indicates a stronger belief in the support of men as allies, possibly due to the experience of the apartheid struggle. An interesting fact is that nineteen percent of white women are uncertain on this statement, indicating that they feel less sure of the feasibility of such a proposition. This may be due to the fact that they lack personal experience of working with men to accomplish a political goal and therefore cannot be sure if such an alliance will prove successful. Black women on the contrary worked closely with men during the struggle against apartheid. The overall profile of the sample is one of women who believe that men can be drawn into the gendered struggle as allies, with eighty five percent of women supporting the statement. When this statistic is coupled with the fact that women do experience feelings of inequality with men, some explanation is needed. This may point to dissatisfaction with the institution of gender in society, rather than dissatisfaction with the manner in which men are conducting themselves. It becomes an issue of societal structure, rather than men being oppressive in terms of gender. When the same item is cross tabulated with feminist identity, we see the following.

Table 7.8: Cross tabulation: Feminist identity and perception of men as allies.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Row totals
Feminist	27% (N=8)	53% (N=16)	17% (N=5)	3% (N=1)	100% (N=30)
Non-feminist	35% (N=6)	59% (N=10)	6% (N=1)	0% (N=0)	100% (N=17)
All groups	30% (N=14)	55% (N=26)	13% (N=6)	2% (N=1)	100% (N=47)

Even though for both groups the majority of women support the statement, feminist women seem to be more apprehensive than non-feminist women. Eighty percent of feminist women support the statement, in comparison to ninety four percent of non-feminist women. The fact that feminist women are more aware of the oppressive role that men may play, can explain this small difference in the response. However, same as the above statistic, women perceive men as allies rather than opponents where the gendered struggle is concerned. It may be necessary for women to shift their gaze from the difference between the sexes to a close scrutiny of society and institutions, to explain feelings of inequality and discontent that they are experiencing.

The final set of issues that will be discussed in this chapter, centres on how women perceive themselves internally as a group. The first issue explored is where women see themselves with regards to being active in the workforce as compared to staying at home. Secondly how close women feel to women's groups with varying levels of commitment to the eradication of gendered discrimination, such as women, the women's movement and the feminist movement. The last part of the discussion will focus on levels of feminist identity development for the sample.

To measure where women see themselves, either at home or in the workforce, equal with men, women were asked to respond to the following statement: "On a scale where 1 indicates that women should have an equal role with men in running business, industry

and government and 7 indicates that a woman's place is in the home, where would you place yourself?". The distribution was as follows:

Graph 7.3: **Perception of the place of women-at work or at home?**
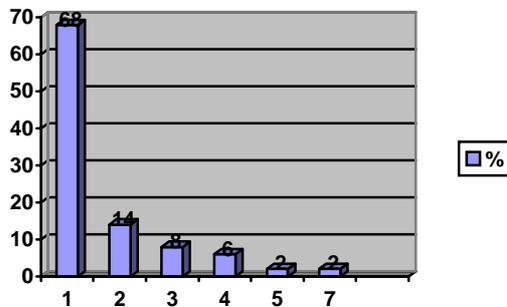
The overwhelming response to this item was that women perceive themselves to be active in the labour force, rather than at home. This indicates that the traditional belief that the place of women is in the home, is rejected by the sample. Women choose to be on an active equal, footing with men and see this as more important than their historically prescribed role as homemakers and mothers. The nature of the sample most definitely plays a role in this statistic, since all the women who completed the questionnaire are active in the labour force and therefore will find it hard to identify with staying at home. Even so, the profile here is not one that fits a woman sacrificing her own potential for the family home.

Some alternative explanations for the above trend, other than women working in their fields of interest for self satisfaction, may be the nature that society is currently structured economically and socially. Women, single or living with a partner may need to contribute financially to the partnership or to supporting themselves, making it important that they are active in the labour force. On a social level women have more freedom of choice concerning issues such as childcare or the running of the home and are therefore not bound to fulfil such responsibilities themselves on a full time bases, allowing them to venture into the workforce. The bottom line here is that regardless of the social reality, women in this sample believe that their place is no longer in the home, challenging the stereotype of mother and wife and seeking equality in the traditionally male dominated labour force.

The next issue to be addressed here is how close women feel to other women and groups involved with the status of women. As discussed in chapter one there is a divide between what is termed the feminist movement and the women's movement. To summarize, the women's movement focuses more on specific issues while the feminist movement mobilizes for change in societal conditions of gender inequality. Coupled with this there is the issue of the feminist movement having a history with some negative connotations, such as exclusion of groups of women. The distinctions between strategic and practical gender issues as discussed by Molyneux are also applicable here.

Since the distinction between the feminist and Women's movement is such a grey area in literature a question exploring how women perceive the difference (if any) between the two movements was included in the interview. Women had to respond to the following question: "If you had to distinguish between the feminist movement and the Women's movement in the South African context, how would you define each movement?" The first reaction to this question for most of the respondents was that they do not perceive the two movements to be different, but rather components of a bigger social trend. When asked to try and define the movement separately anyway the two black respondents still maintained that they do not see a difference, making the following claims respectively: "They (feminists) were serious to be able to do things that our women could not have access to and that were not available to them. I think there is a very thin line between the two, so not really a big difference." And "I think those two words are just grammatical words. I think they are the same thing." This is surprising since the focus on black grassroots movements in literature leads one to believe that especially for black women there will be a distinction. In a very positive light this once more underlines the accepting, inclusive attitude of black women as found and discussed earlier in the data analysis. For the rest of the respondents feminism was defined as being more radical and intellectual with a definite anti-male sentiment. The Women's movement on the other hand was defined as a movement of equality, not only focussing on gender, but also concerning itself with community issues. In the light of the arguments made in this thesis with regards to the need for the two movements to be able to work together, the general agreement of women that the two movements are part of a bigger whole, is very encouraging. Still, for feminism as a tool of political change to be accessible to women and a viable option in addressing their needs and problem, it seems that major redefinition is needed. Currently the Women's movement is perceived to be of more worth in confronting inequality and basic needs on a personal level.

Moving on from perceptions of the respective movements, women were asked to indicate their feelings towards various women's groups by using a feeling thermometer. Three groups were mentioned, first women as a group, totally free from any political connotation, second, the women's movement with their focus issues and third the feminist movement with their political agenda. Women had to respond to the following statement: "The following item works on the principle of a thermometer where 0 indicates very cold and 10 indicates very hot. If you had to indicate your feelings towards the following groups in terms of 'warmness', where would you place yourself?". The distribution for the sample on this item looks as follows:

Graph 7.4: Feelings of 'warmness' towards women as a group.
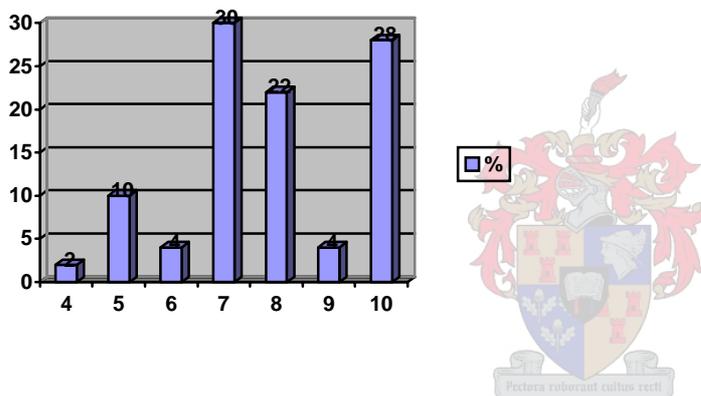
Graph 7.5: Feelings of 'warmness" towards women's movement as a group.
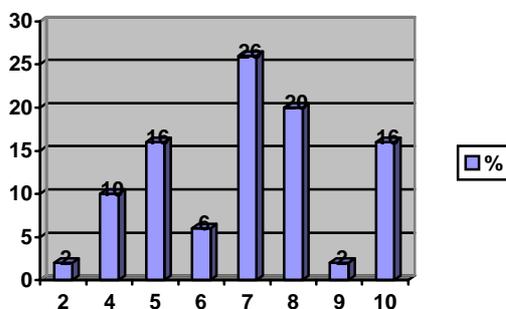
Graph 7.6: Feelings of 'warmness' towards feminists.
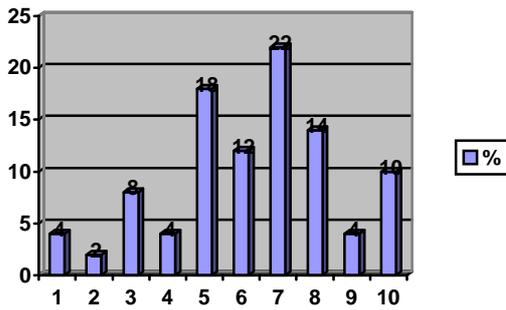
Before the results of the above graphs are discussed further, it is interesting to note that for all of the feeling thermometers the highest scores cluster at seven. This may be explained by the fact that seven shows a high level of affiliation, but not complete dedication to the various groups. This may point to reluctance to taking absolute labels, as discussed earlier.

From the graphs above it is clear that the affiliation that women feel with the various groups decrease as the radical political potential they perceive in the group increases. A good indication of this is the fact that responses for women as a group only start at four, responses for the women's movement start at two and for the feminist movement it starts at one. It was argued that women have negative connotations with the feminist movement because of historical reasons, so it is to be expected that some women will not have favourable feelings towards this group. Interestingly women feel closer to the women's movement, but there are still some indications of apprehension. The argument that it is easier for women to identify with the women's movement because it has less of a negative historical connotation, holds true, but not very strongly. If we take responses from seven upwards as a conservative indication of support for the various groups, eighty four percent of women support women as a group, sixty four percent of women support the women's movement and fifty percent the feminist movement. The fact that only fifty percent of women definitely support the feminist movement is interesting, because in the item in the questionnaire where women had to self-identify as feminist, thirty one out of fifty women identified themselves as feminist, indicating that sixty two percent of the sample are feminist. Fifty percent of the sample does not necessarily have to be interpreted as a low percentage, but in comparison to the statistic on self-identification as feminist, it is substantially lower. This once more supports the argument that while women will think of

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themselves as feminist, they are often not completely comfortable with the feminist movement, underlining the need for redefinition of the feminist movement in South Africa.

The above comparison holds interesting implications for the personal/political divide as defined in feminism. Even though the greater percentage of women support women as a group free from issue-driven activism or political agenda, support dwindles when the interests of women are presented in the more public political space of formalized movements. When this statistic is coupled with the argument made earlier in this chapter that women do experience inequality and even support the removal of constraints in order to promote equality, but fail to convert such feelings to behaviour to bring about change, it indicates an unwillingness on the behalf of women to move out of the spaces of their personal struggles (and comfort zones) and into the political space of addressing their struggles.

An alternative argument is that women do not lack willingness, but ready access to movements that are in the position to aid them or a lack of awareness of the measures that are already in place that they can make use of. The possibilities of lack of awareness and inaccessibility were investigated by including the following question in the interview: "Are you aware of measures in place to address the struggles you experience and do you feel that you have access to such measures?" The general feeling is that there are some platforms in government and possible helpful information, but that such measures mostly exist in theory and on paper. Many of the respondents mention that women need to be educated on the measures available and on how to access them and even then that it will be hard for women to get help. They also agree that rural women are worse off than urban women in getting help through organizational structures. One respondent mentions that it is more feasible for women to organize on grassroots level around issues of immediate importance to them, than to draw on organizational structures for help. In the light of this women may be willing to address the struggles in their lives, but they do not know where to turn and how to get help.

Earlier in the thesis it was argued that even though women may have a feminist consciousness or identity, the degrees to which such a consciousness or identity is developed may differ. In order to determine a level of feminist identity development for the sample a scale developed by Fischer et al (2000) was included in the questionnaire. The scale was discussed in chapter four and is included in section C of the questionnaire, and

can be viewed in appendix one. They identified five levels of feminist identity development, briefly summarized as follows: "The first stage, passive acceptance (PA), is characterized by an acceptance of traditional gender roles, the belief that traditional roles are advantageous, and the belief that men are superior to women. Stage two, revelation (REV), is preceded by one or several crises that result in a questioning of traditional gender roles, feelings of anger toward men, and dualistic thinking. Women in this stage may also feel guilt over ways that they may have contributed to their own oppression in the past. Embeddedness-emanation (EE) is the third stage and is marked by feelings of connectedness with other women, cautious interaction with men, and development of a more relativistic perspective. In the fourth stage, synthesis (SYN), a positive feminist identity is developed and a flexible truce is made with the world. Women in this stage are able to transcend traditional gender roles and evaluate men on an individual basis. Active commitment (AC), the final stage, is characterized by a deep commitment to social change and the belief that men are equal to, but not the same as women."

When this scale was presented to the women in the sample, the following distribution on levels of feminist identity development was observed:

Graph 7.7: Stages in the development of feminist identity.
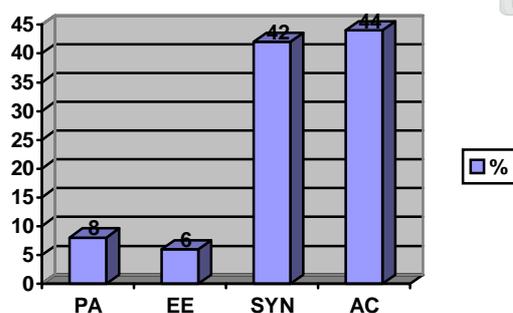
The distribution on this item is very surprising, since forty two percent of women categorized, according to their responses, as being in a stage of synthesis, which indicates a developed feminist identity, and forty four percent of women in the stage of active commitment, showing not only developed feminist identity, but also an active commitment to social change. According to this measure, *eighty six percent* of women have a feminist identity, compared to only *sixty two percent* of women who identified themselves as feminists. Before the data is discussed further, it is needed to look at this apparent contradiction. The most obvious problem here is that the scale was developed by

American scientists to be used on American subjects. However, if the scale is scrutinized closely all the statements included into the scale are broad universal statements and not statements specifically applicable to American society or way of life. All of the statements may be as applicable to women in South Africa. Even if the fact that this scale was not developed specifically with the South African context in mind, is taken into account the possibility that respondents may have been lead to respond in a certain manner or misunderstood the statements are very slim, due to the universal nature of the statements.

Another possible explanation may be that while women do not perceive themselves to be feminist, they support, to a great degree the values of feminism. The trend that we are seeing here and in the responses to the above questions is one of a sample with strong values corresponding to those of feminism, but an unwillingness to identify with the movement that propagates the exact same values.

The possibility that women feel apprehensive about taking the feminist label has been discussed throughout this thesis. To shed more light on the topic, the following question was included in the interview: "If you support the values propagated by feminism, for instance gender equality, do you still feel apprehensive about taking the feminist label? If so, why?" The respondents all agree that they do support the values propagated by feminism, but only one of the respondents feels comfortable with the label 'feminist'. The other respondents opt for terms such as gender activist or gender sensitive. The biggest critique that women had of the feminist label is that it is widely perceived as exclusive and as anti-male. The problem with exclusivity is that it only focuses on the gender of women and does not cater for the other aspect of their lives or identities they may ascribe to.

Even more important than this, the respondents felt very uncomfortable with the anti-male sentiment that the term carries. One respondent gave the following opinion on the issue: "The type of feminist I was exposed to who call themselves that are very strongly anti-man at times. I grew up in an environment trusting men and feminism gave me a very wrong perception of men. I really have gone back to my work around gender identity and I have built my own opinion of men." Another respondent state: "Much as I stand for women's rights, I think it intrusive (sic) of men, because there is no way we can live on the same planet and still saying it is us and them." And lastly: "I don't see myself as anti-men. I don't think it's done us any favours." Coupling this very strong response with the item in the

questionnaire about how women perceive men to be allies, feminism needs to accept the fact that women have an inclusive attitude towards men and that this has grown to be an important part of their identities as women. It seems that even though feminism does have valuable principles and has made great headway in the past promoting the cause of women, it failed to grow with the changing needs and perceptions of women. Feminism is still perceived as a radical, anti-male movement stuck in the past and not responding to the new challenges women have to face today.

Even though women may not want to take the feminist label, they still show high levels of feminist identity development. South African women function in a very political environment, with great awareness of equality, due to the post 1994 context along with the racial dimension this implies. This may have spilt over into the way they view gender, effectively making the traditional women-only focus of feminism not acceptable. On this point it will be interesting to see the distribution of feminist identity development across race. The results are summarized below in table 15.

Table 7.9: **Cross tabulation: Race and levels of feminist identity development.**

	PA	EE	SYN	AC	Row totals
Black	0% (N=0)	0% (N=0)	50% (N=6)	50% (N=6)	100% (N=12)
Coloured	11% (N=1)	22% (N=2)	56% (N=5)	11% (N=1)	100% (N=9)
White	10% (N=3)	3% (N=1)	35% (N=10)	52% (N=15)	100% (N=29)
All groups	8% (N=4)	6% (N=3)	42% (N=21)	44% (N=22)	100% (N=50)

Supporting the earlier findings, black women have the best levels of feminist identity development, followed by white women and then coloured women. Fifty percent of black women fell into the synthesis stage and fifty percent of black women into the stage of active commitment. The active political role that black women played in the struggle for the eradication of apartheid may play a role here. They have had more exposure to the experience of discrimination and have learnt through this experience that active

commitment is the best way to address such discrimination. Added to this, black feminism evolved parallel to the racial struggle and black women unified themselves as a group. Even though they did not unify with the specific task of the eradication of gendered discrimination in mind, but rather racial discrimination, the structures and political consciousness that they internalised in their mobilization against racial discrimination make them better equipped to both be aware of discrimination on other levels, such as gender and to challenge such discrimination.

White women also score very high on levels of feminist identity development. (Here it is important to keep the nature of the sample in mind, since women with some degree of feminist consciousness or identity was included in the sample on purpose.) Thirty five percent of white women were identified as being in a stage of synthesis and fifty two percent of white women to be in a stage of active commitment, adding up to eighty seven percent of white women having a feminist identity. Here the nature of the sample may play a role since all women included in the sample are active in the labour force and have had exposure to the values of feminism, through gender training. Even so, the same is true for black and coloured women.

The high levels of feminist identity development under white women may be due to other factors. White women, not always through their actions, but through the colour of their skin, were perceived as the perpetrators of apartheid. The racial struggle held a different meaning for them than for black women, but they were also exposed to political scrutiny on different levels and therefore also have a great awareness of equality and the eradication of discrimination. Added to this some of the white women included in the sample may have been part of the feminist movement in South Africa prior to the 1994 election and it must be kept in mind that the 1994 election did not only imply racial freedom, but also a more free society in South Africa for all groups who work towards transparency in matters of discrimination and the resultant action to right such discrimination. White women after 1994 were freer to stand up for their rights as women. The argument has already been made that white women had better access to institutions through the system of apartheid. This may explain the fact that they score higher on the level of active commitment, having the means and prior experience in the formalized feminist movement, to take gendered issues to the political arena, in comparison to black women who practiced their feminism on grassroots levels closer to their homes and with limited access to formal structures to aid them.

Fifty six percent of coloured women were identified to be in the synthesis stage with only eleven percent in the stage of active commitment. This may be due to the fact that coloured women were neither the perpetrators of apartheid, nor the most oppressed race. This is not to say that they did experience discrimination, but because of their position they were less exposed to the need to organize politically in their interests as a group. This explains the fact that they score higher on the level of synthesis and lower on active commitment. Coloured women seem to be aware of gendered discrimination and have internalised the values of feminism and developed a feminist identity but are not as likely as the other racial groups to take such values into the political space of active commitment.

To conclude the profile of the sample according to this chapter is one of women who do not yet perceive themselves as equal to men and favour the removal of constraints to promote better levels of equality, but are reluctant to move from the personal space into the political space. Alternatively they are struggling with issues of knowledge on how to go about addressing their grievances and accessibility to organizations to aid them in doing this. The overriding trend according to the data presented here is that women feel close to women as a group and support the values inherent to traditional feminism, yet they are unwilling to take the label of feminist and to become involved in a movement that support their value system. This shows that women can be mobilized as a group around their gender, but that they are reluctant to ally themselves with the feminist movement.

Sentiments towards the Women's movement are much more favourable and women see it as a more viable option if they had to draw on an organization to assist them with their struggles either gendered or in other areas of their lives. This underlines once again the need to go back to the levels of lived experience of women and to build from there a new brand of feminism that caters for South African women. Drawing on the values of the Women's movement may prove beneficial here. The problem here does not seem to be a population of women ignorant to their own plight, but rather women who experience discrimination, but who are uncertain of how to take their grievances to a level where it can be addressed with the desired results. A marriage between the issue driven women's movement and the politically apt feminist movement may be able to provide women with the type of institution that they need to address their needs and to ensure that the results

of such actions seep through to the lived reality of the lives of women, where the needs originated in the first place.
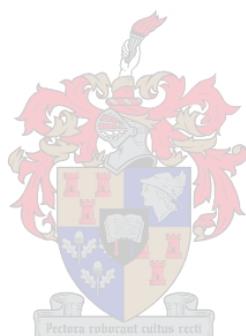
Chapter 8: Conclusion

Throughout this thesis reference has been made to the existence of both the Women's and the feminist movement within the South African gender context. The difference between the two movements was summarized as follows in the introduction: The feminist movement captures ideological notions of political advocacy in order to ensure gender equality whereas the Women's movement is more concerned with practical issues sprouting from the hardships and inequality that women experience in the lived realty of their lives. At the onset of the thesis I proposed an exclusive focus on the feminist movement, but through the research it became apparent that women who support feminist values do not limit themselves to one specific movement. They also do not perceive the feminist and Women's movements to be very different from each other and rather see the two respective movements as two aspect of the same struggle. It became necessary to expand the focus of the thesis to those aspects of the Women's movement that the respondents perceived to be of importance in their gendered struggles.

As mentioned in the introduction to this thesis, the target population of this study was women already involved in the gender struggle and not women as a demographic group defined by their gender. The division that became apparent in journal articles and in debates at conferences was not satisfactorily analysed with regards to cause and possible solution. This may point to a perception that the scope of the problem was too wide to warrant analysis or to a situation where the women involved became caught up in the debate and were unable to step back and critically analyse where the division originated and how this division may influence the movement they are involved in. This being the case, the perceived division in the feminist movement was not an easy topic to try and unravel.

The study of the literature for this thesis revealed some degree of division between women involved in the feminist movement. Two main areas of division were identified. The first area of division focused on movement away from the traditional feminist approach and is accompanied by an unwillingness to take the feminist label. Women involved in gender seem to ally themselves with a less radical approach to gender equality, also focussing on more practical, ground level issues, as embodied

to a certain extent by the Women's movement. The second area of division concerns itself with how and by whom women should be represented in order to build comprehensive accounts of their lives and struggles, as defined by the representation debate. The representation debate also focuses on how research can be used to address perceived problems and there is a definite notion of addressing struggles in the new tradition of grounded theory, rather than trying to apply existing theory.

From the literature it became clear that a focus on division between women cannot be used to successfully address either the nature of the division or to formulate possible ways in which to address this. A different approach was needed. I attempted to address the problem though focussing on what women may share with regards to their feminist or gender identity. The clearly different and often politicized nature of demographic variables did not yield any clear path to follow and neither did an attempt to find some ideological similarities. A focus on identity as a motivator of action seemed a more feasible option. Involvement in the gendered struggle implies a certain degree of feminist identity or at the very least feminist consciousness. In the face of the great levels of diversity amongst women, this is the one common denominator that will motivate women to become involved with gender work. In order to foster a better understanding of how women are divided it is needed to explore the nature of their feminist identities and how they have acquired these identities. This may clarify whether they came to the feminist arena in different ways and if they may expect different yields from their involvement in gender work, possibly pointing to the origin of the current divide.

After careful analysis of literature, the following aspects pertaining to difference and division were identified as comprising the research problem.

> a. how women develop a feminist identity with specific reference to the impact of other markers of identity such as race, motherhood, etc.
> b. if and how the negative connotation of the label feminist plays a role in feminist identity development
> c. what implications the current nature of feminist identity, as determined by the sample, holds for feminist solidarity

The research problem was then addressed by further deconstructing the identified areas in order to compile more workable objectives. This thesis was an attempt to unravel the perceptions of difference and the antagonism coupled with this difference as became apparent in debates in journals and at conferences. This is important since solidarity within feminism can aid the development of structures both formal (the state) and informal (the gender movement) to address the struggles women experience as a result of their gender. The objectives identified for addressing the research problem are as follows:

a) to explore the impact of demographic variables along with the experience of apartheid on the formation of feminist identity.
b) to explore the impact of race as a dividing factor within feminism
c) to explore perceptions of the efficiency of the state as a formal structure to provide for the needs of women
d) to explore how women perceive themselves as a group along with their potential for politically motivated activism
e) to explore the ground level manifestations of the negative connotation of the label "feminist"
f) to explore the degree of existing feminist sentiments even in the absence of self-identification as feminist
g) to determine the applicability of measuring instruments developed outside the South African context to the South African context.

The data gathered both in the administering of the questionnaires and in the interview stage will be discussed here with reference to the objectives and from that the discussion will move on to the aspects identified in the research problem.

The first objective was to explore the impact of demographic variables along with the experience of apartheid on the formation of feminist identity. The demographic attributes of the sample were discussed in accordance with Klein's (1984) proposed pathways to feminist identity. The first possible indication of feminist identity identified by Klein is marital status, the basic argument being that women who are not married will be more likely to develop a feminist identity or consciousness. The relationship between feminist identity and marital status for the South African sample did not show the same trend. Marital status does not play a role in the development of feminist

identity. Through discussion it became clear that the only factor that may explain the variance in marital status is that of the generational difference between women.

Another attribute mentioned by Klein that may have an influence on the development of feminist identity was activity in the labour force. Before the data was analysed it already became clear that mere activity in the labour force can't be used as a simple predictor of feminist consciousness or identity in the South African context, since all of the women who completed the questionnaire are active in the labour force, but only sixty two percent identified themselves to be feminist. The case in the South African context rather seems to be one of job status and the type of field that women work in, influencing possible feminist identity or consciousness. The trends that were identified here were first that women with a higher job status will be more likely to identify themselves as feminist and second that women working in the fields of administration, the academic sphere and information technology will be more likely to identify themselves as feminist.

Another attribute that may indicate the presence of feminist identity or consciousness, was level of education and this proposed relationship held true in the South African context, making it safe to say that the likeliness of feminist identity or consciousness will increase as the levels of education increases. The next attribute to play a role in feminist consciousness or identity was that of community size, the argument being that the bigger the community size, the more likely women will be to have feminist identity or consciousness. This relationship was absent for the sample, with the distribution of feminist identity being well spaced over the data on community size. It is needed to mention here that this finding may be due to the composition of the sample, since very few women who completed the questionnaire were from rural areas or small towns.

Moving away from purely demographic attributes Klein proceeded to discuss the predictive value that demographic life choices such as religion, political ideology and motherhood may have on the development of feminist identity or consciousness.

The first attribute to be investigated was levels of religious attachment, the argument here holding that the likeliness of feminist identity or consciousness will decrease as levels of religious attachment increases. What was found here was that simply being religious does not hold predictive value for feminist identity or consciousness. The data was further

explored looking at levels of religious attachment, but also here no significant relationship could be found between religious attachment and feminist identity or consciousness. The data gathered in the interviews revealed that women experience religion as a choice rather than an institution with principles that they should adhere to. This may explain the lack of influence that religion will have on feminist identity development, since women choose how they practise religion and it is not enforced on them by society.

Another life choice discussed was that of political ideology. Klein stated that liberal political ideology could be predictive of the presence of feminist identity or consciousness. This relationship is found for the sample in the South African context, but it is not very strong. It is advisable to couple political ideology with other choices such as political behaviour when using it in a predictive manner with regards to feminist identity.

The last life choice mentioned by Klein is that of motherhood. The reasoning here is that being a mother will have a negative influence on the development of feminist identity. This proposed relationship is completely absent for the sample. On the contrary, during the interviews the respondents agreed that motherhood makes one more aware of the sacrifices you have to make as a woman being the primary caretaker of your child. Even if this does not directly lead to feminist identity development, it leads to awareness of inequality. Motherhood was further explored through an item measuring the experience of motherhood, but no significant differences could be identified between feminist and non-feminist women. Earlier reference was made to the possibility of using motherhood as a unifying base for women. The research here shows that this is a possibility, supported by the data gathered during the interview stage. One aspect that came to light however was that women saw motherhood as one of many possible factors that can unite women and that it can not be used as the sole base for unification. Women did perceive motherhood to restrict their mobility. There is some racial difference on this issue with white women viewing the restrictions motherhood may pose as a life choice, as opposed to black and coloured women who experience some of the double burden that being a mother and working implies.

As was apparent in chapter one, a discussion of possible pathways to feminist identity within the South African context will not be complete without discussing the role that the history of apartheid played. Here seventy percent of the sample agreed that the history of apartheid influenced the development of their personal feminisms, making the experience

of apartheid an important predictor of feminist identity. When this item was cross tabulated with race, it became apparent that this relationship is stronger for black and coloured women. Information gathered with the interviews strongly suggests that there is a linear relationship between consciousness of racial and gendered inequality. When asked to identify specific aspects of apartheid that may have influenced feminist identity development, there was difference across racial lines. White women did not identify any specific aspect, coloured women mentioned personal internalization of the environment and for black women there was a definite notion of an issue-driven, politicized experience.

To summarize, the only true demographic predictors of feminist identity or consciousness that was found with this sample for the South African context, were high levels of education, high job status and liberal political ideology. In the category of demographic life choices motherhood and experience of the history of apartheid can at the very least be used as predictors of awareness of inequality that may lead to the development of feminist consciousness.

Another objective identified was to investigate the impact of race as a dividing factor within feminism. With the focus on the simultaneous existence of various identities, this first aspect to be addressed in this chapter was how women view their different identities. In short do they perceive race or gender to be the more salient identity or do they see their identities as becoming salient when they move from one context to the next. The majority of women perceived the salience of their identities to be context bound, followed by a smaller percentage of women who saw gender as their most salient identity and lastly a small percentage of women who saw race as the most salient. This statistic seems encouraging at first, since it implies that the relative unimportance of racial identity will make it less of a divisive force. However, there is a definite racial difference on this item, with black women scoring high on salient racial identity. Context bound identity also predicts that as women move into an environment where their racial identities are challenged, it may be activated in a negative way, causing friction.

Another issue concerning racial identity that was investigated is whether women view their racial identity to be more part of the private sphere of their lives, or more public. Here seventy percent of women felt that their racial identities are more public, implying that race has move to a great extent out of the silence of the personal lives of women into the more political public arena. With regards to racial difference black and coloured women perceive

their racial identities to be more public than white women, pointing to higher levels of racial politicisation. The profile of the sample up to this stage in the discussion is one of women with public racial identities with relatively low levels of salience where their racial identities are concerned. These observations, even though valuable, do not shed much light on the divisive power that racial differences and differences that evolved as a result of apartheid may have to women as a group. The next part of this chapter was dedicated to shed some light on this specific issue.

Firstly women were asked whether they feel comfortable discussing gendered issues across racial barriers or if they prefer to keep gender discussions within their racial groups. The results here show that women do not perceive the space in which gendered issues are discussed to be a problematic issue, with eighty percent of the sample saying that it doesn't matter whether racial issue are discussed within race or across racial barriers. Women were also asked to respond to whether black and white women can work together. Ninety two percent of women agreed with this statement, diffusing the possible divisive power of race for women as a group even further. During the interviews an interesting trend did come to light. Even though women did not report antagonistic division across racial barriers, there was a definite acknowledgement of racial difference, but women seem to accept this difference and they are prepared to incorporate it in their gender work across race.

The discussion then focussed on the possibility of working across barriers created by apartheid such as education, geographic location and class. The sample did not perceive any of these created barriers to be problematic, except for white women who showed some apprehension about working across lines of class. This may be due to the fact that white women perceive difference in class harder to transcend than difference in education or geographic location. During the interviews women did mention some factors that may hamper working across lines of difference. Respondents mentioned anger and differing levels of subordination as being problematic. Economic and educational status were also mentioned, but here the idea was one of being aware of the differences and then dealing with it, rather as seeing the differences as insurmountable barriers. Overall women do not perceive differences to pose a big problem when working together, possible due to the fact that they are aware of their differences and therefore can make allowance for it.

If this is the case however, the origins of the difference debate in feminism become more puzzling. It may seem that the antagonism can be indicative of problems with the movement rather than issues of difference between women. To explore this research was included to discovering how women feel about the feminist movement and if negative feelings exist, determining why this is so. The following discussion starts to explore the manifestations of the negative connotation of the label 'feminist' as defined in the objectives, but the discussion here will not be conclusive and will be expanded upon later in this chapter. Firstly women were asked whether they feel weary of the feminist movement. The response here was somewhat varied. Forty two percent of women agreed with the statement, with thirty percent uncertain and only twenty eight percent of women disagreed. As mentioned earlier, the implication of this is that there are some women who identify themselves to be feminist who are not satisfied with the feminist movement. When the racial dimension of this item was investigated, it became clear that black women feel significantly wearier of the feminist movement than the other races, the reasons for this being discussed already. The profile of especially black women now evolves even further to a group that have some racial salience, have taken their racial identity into the public space and feels weary of the feminist movement, underlining the possibility that there is an integral problem with how the feminist movement is perceived rather than racial antagonism.

Reasons for apprehension of the feminist movement were also explored. The biggest reason for apprehension was the possibility of misrepresentation followed by inadequate theory to address the reality of the lives of women. Reasons for apprehension such as difficulty in working across race and the skewed composition of the movement in terms of race did not come forward strongly as causes of apprehension. A question measuring feelings of apprehension was also included in the interview, but contrary to the data gathered with the questionnaire women did not feel apprehensive about the feminist movement. What they identified instead was what they perceived as shortcomings of the feminist movement. The general response here was that the feminist movement needs to incorporate the Women's movement to a greater extent, especially aspects such as catering for all struggles of women and not focussing only on gender and a greater focus on work at grassroots level.

With regards to the divisive power of race, this research shows a different face of women in South Africa than the one that became evident in the debates in feminist literature. Race

is not perceived to be a dividing force and the response of the sample points to great levels of acceptance where difference is concerned. What seems to be more of a problem are the issue of representation and the lack of theory to address the unique challenges that women are faced with in the South African context.

Another objective that was explored through research was perceptions of the efficiency of state as a formal structure to provide for the needs of women. The overwhelming response of women was that the state has a responsibility to become involved in and ultimately improve the social and economic conditions of women. When women were confronted with more specific statements such as the state needs to provide for basic needs, protect against gender-based violence and provide for the needs of aids patients, all women agreed wholeheartedly, with very little variance between feminist and non-feminist women, pointing to feminist sentiment on issues, even in the absence of self-identification as a feminist.

Another objective closely linked to the efficiency of the state is how women perceived themselves as a group along with their potential for politically motivated action. These objectives are linked because if women feel that change is needed in government do they feel that they are in a position of enough strength to bring about change? When asked how much influence women have on the state, women felt that they have some influence, but not enough. When these reported feelings were explored further in terms of whether women experience feelings of inequality with men, all women regardless of self-identification as a feminist reported feelings of inequality. The trend continues even further when women were asked whether they favour the removal of legal constraints to promote the equality of women. All women agreed once more regardless of self-identification as feminists. The observation was made earlier that women support the values of feminism, without wanting to take the label of a feminist and this is well supported here by the responses to the above questions. The big difference here is related to behaviour. When the respondents were asked whether they engage in behaviour to promote removal of constraints, feminist women scored significantly higher than non-feminist women. During the interviews women were asked about the type of activism they practise and only one respondent reported an effort to change government structure, while the other respondents reported work on grassroots level, supporting the notion of staring with the lives of women.

Bringing the discussion back to the aforementioned objective of how women view themselves as a group with the potential for politically motivated action, the following deductions can be made. Women are not satisfied with their influence on the state, there are feelings of inequality and they support the removal of constraints for women. These are all favourable conditions for politically motivated action and women share these feelings regardless of the presence of self-identification as feminist. However, when women were asked whether they will act on these feelings, feminist women are much more likely to move from feelings of dissatisfaction to activism. Even though women may feel dissatisfied, it seems that they need to develop some form of feminist consciousness or identity before they will act to try and address their feelings of dissatisfaction. Possibly one of the most important objectives to be included in this thesis is the ground level manifestations of the negative connotations of the label 'feminist'. The research addressed this through a number of items included in the questionnaire and some questions in the interview. When women had to distinguish between the feminist and Women's movements, it became clear that perceptions of the Women's movement are more favourable. In general the feminist movement was defined as radical and intellectual with a strong anti-male sentiment, while the Women's movement was defined as a movement promoting equality and concerning itself with community issues. This trend was supported when women had to indicate their feelings of support using a feeling thermometer for women, the Women's movement and the feminist movement respectively. Here it became clear that as the radical potential of the group increase women feel less supportive of the group, pointing to a need for a less radical gender approach.

The negative connotation of the feminist label was further confirmed when women were asked during the interview stage whether they feel apprehensive about taking the feminist label even though they support the values propagated by feminism. Only one respondent said that she feel comfortable with the label feminist, while the rest chose to use terms such as gender activist or gender sensitive. The biggest problems women identified with feminism are that it is exclusive in only focussing on gender and ignoring the other aspects of the lives of women and that it is anti-male, ignoring the bonds that women have with their partners or with other males that support them. From the discussion above it becomes abundantly clear that women have some negative perceptions of the feminist movement are therefore refusing to take the label.

Even though women may refuse to take the feminist label, this does not imply that they do not have feminist sentiment. The next objective was included to explore precisely that: whether there is a degree of feminist sentiment even in the absence of self-identification as a feminist. According to the scale included in the questionnaire eighty six percent of women do show levels of feminist identity compared to only sixty two percent of women who identified themselves as feminist. This supports the argument that women do support the values propagated by feminism, but that they have such negative perceptions of the movement that they do not want to publicly ally themselves with feminism. Women feel more comfortable with a less radical movement such as the Women's movement.

The last objective focuses on the more practical issue of research and was included to determine the applicability of measuring instruments developed outside the South African context, locally. The analysis of the data in Chapter 5 was based on the pathways to feminist identity as defined by Klein. Moving away from the valuable information that came to light during the discussion of the demographic variables and the variables concerned with life choices, the measuring instrument did fall short when applied to the South African context. The problems with the measuring instrument here were threefold and may point to some guideline in assessing foreign instruments for application in the South African context. First, the proposed relationships between the demographic variables and feminist identity did not hold true for the South African scenario, with the exception of two variables. This clearly indicates that proposed relationships can by no means be applied to the South African context without testing. We can not assume that marital status influence feminist identity and make assumptions on such grounds without testing it first. Second, some of the proposed variables did influence the development of feminist identity, but not in the manner predicted in Klein's research. For the sample the experience of motherhood did have value with regards to feminist identity, but the reasoning behind the relationship was vastly different from that proposed by Klein. This underlines the different connotations women may have to certain concepts as we move from one context to the next. Third, the pathways proposed by Klein were not exhaustive. The failure to include the experience of apartheid as a possible pathway would have lead to the omission of an important aspect of feminist identity development in the South African context.

The other foreign measuring instrument used was the scale constructed by Fisher to measure levels of feminist identity development. Here the scale was scrutinized for any possible reference that may reflect American values or circumstances specific to the

American way of life, before including it in the questionnaire. Items that were not universally applicable were omitted. The rest of the items included in the questionnaire were based on measures already used in research conducted in the South African context and can with fair certainty be taken to be valid. Some items were constructed from scratch to explore some concepts previously not researched in the South African context, but the items were of a simple nature, leaving little room misinterpretation. To conclude, measuring instruments developed outside the South African context can serve as valuable guidelines in studying similar concepts locally, but care must be taken to apply such measures with great care and awareness of the differences between the context that they originated in and the context that we apply them in. This makes research in third world contexts a challenging task, but in the absence of standardized measuring instruments, specifically in the field of gender, it clearly points to a gap in the academic space that need filling. One needs to start looking at the specific circumstances of women, taking no factor as a given before that factor is not properly assessed as established as applicable to the context. Furthermore the social, cultural and political factors at play in third world countries can not be assumed to be similar and it is needed that context is specified and the unique dynamics are taken into account before one venture into research. If researchers fail to do this they run the risk of misrepresenting circumstances where change needs to be worked and by implication complicating the process of the eradication of gendered discrimination by not addressing the true nature of the problems.
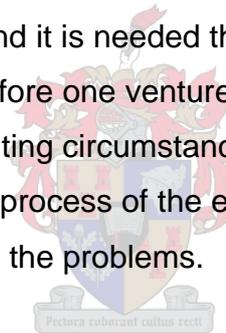
The discussion will now move on to the aspects pertaining to difference and division as defined in the research problem. The first aspect of the research problem focussed on how women develop a feminist identity, with reference to the impact of other markers of identity such as race, motherhood and so forth. On a demographic level the only two variables that have predictive value are high levels of education and in close connection to this high job status. This contributes to the development of feminist identity because women are exposed to different ideas and environments, often challenging previously held convictions. This can lead to a questioning of their gendered identity and how they are challenged because of this, giving rise to feminist consciousness. Motherhood as a marker of identity does influence feminist identity development, through the fostering of circumstance favourable for the development of feminist sympathy or consciousness. One theme that did become clear during the course of the research is that motherhood does make you aware of the sacrifices that you are making through being the primary caretaker of your child. The notion here seems to be of awareness of gender differences, rather than

the development of feminist consciousness. This may influence the development of feminism consciousness since feminist consciousness as a political consciousness starts with the awareness of difference. Added to this women also perceive motherhood to influence their mobility making them more aware of how it sets them apart from males.

Ten years after the transition to democracy, race as a marker of identity does not have the divisive power it is proclaimed to have for women involved in the feminist movement and it does not have great influence on the development of feminism identity. Where the racial aspect is important with regards to the development of feminist identity, is the experience of apartheid. The experience of apartheid contributes to development of feminist identity, through making women aware of inequality. During the struggle women became aware of inequality on a racial level and this spilled over to how they view their gender. This concludes the discussion of the first aspect of the research problem. No other markers of identity showed significant influence on the development of feminist identity.

The next aspect of the research problem was how the negative connotation of the label feminist plays a role in feminist identity development. The profile of the sample is one of women with high levels of support for the values propagated by feminism, but there is a definite reluctance to take the feminism label. The deduction that we can make here is that support for feminism does exist, but that women do not want to ally themselves to the movement. The women included in the sample perceive the feminist movement to be exclusive, anti-male and too radical. To conclude the negative connotation of the label feminist does not hold women back from developing feminist sentiment and consciousness, but women are expressing a need for a different type of movement to support their needs.

The last aspect of the research problem was the implications that the current nature of feminist identity holds for feminist solidarity. There is an undisputed need for a movement concerned with the issue that women struggle with, but the data here suggests that this will be a movement based on the principles of the Women's movement rather than the feminist movement. It seems that the feminist movement has failed to move with the changing needs of women and that the radical, anti-male approach identified by the respondents, is outdated to the point of alienating women. Even so, women do not report being weary of the movement, but they do feel that the feminist movement needs to make some changes, the most important of which is to provide space for and ally itself with the Women's

movement. This indicates that the feminist movement as it exists now and is perceived now will need to adapt or face the prospect of disintegration as a political interest group working for the betterment of the lives of women.

In response to the research problem the more feasible option seem to be an effort to encourage *women's* solidarity and not feminist solidarity. One aspect that is encouraging in this instance is that women do not perceive the feminist and Women's movements to differ much and it seems that for women involved in gender work the two have started to merge already. This is important because the feminist movement, as argued before, can make valuable contributions with regards to the production of knowledge and access to formalized structures, while the Women's movement can more than fill the gap of seeing to the practical needs of women. If the two movements can manage ally themselves, it can be a powerful force working for the betterment of he lives of women. The prospects for this do not look so bleak, especially in the light of the absence of antagonistic racial sentiment and the willingness of women to work across other barriers such as education and class. If the feminist movement fails to ally itself with the Women's movement, the possibility of it surviving as a political interest group concerned with the eradication of gendered discrimination is slim.

The need for women to work together and the importance of a cohesive movement strong in numbers have been discussed at length in this thesis. Even though women may be able to win some of their personal battles individually, there still remain a great number of women in the South African population who are not in the same privileged position and who can greatly benefit from a movement involved in identifying the needs of women such as healthcare, legal aid and housing and providing for such needs. A definite problem with the feminist movement is that it is not a cohesive movement and that it does not focus on practical change in women's lives, hence the rising of the women's movement catering for more specific needs. The need to redefine South African feminism in term of structure, purpose and accessibility has been chanted like a mantra throughout this thesis.

What started out as a movement with the interests of women at heart and with the aim to change the male dominated nature of society in such a manner that the interests of women are sufficiently catered for, has now evolved to a movement with not enough impact on the lived reality of the lives of women. The feminist movement is perceived by many women as

not catering to their needs, hence the rising of alternative movements, such as the women's movement, in an attempt to address the interests of women on a more practical level. The predicament here is that the feminist movement with its history of political involvement is very well equipped to aid women, but because of issues such as exclusion and misrepresentation, women are more reluctant to draw on this ability of the feminist movement to be of practical value to them.
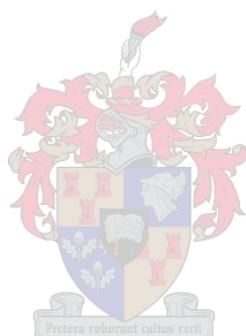
Appendix 1: Feminist Identity Questionnaire

Feminist identity questionnaire

1.) Respondent code:

Section A

1.) What do you see as your racial identity?
                a.) black
                b.) coloured
                c.) indian
                d.) white

2.) Which of the following best describe your marital status?
                a.) single
                b.) married
                c.) divorced
                d.) co-habitation
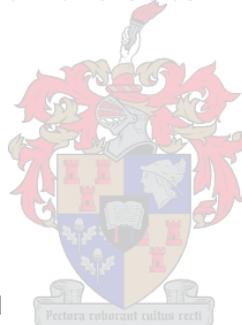
3.) What is your level of education?
                a.) no education
                b.) primary school
                c.) some high school
                d.) matric
                e.) post-matric diploma
                f.) bachelors degree
                g.) honours degree
                h.) masters degree
                i.) doctorate

4.) What is your average monthly income?
                a.) R16 000- R20 000+
                b.) R10 000- R15 999
                c.) R7 000- R9 999
                d.) R4 000- R6 999
                e.) R1 400- R3 999
                f.) R500- R1 399
                g.) Up to R499
                h.) no income

5.) Which of the following best describes your geographic location?

        a.) rural

        b.) small town

        c.) large town

        d.) city

6.) How old are you?

        a.) 20-30 years

        b.) 31-40 years

        c.) 41-50 years

        d.) 51-60 years

        e.) 61-70 years

        f.) Older than 70 years

7.) What is your language preference?

        a.) English

        b.) Afrikaans

        c.) Zulu

        d.) Xhosa

        e.) North-Sotho

        f.) North-Sotho

        g.) Tswana

        h.) Tsonga

        I.) Venda

        j.) other
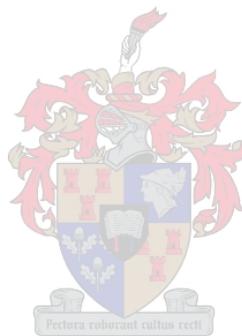
8.) Do you have a religion?

        a.) yes

        b.) no

If no, skip question 9.

9.) If so, please indicate your religious preference?

        a.) traditional English protestant churches

        b.) traditional Afrikaans protestant churches

        c.) traditional African churches

        d.) catholic

        e.) pentacostal churches

        f.) Muslim/ Islam

        g.) Hindu

        h.) Jewish

        I.) agnostic

        j.) Christian

        k.) other

        l.) none

10.) Do you have a political affiliation?

                a.) yes

                b.) no

If no, skip question 11.

11.) If so, please indicate your political affiliation?

                a.) African national congress

                b.) National party

                c.) Inkatha freedom party

                d.) Freedom front

                e.) Democratic alliance

                f.) Pan Africanist congress

                g.) African Christian democratic party

                h.) South African Communist party

                I.) United Democratic

                Movement

                j.) other

12.) What type of work do you do?

13.) What is your rank in your job?
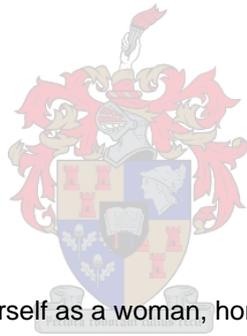
Section B

1.) Sometimes a woman might think of herself as a woman, homemaker, working woman or feminist.

	never	seldom	some of the time	most of the time	all the time
a.) How often do you think of yourself as a woman?					
b.) How often do you think of yourself as a homemaker?					
c.) How often do you think of yourself as a working woman?					
d.) How often do you think of yourself as a feminist?					

2.) The following item works on the principle of a thermometer where 0' indicates cold and
   100' indicates hot. If you had to indicate your feelings towards the following groups
   in terms of "warmness", where would you place yourself?

2.1) women

| 10 | 20 | 30 | 40 | 50 | 60 | 70 | 80 | 90 | 100 |

2.2) the women's movement

| 10 | 20 | 30 | 40 | 50 | 60 | 70 | 80 | 90 | 100 |

2.3) feminists

| 10 | 20 | 30 | 40 | 50 | 60 | 70 | 80 | 90 | 100 |

3.) What are your feelings concerning the following statements?

	agree strongly	agree	uncertain	disagree	disagree strongly
a.) Government should make every effort to improve the social and economic position of women.					
b.) If women were more actively involved in the running of the affairs of the country, it would increase the respect they personally achieve.					

4.) The best strategy for women to change law and social processes that cause inequality in
   society is:

   a.) to work together
   b.) to work individually
   c.) both

5.) How much influence do women as a group have in South Africa?
   a.) too much influence
   b.) the right amount of influence
   c.) too little influence
   d.) no influence
   e.) don't know

6.) The difference between men and women in income, occupational status and position in South
   African society in general, is a result of:
   a.) systematic obstacles and institutional arrangements
   b.) women's personal deficiencies

7.) On a scale where 1 indicates that women should have an equal role with men in
running business, industry and government and 7 indicates that a woman's place is in the
home, where would you place yourself?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7

8.) Our society is made up of many different kinds of people. Choose one of the following groups
that you feel close to in terms of shared values and interests:

a.) African people	
b.) white people	
c.) coloured people	
d.) Indian people	
e.) Zulus	
f.) Xhosas	
g.) big business	
h.) workers	
I.) people from your own language group	
j.) people from your religious group	
k.) rural people	
l.) urban people	
m.) women	
n.) people from your political party	
o.) labour unions	
p.) housewives	
q.) people with AIDS	

9.) There different ideas concerned with the situation of women. Do you agree or
disagree with the following ideas?

	agree strongly	agree	uncertain	disagree	disagree strongly
a.) Women should be the primary caretakers of children, while men should be the breadwinners.					
b.) Women should be equal to men in their work and careers.					
c.) Persuade the political parties to give women the same chances as men of reaching responsible positions in parties					
d.) The state should provide for basic needs such as water, healthcare and housing to improve women's lives.					
e.) The state should protect women against gender-based violence.					
f.) Persuade political parties to give women the same chances as men of becoming candidates for elections.					
g.) Government should provide pregnant women with Aids with free Nevirapine.					

10.) What is your opinion of the movements which have come about recently and whose aim is the liberation of women?

        a.) very high opinion

        b.) quite a good opinion

        c.) rather poor opinion

        d.) very bad opinion

11.) Which of the following best describes you?

        a.) I belong to such a women's movement

        b.) I can see myself as a member of such a movement

        c.) I am completely against being a member of such a movement

12.) The situation of women, compared to that of men, is often discussed nowadays. In your opinion, is there a problem or not for women in society? 1 means there is no problem and 10 means there is a very serious problem.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

13.) I favour the removal of any legal constraints that prohibit women from pursuing their potential for individual development as fully as men do

        a.) agree strongly

        b.) agree

        c.) uncertain

        d.) disagree

        e.) disagree strongly

14.) If you agree, do you engage in behaviour that reflects such beliefs?

        a.) yes

        b.) no

15.) If yes, please give examples of the type of behaviour you would engage in.

1.) What are your feelings concerning the following statements?

	agree strongly	agree	uncertain	disagree	disagree strongly
a.) I want to work to improve women's status.					
b.) I like being a traditional female.					
c.) I feel angry when I think about the way I am treated by men and boys.					
d.) I am very interested in women artists.					
e.) I feel like I have blended my female attributes with my unique personal qualities.					
f.) Men receive many advantages in society and because of this are against equality for women.					
g.) I am very interested in women musicians.					
h.) I don't see much point in questioning the general expectation that men should be masculine and women should be feminine.					
I.) I am very committed to a cause that I believe contributes to a more fair and just world for all people.					
j.) I am proud to be a competent woman.					
k.) I am very interested in women writers.					
l.) One thing I especially like about being a woman is that men will offer me their seat in a crowded bus or open doors for me because I am a woman.					
m.) I am willing to make certain sacrifices to effect change in this society in order to create a non-sexist, peaceful place where all people have equal opportunities.					
n.) Gradually, I am beginning to see how society favours men.					
o.) I enjoy the pride and self-assurance that comes from being a strong female.					

Section D

1.) I am a religious person.
    a.) agree strongly
    b.) agree
    c.) uncertain
    d.) disagree
    e.) disagree strongly

2.) If you agree, do you take some moments to pray, meditate or contemplate, to perform traditional rituals or something similar to that?
    a.) never
    b.) once in a while
    c.) quite often, but not regularly
    d.) regularly, several times a week
    e.) regularly, once a day or more

3.) How would you describe your personal political convictions?
    a.) very conservative
    b.) conservative
    c.) in between
    d.) liberal
    e.) very liberal
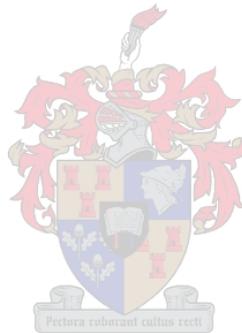
4.) Do you have children?
    a.) yes
    b.) no

If no, skip question 5.

5.) Parenting takes up a lot of my time.
    a.) agree strongly
    b.) agree
    c.) uncertain
    d.) disagree
    e.) disagree strongly

6.) People ascribe to different identities in life, which all co-exist at the same time. If you had to prioritize would you identify race or gender as the more important identity, or do you see identity as context-bound?
    a.) race
    b.) gender
    c.) context bound

7.) Do you see your racial identity as public or private?
                a.) public
                b.) private

8.) Do you see your gendered identity as public or private?
                a.) public
                b.) private

9.) Do you feel more comfortable discussing gendered issues within your racial group, across racial barriers or doesn't it matter ?
                a.) within race
                b.) across race
                c.) it doesn't matter

10.) The society that we live in is marked by social constraints. Which of the following had a bigger influence on the development of your self-concept as a woman?
                a.) gender-appropriate behaviour prescribed by society
                b.) subjective experiences in my immediate environment
                c.) my historical background and my culture

11.) What are your feelings concerning the following statements?

	agree strongly	agree	uncertain	disagree	disagree strongly
a.) The feminist movement does work practical/material changes in the lives of women.					
b.) Black and white women in South Africa can work together.					
c.) People in my social environment expect me to behave in a certain manner because I am a woman.					
d.) It is not possible for educated and uneducated women to work together.					
e.) I have a strong sense of my identity as a woman and this is not easily compromised as I move from one social context to the next.					
f.) The feminist movement is responsible for some strategic changes in the lives of women.					
g.) It should not be a problem for urban and rural women to work together.					
h.) I have little or no power to alter the attributes that others assign to me on grounds of my gender.					
I.) I constantly re-evaluate my identity as a woman through incorporating new experiences and information.					
j.) A woman's class will not hamper her ability to work with other women.					
k.) Sometimes I feel like I am excluded from social interaction on grounds of my gender.					
l.) Gender stereotyping hampers the ability of women to reach their full potential.					
m.) Men can be allies for women in the struggle against gender oppression.					
n.) It is stressful to move from one social context to the next, since I have to make allowance for different sets of expectations.					

12.) Sometimes I feel weary of the feminist movement.
                 a.) agree strongly
                 b.) agree
                 c.) uncertain
                 d.) disagree
                 e.) disagree strongly

13.) I you agree, which of the following best describes the reason for your apprehension?

      a.) the possibility of misrepresentation

      b.) difficulty in working across racial barriers

      c.) skewed composition of the movement in terms of race and class

      d.) inadequate theory to address the reality of your life

      e.) not enough possibility of practical change that it can work for you personally

14.) Do you see yourself as a feminist?

      a.) yes

      b.) no

If no, ignore the rest of the questions.

15.) How did you become aware of the feminist movement?

      a.) through ideological exploration

      b.) through the experience of personal struggles in your life

16.) In your opinion what is the most viable road to solidarity within the feminist movement?

      a.) shared ideology

      b.) shared issues

      c.) combination of shared ideology and issues

17.) What are your feelings concerning the following statements?

	agree strongly	agree	uncertain	disagree	disagree strongly
a.) The history of apartheid influenced the development of my own personal feminism.					
b.) My political convictions and/or party preference influence the type of feminist issues I see as important.					

Appendix 2: Structure of interviews

1. If you had to distinguish between the feminist movement and the women's movement in the South African context, how would you define each movement?

(Insert: For the remainder of this interview I would like you to keep in mind that for the purpose of this research the women's movement is defined as a movement who concerns itself with short term changes in women's conditions of inequality, in comparison to the feminist movement defined with a focus on long term changes in power relations between men and women and other relations of oppression.)

2. Do you support the values propagated by feminism, for instance gender equality, but still feel apprehensive about taking the feminist label? If so, why?
3. In your opinion, can motherhood be a unifying factor for women?
4. Can the experience of motherhood lead to increased gender consciousness or even feminist sentiments and if so, how?
5. Do you experience motherhood as restricting your experiences to home life, or is it part of your experience of the public domain?
6. If you have religious attachment, do you feel that this will influence your development of feminist identity and visa versa. Please explain how.
7. Where you involved in the struggle against apartheid?
8. If yes, did this contribute to your feminist identity development and if so, how?
9. Which aspects of apartheid influenced your feminist identity development?
10. Can you identify any other set of experiences that contributed to the development of your feminist identity, if yes, what?
11. Do you feel that race is a dividing factor for women concerning gendered issues?
12. In the absence of race can you think of any other factors that divide women?
13. Do you feel apprehensive of the feminist movement, if yes, please cite the most important reasons for your feelings.
14. Are you prepared to move past sympathy with the issues facing women today and engage in action to remedy such issues? If yes, what type of actions have you engaged in?
15. Are you willing to address the struggles you experience on a more public and even political level? If yes, do you feel that:

a. You are aware of measures already in place to aid you in this?

b. Do you feel that you have access to such measures, including organized structures?
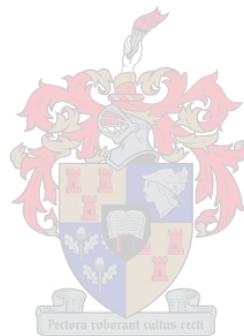
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