

EXPLORING THE PARADOXICAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN
FEMINIST CONSCIOUSNESS AND PARTICIPATION

by

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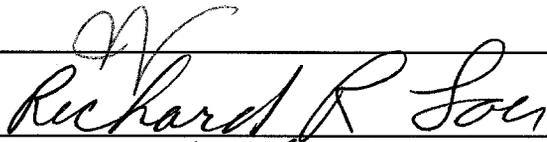
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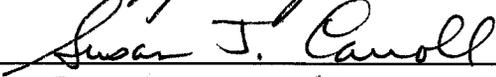
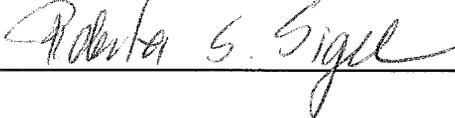
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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION
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This dissertation provides a critical exploration of the anomalous relationship between feminist consciousness and participation. Specifically, this dissertation argues there are two compelling reasons to question the paradox of feminist consciousness' non-relationship to electoral participation. The first argument focuses on methodologically flawed and theoretically underdeveloped measures of feminist consciousness used in past research to establish its non-relationship to participation. Using an array of new indicators in the 1992 National Election Study, I explore the possibility that the non-relationship between feminist consciousness and participation is an artifact of faulty measures.

Secondly, I take issue with the underlying assumption that group consciousness leads to more participation. This argument states that regardless of how feminist consciousness is measured, the historical disconnect between attempts to address gender inequality and electoral politics, coupled with participatory norms that favor individual over group interests, make the relationship between feminist consciousness and politics difficult to foster.

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Introduction: Anomalous Women

Women's electoral participation matters. Indeed, the 1996 Presidential election provides evidence of women's electoral power. Former President Clinton's victory over Bob Dole is owed in part to the largest gender gap in history. Fifty-four percent of women voted for Clinton, compared to only 43 percent of men – an eleven point gender gap that was the largest in history. The fact that more women than men voted for Clinton resulted in what some feminist activists claim was the first time women voters elected the president of the United States (Carroll 1999). Regardless of whether women's mobilization results in a decisive victory for a candidate, women participate politically in numbers that are increasingly shaping the political landscape.

Having said that, women are not a monolith. Women are as much dissimilar among themselves as they are to men. What motivates one woman to become engaged in politics may not resonate with her neighbor. Electoral participation is becoming increasingly understood as behavior that most choose *not* to do. Indeed, the usual question posed by political science researchers when attempting to explain participation has recently been turned on its head by asking “Why *don't* people participate?” (Verba, Schlozman and Brady 1995). Some of the more compelling reasons offered to explain why an individual eschews electoral engagement involve a lack of resources (Verba and Nie 1972; Wolfinger and Rosenstone 1980; Verba et al. 1995), not being asked (Verba et al. 1995; Rosenstone and Hansen 1993), and the irrationality of voting (Downs 1957; Olson 1965). All of these reasons are as much applicable to women as they are to men, but they are also equally incapable of addressing the importance of gender in explaining why some women participate while others do not.

Into the breach steps those who have examined the psychological motivations for engagement in group consciousness research (Miller, Gurin, Gurin and Malanchuk, 1981; Klein 1984; Conover 1984; Gurin 1985; Tolleson Rinehart 1992). Women's group consciousness has been singled out repeatedly for its potential usefulness in shedding light on the political distinctiveness of women. This is because group consciousness is expected to foster more engagement among group conscious women due to the transforming effects of developing a group based identity.

Key to understanding the supposed connection between consciousness and participation is the tension between group and individual interests in the U.S. Citizens are predisposed to evaluate the political world through an individualistic prism. "What does this mean for me?" is the default question most ask themselves when faced with a political choice. The decision to participate is among these choices, and adding the awareness of group interests that arise from having a group identity is thought to increase the likelihood that one becomes engaged.

However, the participation that is supposed to stem from women's group consciousness has not materialized in the literature. Women are not only less likely to demonstrate group consciousness relative to other social and ethnic groups in the U.S. (Gurin et al. 1980; Miller et al. 1981; Gurin 1985), they are also less likely to show a connection between consciousness and engagement (Miller et al. 1981; Tolleson Rinehart 1992). In short, the current state of knowledge suggests that women derive no meaningful importance from their gender identity when it comes to understanding what motivates their engagement.

To date, there has been no critical analysis of women's group consciousness

research and the curious finding that women are the anomaly when it comes to engagement. It is indeed striking that women appear to be largely unaffected by gender identity. Why do psychological motivations stemming from group identity appear to work for some groups, while not working for women? The answers may lie in problematical measures and analyses that underlie the quantitative research on women's group consciousness. But there is also room to question the unchallenged assumption that group consciousness encourages participation regardless of the group being considered.

In this dissertation, I provide the first critical analysis of feminist consciousness and its relationship to electoral participation. In light of the understudied nature of women's group consciousness, I contend there is ample room to question the seemingly paradoxical relationship group identified women have with electoral participation. Indeed, I find evidence to disconfirm earlier findings that show a non-relationship between feminist consciousness and electoral participation. I also, through new qualitative evidence, establish a different way to measure feminist consciousness that allows for a more nuanced understanding of the ways in which women politicize their identities as *feminist* women. Through this, I find that women often have a difficult time seeing the relevance of politics for remedying problems associated with gender inequality. What follows is a detailed discussion of the ways in which I address the paradoxical relationship between feminist consciousness and electoral participation.

The mismeasurement hypothesis

The few blunt instruments used to measure women's group consciousness have been cited time and again by women scholars as problematical for truly demonstrating the extent to which women exhibit group consciousness (Conover and Sapiro 1992; Sapiro

and Conover 2001). Social desirability bias and question ambiguity are among the most pressing concerns with existing measures. In particular, the “equal roles” question is commonly used to measure feminist consciousness, but overtime the response distribution has become more skewed toward the egalitarian end. It seems respondents are less inclined to give a response that endorses the idea that a woman’s place is in the home, even if that is a true reflection of their beliefs. Furthermore, the question that asks respondents if they feel “close to” other women conjures up a variety of contexts in which to base a response. It is difficult to discern whether a woman is responding to the idea of emotional closeness, despite this being key to its proper use in a measure of feminist consciousness.

But there are also problems with the conceptualization of women’s group consciousness in existing research. As it stands now, the research suggests there are two dimensions to group consciousness among women -- an emotional and cognitive dimension. Each is measured by a single indicator, and neither account for the importance of feminism in providing consciousness with an underlying belief structure. I believe that calling it “gender” consciousness, as is often the case, fails to provide the reader with an understanding of how gender operates to define a woman’s understanding of the political world. Absent any measure of feminism, research on women’s group consciousness cannot live up to the expectation that it will shed light on how, rather than merely if, women have come to understand the political importance of gender.

Second, the existing, two-dimensional measure of women’s group consciousness does not include a measure of attitudes toward collective action. This is a theoretically important element of group consciousness that should not be excluded from measurement

among women simply because it is an infrequent question in commonly used political science data.

I also contend that the standard method of data collection for group consciousness research is potentially problematical. The method of choice is often large scale telephone or in-person surveys with a closed-ended question format. The American National Election Studies (NES) – frequent sources of group consciousness research – measure a variety of attitudes and behaviors among thousands of people. Because of the vast array of issues and behaviors covered in NES surveys, there is little room to pursue group consciousness measurement. What limited space is available is usually taken up by closed-ended questions that ask respondents to locate themselves along a continuum measuring attitudes toward women's role in society. This may not be the best way to measure women's group consciousness. It could be that qualitative research promotes a more accurate understanding of the nature of the phenomenon, as well as being able to provide insight into whether group conscious women recognize the political implications of their identity.

Finally, I argue that there are better ways to assess the relationship between women's group consciousness and participation than those used in past research. Response distributions and bivariate correlations between a measure of consciousness and engagement offer preliminary insight into how things work, but they alone should not (and have) been used to analyze how consciousness affects participation. Furthermore, given the widespread acceptance of women's group consciousness' multi-dimensionality, not accounting for how each dimension – by itself and in conjunction with the other dimensions – affects participation provides fodder for critics suspicious of the apparent

contradiction between group conscious women and participation.

The inadequate measurement of women's group consciousness, which includes a preference for one research method over another, may be what underlies findings that attest to the lack of a relationship between consciousness and participation. Women's group consciousness may be simply mismeasured in previous analyses, something owed not to the creativity or thoughtfulness of researchers, but rather to the limited availability of good data to address the relationship between women's group consciousness and participation. If true, a new analysis using data that can address problems with the existing measures and methods may reveal shortcomings in existing knowledge.

Looking beyond the data

However, another way to interpret the non-findings assumes the hypothesis driving research into women's group consciousness and participation is misinformed. This argument remains skeptical of previous analyses that suffer from methodological problems. But rather than focusing on the data, this argument focuses its criticism on the assumption that, *ceteris paribus*, group consciousness promotes participation among all social and ethnic groups.

There are a variety of reasons to question the expected connection between women's group consciousness and participation. Some are non-specific to women, such as the difficulty of seeing beyond individual interests and forming an awareness of collective identities in the U.S., while others are tied more to women, such as the intimate relations they share with their "oppressors" (i.e., men). There is also the ahistoric framework used to estimate the impact of consciousness among all social and ethnic groups. For women, the women's movement is not synonymous with political protests or

attempts to remedy gender inequality through the political system. Thus, it is questionable that assume that consciousness will heighten participation among group conscious women. All of these reasons combine to form a uniquely difficult environment that hinders a woman's ability to not only form a group consciousness, but also link it to political engagement.¹

First, there is the problem of simply forming a group identity. Regardless of whether the group under investigation is women, group consciousness in the United States is difficult to foster. At its heart, consciousness involves an individual overcoming the ethos of individualism. To succeed in life one need rely only on his or her honest efforts and hard work. The rest takes care of itself, or so the story goes. Tocqueville (1945) saw it as a defining characteristic of America, and described those who adhere to the ethos of individualism as believing "They...imagine that their whole destiny is in their own hands" (506) .

The extent to which Americans hold dear this principle can be seen in responses to political figures who define their personal histories as guided by the ethos of individualism. Those who can credibly cloak themselves in the aura of the "Everyday Joe" who rises to prominence through determination, hard work, and, most importantly, the ability to achieve one's goals on his or her own, are often embraced by large segments of society.

Recent examples include Ronald Reagan. To a large degree, the mass appeal he

¹ This is not to suggest an exploration of the "mismeasurement" hypothesis is any less compelling. Regardless of whether it proves beneficial to uncovering a relationship, it is important to understand how measurement may complicate the understanding of how, if at all, women's group consciousness promotes political participation. Given the limited array of questions to measure group consciousness in the past, a fresh attempt at uncovering a new measure may prove worthwhile.

was able to achieve in the electorate rested on the “rugged individualist” persona he was skilled at creating. Before becoming governor of California in 1966, his only prior political experience was testifying before the House Committee on Un-American Activities in 1947 on the matter of communist sympathy within the Screen Actors Guild. His two-term stint as governor of California was followed by the presidency in 1980. While climbing the political ladder to the presidency, Reagan was successful in taking with him the idea that one man alone can not only change the course of his life, but also that of a nation. Those who have analyzed the symbolic meaning of the Reagan presidency note the importance of individualism for understanding public support. To wit:

The simple step-by-step biography of his early life is analytically necessary for it points to "national" values that Reagan seemed to epitomize: hard work in the face of adversity, the morality superficially inherent in attending a Christian college that forbade drinking and smoking, and the perseverance and individualism that led to success on the football field and in campus politics. These values later become central to his presidency, which Robert Dallek describes as "a celebration of old values. Autonomy, self-help, free enterprise, individualism, liberty, hard work, morality, religion, and patriotism," all of which came to be the "identifying symbols" analogous to Reagan. (Source unknown, www.columbia.edu/~ca206/alger.html)

Even those with a rich political pedigree can appeal to voters' individualism.

Despite George W. Bush's wealth and well-connected political family, many find him an appealing leader because he represents a “go it alone” mentality, even if that may not be a true reflection of his past.

The point of this brief discussion of the presidency and public opinion is to argue for the potency of individualism in the American belief system. We are a nation of individuals, not groups, and overcoming that distinction is a necessary element to forming

group based identities.²

This is a difficult hurdle to overcome. Even though race and ethnicity have been acceptable criteria to use for increasing diversity on college campuses since 1978, they have angered many because of the appearance that an individual's merits can be trumped by group interests. Today, the University of Michigan's race-conscious admissions policy faces Supreme Court scrutiny, and could be deemed unconstitutional because it evaluates potential students with specific attention to their racial and ethnic background. Many find the idea of special consideration for racial minorities repugnant not because they long for colleges and universities dominated by white students, but rather because of what they see as the wrongful assumptions underlying the University of Michigan's policy. To them, giving minority students extra points in the scale used by Michigan to evaluate applicants suggests that we as a society have no faith in the ability of minority students to compete on par with white students. The admission policy violates a basic assumption of American values by implying that minority students cannot succeed without help from others, namely the collective identity they derive from other African Americans and Latinos, to name but a few.

This argument against the Michigan admission policy is supported by some prominent African Americans and Latinos. Condoleeza Rice, the president's National Security Advisor and former provost of Stanford University, and Alberto R. Gonzalez, the White House chief counsel, were reportedly instrumental in convincing the Bush administration to file a brief in support of the students who challenged the Michigan

² Those who chafe at hyphenated identities, such as African-Americans, Asian-Americans, or Hispanic-Americans do so because the names violate the superiority of individuals over groups. Critics of hyphenated identities would argue that those who use these terms are not content with just being an everyday American, but instead require some special group affiliation.

policy (Allen and Lane 2003). The fact that they themselves occupy high profile positions in the White House and are African American and Latino adds some legitimacy to the argument that race-conscious admissions are an affront to racial and ethnic minorities more so than if only white leaders were making the argument. For those who may be swayed by the argument that diversity rests on the ability of Michigan and other universities to employ race-conscious admission standards, individualist based arguments against the policy by politically powerful minorities is a powerful counterweight to affirmative action in education and beyond.³

Affirmative action in colleges and universities is just one example of how difficult it is to formulate public policy through reference to group based identities. Anything that appears to give special consideration to groups over individuals will always be seen as a direct attack on the sacred importance of the ethos of individualism.

Relatedly, Americans like to believe they live in a classless society, or at least one where class strata are not clearly defined and upward mobility is possible through hard work. Despite evidence to the contrary, 19 percent of Americans place themselves in the top one percent of income earners, and another 20 percent believe they will reach that status someday, a phenomenon Brooks (2002) describes as “the triumph of hope over self-interest.” Unfortunately for most, research suggests the class system in the U.S. is relatively stable and not that porous.⁴ There appears to be minimal generational class

³ Of course, debates over affirmative action are more complex than described here. In addition to understanding the debate through individual versus group interests, political ideology weighs heavily in the debate as liberal Democrats fear attempts to roll back affirmative action are part of a larger effort to undo equity reforms for racial and ethnic minorities.

⁴ I am referring to class distinctions that arise from differences in household income. Political preferences, lifestyle choices, and consumption patterns are way of measuring social class that takes into account the cultural lives of Americans. Some argue that measuring social class in this manner shows that class has become more permeable.

mobility, especially among those in the lowest tier of the economic strata.⁵ It is most likely not for want of hard work that those making minimum wage at two jobs consecutively, while supporting a family find themselves unable to move up and out of the life among the poor. Despite this, Americans find it difficult to identify the obvious economic trends because doing so calls into question the underlying truth of the ethos of individualism.

The fact that Americans have a difficult time recognizing the limits of individualist thinking leads to a second obstacle to the formation of group consciousness. Collective action, or the “large-scale political activism that is motivated by such public concerns as the environment, peace, civil rights, women’s rights, and other moral and ideological issues,” is generally understood to be characteristic of group conscious individuals (Chong 1990: 1). But this only occurs when individuals doubt the unconditional benefits of getting ahead on one’s own and come to understand that working together can bring about changes for the group as a whole. Ironically, perhaps one of the few collectively shared beliefs among Americans is the ethos of individualism.

Collective action in the U.S. is not easily achieved. Activities that influence policymakers and express one’s political voice are done by individuals. Voting, petition signing, campaign contributions, working on a campaign, and contacting elected officials are individual, rather than group, behaviors. Of course, it is through the aggregation of individual preferences and actions that policymakers take their cues. And certainly a great deal of political behavior is done in conjunction with others through mobilization efforts.

⁵ Specifically, Perrucci and Wyson (2002) argue that class mobility has decreased. Their research on 2749 fathers and sons from the 1970s to the late 1990s demonstrate that for the most part, sons from the lower economic tiers retain the same occupational prestige and incomes as their fathers. However, for those at the upper level, sons gained prestigious occupations even more so than their fathers.

But in general, a strong individualist message resonates in appeals to participate.

Thus, motivating the public to become engaged in collective action is difficult to do. The relatively few instances of large scale collective action in this country are testimony to just how hard this kind of participation is to get going.⁶ Recent movements include those centering around opposition to war with Iraq, the Million Mom March, World Trade Organization and anti-globalization protests, and going back a bit further, the Vietnam War protests and the Civil Rights movement of the 1960s. All of these instances involved issues that were (or are) part of the political dialogue, received ample exposure in the media, and had the potential to impact millions of Americans' lives. In many cases, they also represented a broad cross-section of the United States. None of these examples can be described as involving an obscure issue with only limited appeal to citizens.

However, the number of individuals active in any of these movements was small in comparison to those who report supporting the goals of the movement. While it is impossible to tell how many individuals were active in, for example, civil rights protests and organizations, it is questionable to assume participation rivaled the number of those

⁶ Some may quarrel with my argument that Americans are not inclined to work with others. Community-based collective action, or work done with others outside the scope of electoral politics and is well-documented. Americans are indeed active in voluntary activity (34%) and report high incidences of working with others in their communities to solve problems (21%) (Keeter et al. 2002).

However, these types of behavior are often not seen by individuals as attempts to solve a political problem. In most cases, individuals do not see their efforts with others as an example of working to solve a problem with political solutions. Rather, they are volunteering to help the homeless get back on their feet or working in their children's schools to raise money for books. Lacking a politicized awareness of why their work with others is important, it is difficult to call what they are doing collective action with a political goal.

Finally, even though there is ample proof that Americans are involved with groups and organizations who take up political causes from time to time (i.e., Sierra Club, National Rifle Association, Planned Parenthood, Humane Society, etc.), this kind of activity does not go beyond membership dues very often. Again, while group membership may outwardly appear a form of collective action with political goals, the extent of many's involvement calls into question how consistent this is with mass level collective action.

in the population who supported voting rights for African Americans, ending segregation, and promoting social equality for disenfranchised minorities.⁷

Similarly, despite the public being largely supportive over greater restrictions on gun ownership, the Million Mom March has had difficulty going from “a march to a movement.” While the event and its resulting organization ostensibly appealed to mothers, the group publicized itself more broadly by calling on anyone who objects to gun violence and lax gun laws to come forward and join the march and organization. In 2000, several hundred thousand turned out for a march on Washington to demand more restrictive gun control legislation. A year later, the numbers had dwindled to a few hundred for an anniversary march on Washington, although local chapters had reportedly sprung up to pursue gun control with state and local governments (Sheridan and Lenhart 2001).

While limited in number, collective action movements in the United States have been successful. The Equal Rights Amendment fell short of ratification by one state. The women’s movement helped to bring about lasting change for women and girls through legislation in the areas of health care, reproductive rights, education, and personal finances. The civil rights movement led to the Voting Rights Act and the end of Jim Crow laws in the south, and helped to pave the way for African Americans to compete on par with whites for jobs, education, and housing. Protests against the Vietnam War helped

⁷ Estimates of those in attendance at the March on Washington, the historic event that featured Martin Luther King, Jr.’s important “I have a dream” speech, are around a quarter of a million (Chong 1991: 193).

However, at the same time I do not mean to imply the number of those involved in protest activities is synonymous with effectiveness. Clearly organized activity on behalf of civil rights brought about a watershed moment in American history with the passage of civil rights legislation. For a more thorough account of the conditions under which collective action is thought to achieve enduring change, see McAdam, McCarthy and Zald (1996).

convince the government that the public no longer believed the United States was right to be involved in a civil conflict. And while the Million Mom March did not bring about the sweeping changes proposed by organizers, it signaled to policymakers that there was a mobilized, vocal contingent out there who would consistently hold elected officials accountable.

Collective action has a history of working in the United States. However, Americans are less apt to turn to it as a way of influencing political leaders. Participation is structured to favor the individual versus groups, as can be seen in the relatively stable incidences of voting versus protesting. When it comes time to expressing one's political voice, Americans turn to what they are taught is the most effective and direct way – going it alone.

What all of this means for the formation of group consciousness is clear. Group consciousness in the U.S. faces an uphill battle on its way to becoming a potent part of the American psyche. Whether the group under investigation is women, African Americans, Latinos, Asian Americans, the poor, Latinos, the elderly, or Asian Americans, group identification and working with others to solve problems is the exception to the rule of individualism.

The unique obstacles to women's group consciousness

Adding to the generic difficulties described above in forming a group identity are those specific to women. I am referring to the intimacy women share with men and the problems associated with linking one's husband, father, friend, brother, or any other close relation to the causes behind gender inequality.

Group consciousness develops in part through thinking about one's place in

society from an ingroup/outgroup perspective. Minority groups are believed to socially categorize themselves as members of an “ingroup” in accordance with their race, gender, class, etc. A helpful pre-condition for the development of ingroup identification is a relatively segregated environment where ingroup membership can thrive. This provides an individual with greater opportunities to see the world in an “us versus them” or a “we/they” dichotomy and thus lay blame for group inequalities somewhere other than the individual. To some degree, all minority groups are faced with the dilemma of attributing blame for group inequalities to individuals with whom they have close relations. While many African Americans, for example, continue to live in communities apart from whites, race is no longer the impossible hurdle it once was in forming personal relationships⁸ For women, however, the opportunities to develop an ingroup identification through segregation from men is harder to come by.

Women face unique psychological challenges to forming a group identity because social norms dictate that many “sleep with the enemy.” Their living arrangements are markedly different from other groups because their lives are integrated with those most responsible for perpetuating gender inequality. African Americans, for example, continue to reside in majority black areas (Massey and Denton 1993), making it easier for them to maintain a psychological distinction between members of their own racial group and those deemed responsible for perpetuating racial discrimination. Even the elderly may have an easier time achieving group consciousness given modern-day living arrangements which encourage older Americans to live apart from the young. By virtue of their intimate relations with men, the same cannot be said for women.

⁸ See, for instance, Massey and Denton (1993) for a thorough examination of residential segregation patterns among African Americans.

This structural condition limits women's ability to see the usefulness of a collective identity since many experience a daily disconnect with others who may have experiences similar to those of the individual woman. It is precisely this kind of environment, last seen in 1970's era consciousness raising groups, that fosters an awareness necessary to form a commitment to collective action. While consciousness raising groups have been replaced by today's domestic violence prevention groups, rape crisis counseling centers, and reproductive rights organizations, they may be insufficient to compensate for women's unique relationship with men.

Scholars have also pointed out the inextricable linkage between the economic fortunes of men and women, both as husbands and wives and as members of economic classes (Gurin 1985). Since much of a family's economic security rests on the earning power of the husband (although that certainly is less true today), women are hindered from embracing a belief system which encourages a reevaluation of wage disparities between men and women. Women also benefit from membership in a society with a strong economy. If up until now economic might is attributed to the creativity and ambition of a largely male workforce, it is perhaps frightening to embrace a collective identity that may endorse changing the rules of the game.

Family life and socialized gender norms are also helpful in explaining why group consciousness is harder to develop among women relative to others. As Sapiro (1990) points out, much of the difficulty begins in childhood, as children witness the traditional division of labor in families between husbands and wives.⁹ She argues:

⁹ Marked increases in the number of households where both mothers and fathers work outside the home may suggest children are not as affected by witnessing the traditional division of labor, as women are increasingly responsible for both providing for and taking care of the home.

However, a recent study by the David and Lucile Packard Foundation finds that 68 percent of

The child knows and loves individuals of both sexes, which makes perception of a basic conflict between the sexes difficult and anxiety producing. But also, through the child's relationship to the division of labor between mother and father (and, indeed, gender-based divisions of labor among other significant people in the child's environment), the child comes to depend upon and respect the institutionalization of gender itself (271).

It is a difficult task to develop a view of the world which questions the very foundation in which early childhood development is thought to thrive.¹⁰

Finally, intimate personal relations between women and men contribute to an environment that breeds passive acceptance of gender inequality. From a very young age, women are taught that sex is a hierarchy, and men rightfully assume dominance given their physical strength and ability to act in accordance with reason rather than emotions. In the mind/body duality, women are assigned the role of the body and represent "distraction from knowledge, seduction away from God, capitulation to sexual desire, violence or aggression, failure of will, even death" (Bordo 1993: 5). Men represent the mind, or the "effective and active element" that provides for, impregnates, and brings fulfillment to the passive female (Bordo 1993: 13). How often has the charge been made that men are better suited to political leadership given women's volatile and uncontrollable emotions? The sentiments expressed in the question only serve to reinforce the contention that women occupy the second tier in the gender hierarchy.

fathers and 69 percent of mothers agree with the statement, "It is much better for the family if the father works outside the home and the mother takes care of the children." This suggests that adult attitudes in support of the traditional division of labor remain a significant obstacle for getting children to challenge patriarchal norms.

¹⁰ Sigel (1996) provides a persuasive argument against the socialization view of gender relations and the difficulty it poses for the development of gender consciousness. She cites a number of reasons for skepticism, most notably that it tends to "overlook adults' capacity for change...By overlooking or at least deemphasizing the potential for self-induced change, the socialization approach tends to project a passive 'oversocialized' view of women as though all women accepted more or less unquestioningly the lessons of their childhood" (Sigel 1996: 11-13).

Jackman (1994) theorizes that the assumption of female passivity is what underlies the ability of men to maintain their privileged status over women. The ideology of paternalism, or the ability of men to project an attitude of looking out for women's best interests while ensuring their political and social dominance, explains the perpetuation of gender inequality. Her analysis of inequality across a variety of groups leads her to argue the following:

The agenda for dominant groups is to create an ideological cocoon whereby they can define their discriminatory actions as benevolent...To that end, their unequal relationship is swathed in a morality that identifies subordinates' worth and value within the terms of that relationship. Such an orientation must rest on persuasion rather than on force between the groups. With affection comes the ability of those in command to shape the needs and aspirations of subordinates and to portray discriminatory arrangements as being in the best interests of all concerned. Conflict is obviated because those who must initiate it – the have-nots – are bound emotionally and cognitively in a framework that is of the dominant group's definition. Far from undermining their domination over subordinates, the expression of affection for subordinates thus strengthens the dominant group's control (15).

While Jackman's analysis teeters on charging women with being duped into active participation in their discrimination, her argument is powerful for what it says about the role of affection. A woman may logically ask why her father, brother, or husband would behave in a way that is inconsistent with her interests.

Take the recent debates over Title IX in university athletic programs. Some men have argued it is discriminatory toward male athletic programs because it assumes men and women bring equal enthusiasm and interest to sports. This is not true, they contend, since men and women are fundamentally different when it comes to athletics. As one advocate for cutting Title IX recently argued:

I think that if we're not gonna go into collegiate dance programs and tell them to get rid of 80 percent of their women so that they're proportional, then I don't know why we're going into collegiate athletic programs and doing that....it may be that there aren't as many men interested in--in dance as women. But you know what else is a

possibility? There might not be as many women interested--interested in athletics as there are men. And I'm saying this law does not allow for that possibility (60 Minutes).

In this view, a rule that dictates proportionality in athletic programs in college will inevitably hurt men. However, the underlying assumption that women are simply not as interested in sports is spurious. Is this to suggest men who make this case are intentionally concealing their sexist attitudes toward women in order to get women to go along with their argument? Maybe yes, maybe no. The issue is whether a woman who hears this argument from a loved and respected friend or relative would even think to question the truthfulness of the claim. It simply may get registered as a legitimate reason to question Title IX and its effects on male athletics.¹¹

Thus, the development of group consciousness among women cannot be equated with that of other groups. The structural conditions imposed on women by virtue of intimate relations with men compromises the ability of women to recognize collective interests and the systematic relegation of women to the second tier of the sex hierarchy. These structural conditions – or male/female intimacy writ large – not only make it difficult to develop a group identity, but also make it difficult for women to politicize problems that appear rooted in the most personal of relationships.

The historical disconnect between women's organized activity and politics

The difficulties women face in forming a group identity are insufficient to address the question of why women appear to be the anomaly in group consciousness research. It is not that women are incapable of overcoming the ethos of individualism and the structural problem of male/female intimacy. Indeed, survey research has shown that

¹¹ Adding to the complexity of the Title IX debate is the extent to which women, in their roles as mothers and other close relations with men, are unhappy with, for example, their son's wrestling programs eliminated.

women do form group identities, although not on par with other minority groups. The larger question involves why group consciousness among women seems to have little to do with participation, despite the opposite being true among other minority groups. Those who are group identified are more apt to be politically engaged because they recognize that participation is necessary in order to represent group as well as individual interests. A shared identity mitigates the ethos of individualism and helps people see that engagement done in conjunction with others can bring about change for the group as well as the individual. Why this has not been the case among women may have something to do with measurement, but a more compelling argument can be found by looking at the historical connection between groups and collective action in the U.S. The rule of group consciousness leading to more participation may be group specific. In this case, women are neither the exception nor the rule, but are instead their own unique case in the study of politicized social identities and political behavior.

For starters, comparing women to other groups assumes a shared history of attempts to address social and political inequalities. In the U.S., the group with the strongest relationship between consciousness and participation are African Americans (Miller et al. 1981). As research has shown, group conscious African Americans participate at rates that exceed those of others who lack an identification, even after controlling for the important socio-economic influences of education and income (Verba and Nie 1972). Group identification seems to matter, even to the point of compensating for the historical lag in participation among blacks relative to whites. Why do race conscious blacks turn to politics while group conscious women do not?

Historically, there are good reasons for blacks to believe politics is a useful tool

for remedying political inequality. Collective action in the Civil Rights Movement centered largely around voting rights. While, for instance, President Kennedy spoke to the nation about inequality for blacks that went beyond politics, such as unemployment, the shorter life expectancies of African Americans, and wage disparity with whites, the tangible benefits of collective action were electoral. The Civil Rights Movement culminated in the 1964 Civil Rights Act and a year later, the 1965 Voting Rights Act. As Chong (1991) notes:

No one could be faulted for thinking that there were additional reforms on the horizon. Yet ironically at the height of its success, the civil rights movement began to come apart at the seams. After 1965, the number of protests and civil actions sponsored by the movement suddenly plummeted. Martin Luther King, Jr., muttered, “There is no more civil rights movement. President Johnson signed it out of existence when he signed the voting rights bill” (194).

Thus, the point of collective action for African Americans was largely political – registering black voters and an end to literacy tests. A historical connection between collective action and electoral politics goes a long way in explaining why black consciousness has a demonstrated link to higher turnout among blacks. Psychologically empowered African Americans recognize that their voices are not heard in a vacuum, but have the potential to promote the collective welfare of black lives. In short, electoral politics was the goal of collective action in the civil rights movement, something that cannot be said for women to the same degree.¹²

The belief system underlying collective action in the 1960s and 1970s women’s movement was feminism. While part of what feminism meant was a recognition that

¹² This is not to suggest women’s history is devoid of instances of collective action for political purposes. The suffrage movement and reproductive rights efforts two that stand out as political in nature. But many others, such as the temperance movement and Mothers Against Drunk Driving, were not expressly political. These were motivated out of a concern for social issues rather than rights and privileges unique to women, or those that appeal explicitly to women’s identity *as women*.

gender inequality persists because women are excluded from decision making in public life, feminism was also concerned about issues that were not tied to the electoral process. Sexism and discrimination, the deeply felt consequences of gender inequality, are not always experienced in public life, but instead reach deep into one's private life. The occasional sexist remark among family and friends, the pervasiveness of sexualized images of women in the media, and deeply held notions about the division of labor in private life complicate the ability for individuals to politicize gender inequality. Politics and elected officials can only address issues that are within reach of legislation, and overcoming sexist attitudes about women, reclaiming women's sexuality, and psychologically empowering women are not goals easily met through electoral politics. This is what perhaps explains why feminism is often referred to as a movement that was "born in the streets." As a result, to some degree, the relationship between women's group consciousness and participation is determined by the nature of problems stemming from gender inequality. Changing individual minds about women and society needed to be done outside of politics.

True, organizing for the purpose of getting more elected women in office is also a goal of the women's movement. But organizations such as Emily's List, and other political action committees with the expressed goal of helping women candidates did not crop up until the 1980s.¹³ The much heralded "Year of the Woman" in politics did not happen until 1992. As a result, those who can identify an organized movement for

¹³ Notable exceptions include the National Women's Political Caucus which began in 1971 and the struggle to ratify the Equal Rights Amendment in the 1970s. These, however, did not likely resonate with women to the extent voting rights did for African Americans because goals of the women's movement were more diffuse and harder to address through electoral politics. The ERA was not ratified which allowed for it to slip from many women's memories; and National Women's Political Caucus did not touch women's lives to the same extent as changing people's minds about sexism and expanded roles for women.

women are likely to remember goals having little to do with electoral politics. The historic importance of non-political goals – such as getting society to accept women’s sexual autonomy and the right to formal education for purposes other than finding a spouse – makes the relationship between women’s group consciousness and participation difficult to foster. Thus, the first reason to look somewhere other than the data for explaining the non-relationship between women’s group consciousness and participation is history. Unlike the civil rights movement for African Americans, women’s collective action lacks electoral politics as a central goal of the women’s movement.

This is not to say politics has had nothing to do with improving the status of women. Indeed, women can point to specific areas where their lives have been improved through the efforts of elected officials. Perhaps the most visible case of politics intervening to affect the lives of women is reproductive rights. Women’s reproductive lives have grown longer and they now must deal with reproductive decisions well into their 40s. The extent to which legislation has impacted this critical aspect of women’s lives cannot be understated.

The 1973 Supreme Court ruling in *Roe v. Wade* that legally sanctioned abortion in the U.S. set off a continued firestorm of protest from opponents of abortion. It is not for lack of trying that anti-abortion activists have been unable to make abortion a punishable offense. For that to happen, the slim majority of support for *Roe v. Wade* in the Supreme Court would have to be replaced by justices who are opposed to the now 30 year-old ruling. Executive and legislative power are what stand in the way of the judiciary circumscribing reproductive rights and thereby eliminating termination as a legal choice for women. So far, this has not happened, although successful attempts have been made

to limit the conditions under which abortion may occur (i.e., parental notification, a mandatory 24-hour waiting period prior to termination).

But abortion is not the only way in which women's reproductive lives have been touched by politics. FDA approval of RU-486, or the morning after pill, is a recent example of government's role in providing women with an alternative to forced motherhood. Elected officials are also key players in determining what role schools will play in teaching young men and women about sexuality. Abstinence only versus open discussions about contraceptive methods are important decisions schools boards must make. Whether they themselves are elected officials, school board decisions are guided by individuals who are held accountable by voters.

Other issues that are equally important to women but whose legislation receives less attention include women's health and parental leave. Congress has been instrumental in ensuring that federal research dollars address female health issues, such as breast and reproductive cancers. And the historical change from work being a necessity rather than a choice for women has made parental leave critical for ensuring that women have a job to return to after bearing a child. Also, the growing number of single mothers in the U.S. has resulted in the need for legislation to address "deadbeat dads" and their unwillingness to assist with the costs of raising a child. Elected officials at both the state and national level have attempted to address this issue and thus improve not only the lives of children, but the women who are sometimes forced to work multiple jobs while raising those children. The list could continue but the point is clear. Electoral politics is not *irrelevant* to the cause of the women's movement. It is simply not the underlying goal of the movement in its early incarnation.

Thus, the historic disconnect between collective action toward electoral goals provides a persuasive rationale for why women's group consciousness should not be expected to follow the pattern among African Americans in its relationship to participation. Perhaps, even after accounting for the role of measurement, feminist-identified women will still appear no more participatory than non-identified women. If true, the history of the women's movement and its goals go a long way in explaining why findings such as these are understandable.

Questions and methods

Taken together, the two reasons for questioning the paradoxical relationship between women's group consciousness and electoral participation lead to the following hypothesis to be tested in this dissertation:

- Women are not the anomaly in group consciousness research. Once remeasured and analyzed using multivariate statistical models, women's group consciousness will bear a significant and positive effect on electoral engagement.

Furthermore, this dissertation will critically explore the underlying assumption that group conscious women should, *ceteris paribus*, be more participatory than their non-identified counterparts. The historical disconnect between the women's movement and electoral goals, combined with the unique problems associated with gender inequality, make the relationship between feminist consciousness and participation difficult to foster.

Research questions addressed in this dissertation will use the following two data sources:

The 1992 National Election Study

This data set is uniquely positioned to test the “mismeasurement” hypothesis given its inclusion of 14 gender-related indicators. Following on the heels of the 1991 National Election Pilot Study, in which the NES Board of Overseers set out to come up with new measures of gender consciousness, the 1992 NES added a variety of new questions in addition to those commonly used to assess women’s group consciousness. This resulted in indicators that go a long way in addressing the methodological concerns that underlie the mismeasurement hypothesis (i.e., skewed variance, social desirability bias, question ambiguity). Additionally, the usual array of questions used to assess electoral engagement are included in order to test the hypothesis that a better measure is not only available, but also demonstrates a significant and positive relationship to political engagement.

Douglass College in-person interviews

This analysis benefits from an ongoing research project examining generational differences in attitudes and behavior among mothers and daughters. In an attempt to revisit questions posed to current undergraduates at Douglass College, the women’s college at Rutgers University, and their mothers in 1975, Roberta Sigel has undertaken the same project today in order to gain insight into generational transmission of attitudes toward feminism and the women’s movement, as well as the effects of attending a single sex college on women’s lives. 23 pairs of mothers and daughters who share a history of attendance at Douglass College have been interviewed in addition to ten current Douglass undergraduates and their mothers who did not attend college. Interviews were conducted largely in-person, with some done via telephone for those few mothers who did not live in

the general area of the college. The interview format employed closed and open-ended questions. Respondents were encouraged to talk at length about issues that were covered in the interview even if that meant a closed-ended response was followed by further discussion of the respondent's attitudes or beliefs. This resulted in interviews rich with respondent insight into themes covered in the survey that would have been missed had Sigel used only a closed-ended format or less personal method of data collection such as a mail questionnaire.

In addition to the themes central to Sigel's research – attitudes toward feminism, the women's movement, gender roles, life plans, and the effects of attending a single sex college – Sigel also included some questions about gender identity and its relationship to electoral politics. These questions – one in particular that explores the measurement of gender identity in an experimental way – allows for my ability to test the second hypothesis, namely that feminist consciousness bears an uneasy relationship with electoral participation.

A number of scholars have noted the importance of supplementing quantitative with qualitative data. Schlozman (2002) argues "data from surveys gain greater resonance when supplemented by less superficial – but also less systematic – evidence gleaned from other sources: longer, open-ended interviews; participant observation; historical analysis; the media; or popular culture" (458). King, Keohane, and Verba (1994) make a similar point in their work on bridging the divide between qualitative and quantitative research: "If we are to understand the rapidly changing social world, we will need to include information that cannot be easily quantified as well as that which can" (5). Sigel (1996) employed both forms of data collection in her seminal work on contemporary gender

relations.¹⁴ So too have Delli Carpini and Keeter (1996) and Conover, Crewe, and Searing (1991).

In the context of this dissertation, use of qualitative data helps to address some of the limitations of an analysis based solely on survey research. One in particular is the inseparability of identities that often define a woman's life. Women cannot separate aspects of their identity that have the potential to be politically relevant (i.e., race, gender, their roles as caregivers, etc.). But survey research implicitly assumes that they can. As was noted previously, use of the "close to" series of questions relies on the assumption that an individual can assign importance to one part of themselves over others, such as in the case of an African American feminist woman. "Woman," "black," and "feminist" are all categories asked about in the "close to" questions, but only one emerges as the important trait in the question that asks to whom she feels the closest.¹⁵

One way of getting around the limitations of identity measurement in survey research is to allow women greater flexibility in politically relevant self-identification. The following is an experimental question posed to women that provides for multiple identities, as well as an opportunity to rank a variety of traits in accordance with their political relevance.

¹⁴ Sigel (1996) reports being pleasantly surprised at how useful the focus groups were to the larger project examining gender relations. As she states, "The focus groups did not, however, serve only an auxiliary function to the telephone survey. Although that was our original intention, the richness of information and insights the groups provided soon convinced me to assign them a far more prominent place in the total enterprise. Listening to men and women in the groups actually helped shape my sensitivity to the role the topic played in the daily lives of the public. I felt as though I became privy to some of their frustrations as well as gratifications, and, most of all, I learned what mattered to them and what did not when they thought about gender" (35).

¹⁵ Those who have noted the increasing racial and ethnic diversity in the US have pointed to the problems with using survey research to account for the effects of group based identities on political behavior. Accounting for the increasing number of individuals who identify their heritage through categories other than white, black, or Latino is difficult in most existing surveys.

There are so many different things about ourselves which influence how we think about and understand political issues. Some people, for instance, use their party affiliation as their most important guide for helping them decide where they stand on a certain issue.

I'm going to give you a series of cards, each with something which is thought to influence how people understand political issues. I'd like you to take a moment and think about what cards describe things which you consider the most important for helping you to decide what issues are the most important to you and what your attitudes are about various political issues.

Divide the cards into three piles – the first pile should include the things which you consider the most important; the second should include things which are important, but not as important as the cards you placed in the first pile; and the third should contain cards which describe things that are the least important for your understanding of politics and issues.

Respondents were presented with a total of 11 cards (12 for mothers) in no particular order with the following categories:

- My identity as a woman
- My social class
- My political party affiliation
- My race
- My age
- My citizenship
- My sexual orientation
- My religious affiliation
- My career
- My ethnicity
- My ideology (liberal, conservative, etc.)

- My identity as a mother¹⁶

Respondents were encouraged to take their time in sorting the cards. If they had questions, the instructions were read again. Few required guidance above and beyond what was included in the instructions, although it is not unlikely that respondents interpreted political issues differently.

Once the respondents were done sorting the cards into three piles, the interviewer examined what was in the first pile, and then placed each pile into a separate envelope. If “My identity as a woman” was included in the first pile, the respondent was asked “Could you talk a little about how your identity as a woman relates to your understanding and evaluation of political issues?” The same respondents were asked the following: “Overall, do you find that your identity as a women is more influential when the issue being considered is a ‘woman’s issue,’ or does your gender seem to influence you regardless of the type of issue being considered?”

Finally, those who included “My identity as a woman” and one or both of “My race” and “My ethnicity” in the first pile were asked the following: “Could you talk a little about how your identity as a woman and your race and/or ethnicity relate to each other to influence your understanding and evaluation of political issues?”

This method of measurement is not meant to replicate the substantive meaning behind the quantitative measurement. Despite not including, for instance, “My identity as a feminist” among the cards, there is room through the follow up question to gain insight into how the role of gender interacts with a woman’s political orientations. Also, because it makes no mention of participation *per se*, it cannot refute or support the finding in the

¹⁶ This card was presented only to mothers.

quantitative analysis that feminist consciousness appears unrelated to participation. Its primary use will be to highlight the difficulties of imposing a primary identity on women. This, in turn, may help to explain the difficulties behind uncovering a relationship between feminist identity and political behavior.

As with any other method of data collection, there are some limitations to using this format and data as well. First, the women included are non-representative of the female population. They were chosen because they meet the criteria for having attended Douglass College and, as such, are highly educated.¹⁷ Given their exposure to a college environment where their identity as women was a requirement for admission, it is likely that some thought has been given to the importance of gender in US politics. Their responses are not expected to be typical of what would be heard if a randomly selected

¹⁷ Non-college educated mothers are not included in this analysis. They were interviewed in the second wave of data collection and all interviews were conducted over the telephone. Because this question does not lend itself to anything other than an in-person format, it was excluded from second wave data collection.

Other pertinent information to note about the respondents includes the following: Mothers range in age from 40 to 55. One out of the 23 mothers is African American and the rest are white. Most are employed (78 percent) and married (74 percent). The rest have been married at some point in their lives and are now either divorced or separated. Eight majored in the physical or biological sciences, and the rest report humanities, social science, or some other field as their major. One went on to become an attorney, another 14 received master's degrees, two are medical doctors, and one received her doctorate following graduation.

The next group of respondents is comprised of 33 current undergraduates at Douglass College, 23 of whom are the daughters of the mothers who attended Douglass in the late 1960s to mid 1970s. The remaining ten are undergraduates who report having mothers with no college background. The young women range in age from 18 to 24. Consistent with the mothers, most are white, with one African American and another who defines herself as Hispanic. Ten are majoring in what might be considered non-traditional female fields (physical or biological sciences and business), and the rest report majors in the humanities or social science.

As for the partisan and ideological distributions of the respondents, they are not predominantly Democratic and liberal. Close to half identify themselves as Democrats (46 percent), about a third are Independents, and relatively few are Republican (16 percent). Those who espouse a liberal political ideology are about 34 percent of respondents, with an equal percentage who say "it depends on the issue." The remainder (14 percent) say they identify with conservatives in the liberal/conservative spectrum.

Finally, all were willing and, in fact, enthusiastic participants in the survey, having responded to a letter or email message asking for their participation in a survey of attitudes and behavior sponsored by Douglass College.

woman was asked to perform card sorting in order to gauge her gender identity, or lack thereof. Also, the question is the last on the survey. The preceding questions are largely centered around gender roles, feminism, and the women's movement. This is likely to have resulted in respondents who were "primed" for thinking about the importance of gender in shaping their orientation to politics. Perhaps not having been asked a variety of gender-related questions before, some women would have opted to exclude "My identity as a woman" from her first pile.

At the same time, one of the goals of this research is to examine how gender operates to define a woman's orientation to politics. This may be best done through talking with women who are among those most likely to have given some thought to this issue. For the mothers, they came of age during the heyday of the contemporary women's movement. Their experiences at a single-sex college included talks given by prominent feminist speakers and egalitarian reforms in the gendered expectations and rules governing undergraduate behavior. Many recounted their newfound awareness of how unfair it was to live under curfews while their male counterparts stayed out all night. Mothers also talked about realizing the importance of an education beyond finding a husband. These experiences, coupled with their adult years coinciding with women's challenges to gender inequality, have made this group of women ideal candidates for exploring feminist consciousness and its relationship to politics.

Similarly, the young women who are current undergraduates at Douglass College have been exposed to a curriculum that includes some attention to gender and society. Many also noted the visibility of "strong women" in positions of leadership at Douglass. Like the mothers, current Douglass undergraduates are likely to be insightful in their

ability to explain when and under what conditions a feminist identity interacts with political behavior.

Thus, despite the limitations of using such a select sample of women for exploring qualitatively the measurement of feminist consciousness, their unique background makes them ideal for the subject at hand. The problems of generating inferences from such a small, nonrepresentative sample to the population at large may be offset by the benefits derived from the well-qualified insights of those in the sample. In short, getting the most bang for the buck in this small sample should further an understanding of the importance of feminist consciousness for politics.

What follows

The remaining sections of this dissertation will explore the complexities of measuring feminist consciousness and assessing its relationship to electoral politics through both quantitative and qualitative data.

First, an overview of the literature on political science's attempts to understand women's political behavior will be presented. Political science has evolved from a discipline who considered women mere extensions of their husband's political attitudes and preferences, to one where gender is treated as an important variable in understanding American political behavior. This section will also detail the evolution of group consciousness in quantitative analyses, with specific attention to the emergence of what is commonly termed "gender consciousness" to describe women with politicized social identities. However, using the term gender consciousness to describe what is ostensibly a belief system rooted in liberal feminist attitudes is deceptive. I will argue, through careful attention to the ways in which gender consciousness is measured, that the bulk of the

research done to date is erroneously understood to be gender consciousness. This has resulted in needless confusion over who is the subject of these analyses. More importantly, I argue that gender consciousness is a theoretically empty term since it does not define how women use gender to organize the larger world around them. This section will base a claim for naming analyses rooted in feminist attitudes in beliefs feminist, as opposed to gender, consciousness. Finally, this chapter will explore the historical measurement of feminist consciousness in quantitative research, with specific attention to the methodological and theoretical shortcomings of existing measures. Perhaps, as will be discussed, feminist consciousness' non-relationship to political participation is due more to inaccurate measurement than it is a true reflection of reality.

In the next chapter, I examine an alternate measure of feminist consciousness. Using survey data from the 1992 American National Election Study, I explore a more theoretically and methodologically sound measure of feminist consciousness, or one which addresses problems associated with missing indicators, social desirability bias, question ambiguity, and limited dimensionality.¹⁸ Using confirmatory factor analyses, I demonstrate that underlying the data is a three dimensional measure of feminist consciousness, or one which taps an emotional, egalitarian, and feminist identity dimension.

Having established a new measure of feminist consciousness, the next chapter tests the mismeasurement hypothesis by examining whether earlier non-findings regarding consciousness and participation were artifacts of faulty measures. In addition to the new measure of feminist consciousness, a standard measure, or one which uses the

¹⁸ While the indicators included in the 1992 survey are an improvement over standard measures, unfortunately the same questions were not used in subsequent surveys.

two questions commonly included in National Election Studies, will be included in multivariate analyses in order to assess how, if at all, measurement and the type of analysis affects the relationship to electoral participation.

This chapter will also explore whether specific conditions are needed in order to spur more participation among feminist conscious women. First, taking a cue from Shingles (1981) who demonstrated that black consciousness depends in part on high levels of internal political efficacy in order to spur participation, this chapter will examine feminist consciousness' indirect relationship to participation through an efficacious political orientation. Women who are feminist-identified should feel their participation is likely to promote change, which in turn encourages higher levels of engagement than women who lack an identification.

The other condition to warrant specific attention is the role the political environment may play in triggering significantly more engagement among feminist conscious women. 1992 was unique not only for the number of gender-related indicators on the NES, but also because women ran for and were elected to record numbers of seats in Congress. Gender was a salient feature in many campaigns across the country. Women candidates argued that more women were needed in Congress in order to ensure better representation of women's interests. The Clarence Thomas-Anita Hill hearings were fresh in voters' minds, as was the sexual harassment exploits of Oregon senator Robert Packwood. Many women running for office linked their candidacy with voters' opportunity to right the wrongs of a male-dominated legislative institution. This may have resulted in a trigger, of sorts, in the minds of feminist-identified women who would otherwise have not linked their identity as women with their political behavior. If feminist

consciousness has any effect on turnout, looking at the behavior of women in districts and states with women candidates for House and/or Senate races should bear this out.

The last chapter to explore the relationship between feminist consciousness and participation does so by switching gears and turning to qualitative data. This chapter uses open-ended, in-person interviews to test the hypothesis that regardless how feminist consciousness is measured, it bears an uneasy relationship with electoral politics. It does so by asking whether women make the connection between their affinity for feminist principles with electoral politics. This chapter brings the analysis full circle by exploring whether and to what extent feminist-identified women have a hard time believing politics and legislation are capable of addressing their concerns.

Finally, the concluding chapter offers a summary of what subsequent chapters say about the political behavior of feminist-identified women. This chapter will synthesize the major findings to emerge from testing the mismeasurement hypothesis as well as those from the qualitative approach to understanding feminist consciousness and its relationship to electoral politics. My hope is that through a critical analysis of what psychological traits come together to form a feminist consciousness, and how these concepts are understood in the minds of feminist-identified women, there can be a renewed interest in understanding how and when feminism influences the selection of policies and policymakers.

Chapter 2: Early Attempts to Explain Women's Political Behavior and the Evolution of Feminist Consciousness

Before embarking on a test of the “mismeasurement hypotheses” – or whether a new measure of women's group consciousness yields a stronger relationship to participation – it is necessary to explain why group consciousness research is a departure from previous attempts to explain women's political behavior. While giving greater attention to the heterogeneity of women, group consciousness research was ultimately limited by the availability of data and indicators to measure the phenomenon. This has resulted in questionable findings arising from the methodological shortcomings of existing measures. This chapter will detail these problems in an attempt to set the stage for testing the hypothesis that a “new” measure of feminist consciousness could reveal a more robust relationship to political behavior.

Early attempts to measure women's political behavior

While the early literature on political behavior includes some mention of sex differences (Berelson, Lazarsfeld and McPhee 1954; Lane 1959; Campbell, Converse, Miller and Stokes 1960; Greenstein 1965; Milbrath 1966; Verba and Nie 1972; Nie, Verba and Petrocik 1976), most of the thinking on this subject assumes a simplistic measure of differences attributable to one's status as a woman.¹⁹ The population is divided neatly into men and women and any differences which arise in behavior and attitudes are interpreted as an indication of gender's influence on political behavior. Campbell and his colleagues (1960) demonstrate marked differences in the political efficacy, sophistication, and involvement of men and women. Women's lower incidence

¹⁹ For a thorough discussion of problems inherent in the early literature on political behavior and its treatment of women, see Boroque and Grossholtz (1974).

of traits associated with political activism is suggested to be the result of a wife's tendency to rely on her husband for political information and decisions (Campbell et al. 1960: 492). Later analyses of electoral behavior rely on the same method for measuring gender differences, often arriving at conclusions suggestive of the simplicity of understanding why men and women differ politically.

Women have also been shown to hold policy attitudes quite distinct from those held by men (e.g., Frankovic 1982; Smith 1984; Shapiro and Mahajan 1986; Wirls 1986; Carroll 1988; Andersen 1997; Kauffman and Petrocik 1999). Gender differences in attitudes toward the use of force, regulation and public protection, social welfare, and traditional values demonstrate women's distinctiveness from men. However, while it is important to understand the ways in which women differ from men politically, it is equally important to understand why gender differences persist in the attitudes and behavior of men and women. And to this end, scholars have proposed a variety of approaches to explain why women appear so distinctive from men politically in survey after survey.

For some, the answer lies in the incompatibility between characteristics associated with political activism and the unique life experiences of women. Welch (1977), for instance, questions the utility of measuring gender's impact on behavior through the simple dichotomization of respondents as male or female. Instead, she theorizes a more complex model of gender's effect on participation. She accounts for the role political socialization plays in discouraging women to be active participants in public life, the situational constraints imposed on women due to family responsibilities that keep women from active engagement, and the structural impediments to women's participation due to

their overrepresentation in groups such as the unemployed and uneducated. Once situational and structural factors are considered, Welch finds women to be just as participatory as men and argues “the stereotype of the politically passive woman is untrue” (Welch 1977: 726).

In a similar vein, Schlozman, Burns and Verba (1994), Burns, Schlozman and Verba (1997, 2001), and Verba, Burns and Schlozman (1997) attempt to account for gender differences in participation through attentiveness to the role of resources (i.e., time, money and civic skills), domestic life, and interest, information, and efficacy. As they note, despite an abundance of theorizing about the potential impact of domestic life on women’s political participation, they find little evidence to confirm the common assumption that women participate less because they have less time and fewer skills to draw from in their political engagement. Rather, the growing importance of money and the role it plays in political participation is prominently displayed in their findings which show men, usually through their role as head of household and the chief financial officer in the home, appear more participatory in the amount of money they give. While unable to explain fully gender differences in participation, they find women are significantly distinct from men in the efficacy, interest, and knowledge they bring to the world of politics.

Another approach to understanding gender differences in attitudes and behavior is informed from a psychological perspective. Here the idea is to look at what women think rather than what they do in their roles as wives, mothers, workers, etc. The ability of women to shed vestiges of patriarchal thinking is offered as an alternative approach to understanding why women appear distinct from men politically.

For example, in attempts to explain the notable gender gap in vote choices in the 1980 presidential election, Carroll (1988) suggests overtime increases in women's psychological independence from men are partly to blame. While critical of work that suggests women simply mimic the vote choice of their husbands, Carroll nevertheless recognizes the likelihood that women who make joint decisions with men or decisions based on shared interests probably end up deferring to men since, as she argues, "women under patriarchy are socialized to view their interests as secondary, if not identical, to those of men" (Carroll 1988: 241). However, given increases in the number of women whom Carroll identifies as "economically independent of men by virtue of their marital status," women may have become less psychologically committed to the maintenance of patriarchal relationships and thereby less supportive of non-egalitarian attitudes toward women's role in society. She finds that women who are both unmarried and supportive of women's equal role in society with men are considerably less likely to support and vote for Ronald Reagan.

Other scholars have attempted to explain the well-documented gender gap in attitudes and behavior through differences among women in their orientation to feminism (Conover 1988a; Cook and Wilcox 1991). Recognizing the "insufficient attention (given) to the considerable variations among women," Conover argues that women who demonstrate psychological traits consistent with a feminist identity largely account for any gender differences in political orientations and preferences (Conover 1988a: 1001).²⁰ In this case, the psychological attributes used to explain the gender gap include the extent

²⁰ Cook and Wilcox (1991), however, challenge Conover's claim to unlocking part of the mystery behind the gender gap by controlling for the degree of support for feminist attitudes among both men and women. They suggest gender differences in political behavior and attitudes are the result not of feminist values but of political liberals who are more likely to support liberal egalitarian values and policies.

to which women think of themselves as feminists and express support for the women's movement.

More explicit attempts to explain group (including gender) differences through a social psychological perspective grew out of social identity theory and group consciousness research (Gurin, Miller and Gurin 1980; Tajfel 1981; Tajfel 1982; Conover 1984; Gurin and Townsend 1986; Conover 1988b). The distinction between the two concepts rests on what Gurin and Townsend (1986) argue is awareness versus ideology. Social identity theory as articulated by Tajfel (1981) is essentially an examination of the psychological motivations for an individual to reject or embrace group membership. Using an experimental design, Tajfel showed that individuals randomly assigned to groups were apt to prefer fellow group members and demonstrate discrimination toward members of other groups. But what social identity theory does not account for is how group identity then translates into a "member's ideology about the group's position in society" (Gurin and Townsend 1986: 139). This necessary politicization of social identity results in an individual recognizing that his or her individual interests are tied to those of their group. Using women as the example, social identity theory argues that women are more apt to identify with other women than with men and, to varying degrees, view men and other dissimilar groups with suspicion. However, group consciousness is achieved when women move beyond mere identification and begin to question their second-class status as being the result of personal idiosyncracies or predetermined and socially optimum gender roles. Stressing a variety of attitudes, beliefs, and orientations, group

consciousness research in political science has attempted to explain how group identities in the U.S. become important for individual political behavior.²¹

The development of group consciousness research

As 1970s research on electoral behavior moved from an emphasis on party identification and ideology as primary determinants of voting behavior, the importance of group consciousness for political behavior became more widely considered. However, the first group which this concept was applied politically was African Americans and only later were the concepts applied to women. For example, Verba and Nie (1972) found that African Americans who demonstrated group consciousness were more likely to participate than non-identifying respondents. Their data revealed that the historic lag in black participation relative to whites can be compensated for by increases in group consciousness among African Americans.²²

The importance of group consciousness among African Americans encouraged the application of the same concept to women in an attempt to better understand gender differences. This alternative body of literature examines questions concerning the extent to which the saliency of one's identity *as a woman* encourages distinct patterns of political attitudes and engagement (Miller, Gurin, Gurin and Malanchuk 1981; Klein 1984; Gurin 1985; Sapiro 1990; Tolleson Rinehart 1992). The notion of a feminist (sometimes called gender) consciousness has been used in part as a way of reconceptualizing the measurement of gender's impact on political behavior.

²¹ A recent account of the shortcomings of social identity theory and its inability to explain when identities become politically relevant can be found in Huddy (2001).

²² Similar findings can also be found in the works of Miller et al. (1981) and Shingles (1981).

This body of literature emphasizes the complexity of measuring gender's impact on political behavior, above and beyond merely identifying respondents as male or female and taking into account structural and situational factors. The underlying hypothesis of this body of research expects feminism to bring about more or different forms of political activism among those with feminist consciousness. Women who recognize their *collective* disadvantaged status in society should be more likely to participate in order to bring about change and identify issues of importance to women.

The importance of group consciousness for helping to redefine how women and their relationship to politics is understood cannot be overstated. Primarily, the application of group consciousness to women demonstrates how a stable characteristic of individuals (i.e., sex) becomes the foundation for a dynamic process of change that can account for the diversity of attitudes and behavior among women. Those "conscious" of their status in society are likely to behave and believe different things than those who are not like-minded. Also, gender or feminist consciousness accounts for the impact of both sex and gender on a woman's political behavior by theorizing the importance of women's status in a patriarchal society. Women's behavior is understood in the context of a political and social environment which has historically been unresponsive to women's interests and concerns.

Gender versus feminist consciousness: theoretical confusion

As anyone surveying the literature on gender consciousness inevitably finds, there is little consistency across studies regarding whether group consciousness among women is referred to as gender or feminist in nature. Two scholars who have done a great deal of research in this area argue "previous measures of gender and feminist consciousness have

been based on a wide array of contradictory and sometimes confusing conceptualizations” (Conover and Sapiro 1993: 1084). My intention is not to add to the confusion, but rather to add some degree of clarity to the use of these two similar terms.

To begin with, gender and feminist consciousness have historically and implicitly referred to support for feminism which elevates the importance of women seeking roles in the public sphere. Defining an eligible response as one which supports the statement “women should have an equal role with men in running business, industry, and government” is clearly an assumption borne out of principles embodied in those seeking to advance the cause of gender equality in public life. For the concept to be labeled gender consciousness, one would expect the criteria to be less infused with advocating a particular feminist orientation. For example, gender consciousness, properly defined, might include women who identify with other women, believe in the need for collective action among women, but who also believe women are handicapped by feminist principles which have devalued the role of mothering and encouraged women to value careers over childrearing. While it is true a woman whose beliefs resemble this description may still support women’s equality in society in a normative sense and thus meet the criteria for gender consciousness, she clearly would be uncomfortable with the assumption that she endorses a belief system consistent with equality feminism. This is unavoidable, however, because the measures by and large are tapping into support for equality feminism.

Conceptually, perhaps it is helpful to think of gender consciousness as an umbrella term for group consciousness specific to women. Despite inconsistencies in the definition of gender or feminist consciousness, researchers seem to agree that it is a

politicized form of social identity, characterized by the centrality of gender for organizing and clarifying the political world around women. These points are aptly captured in the following definition of gender consciousness offered by Tolleson Rinehart (1992).

[T]he recognition that one's relations to the political world is shaped in important ways by the physical fact of one's sex...[L]ike other forms of group consciousness, [it] embodies an identification with similar others, positive affect toward them, and a feeling of interdependence with the group's fortunes...[It may *or may not*] carry a cognitive evaluation of the group's sociopolitical disadvantage, in absolute or relative terms, vis-à-vis other groups (14).

I contend that gender consciousness is a theoretically empty category because it cannot answer the question of how a woman's gender operates to organize and clarify the political world. It simply means a woman has become aware that her status as a woman defines in many ways her opportunities and limitations in society and that political engagement is an important tool for rectifying the problem of gender inequality. The following are two hypothetical examples of women who could easily be identified as having a gender consciousness. The difference lies in how their life circumstances are interpreted relative to their status as women.

Both women are active in women's organizations (the first is a member of NOW, the second Concerned Women for America); both believe women are unfairly treated in the workplace (the first argues "equal work for equal pay," the second believes women should receive special workplace protection such as prohibition from certain occupations); both are troubled by the relationship between workforce participation and childcare, but the first woman welcomes women's participation in the labor force and supports government sponsored daycare, while the second woman is troubled by women working outside the home because of the unique relationship which exists between

mother and child; and both women champion women's movements, but the first supports the liberal women's movement while the second believes in the conservative women's movement, or the one identified with opposition to the Equal Rights Amendment.

The list could continue across a variety of issues but the point is clear. Both women use their gender identity to organize their understanding of the world around them and base their opinions on political issues on their identity as women. However, these women depart from one another in their understanding of how gender is deployed to define limitations and opportunities in their lives. The first woman could be identified as having a "feminist consciousness" while the second might be considered having an "anti-feminist" consciousness. It is here that the definitions become theoretically important for understanding the way in which gender operates to explain a woman's relationship to the political world. Gender consciousness is unable to make this distinction.

However, scholarly research is full of examples of gender consciousness being used to explain feminist consciousness.²³ For example, Sapiro (1990) defines gender consciousness as

[I]dentifying with women as a social group, having an awareness of gender inequality and believing this inequality to be illegitimate, locating the reasons for inequality in social causes (e.g., discrimination), and assuming a need for collective as opposed to individual solutions. Not surprisingly, gender consciousness thus defined may equally be labeled 'feminist consciousness' (Sapiro 1990: 268).

Similarly, Gurin (1985) argues "In our definition of group consciousness, collective action is geared to change, and in this sense gender consciousness is feminist" (146). And finally, Tolleson Rinehart (1992) says the following about gender consciousness:

²³ One notable exception can be found in Reingold and Foust (1998). Their analysis of the determinants of feminist consciousness reflects a consistency between findings which point to the feminist nature of women's group consciousness and their insistence on calling the phenomenon feminist rather than gender consciousness.

Gender consciousness is the recognition that one's relation to the political world is shaped in important ways by the physical fact of one's sex, and feminism, regardless of the particular form it may take, is, at its root, a powerful manifestation of gender consciousness (14).

In addition to the way gender consciousness is defined, empirical analyses often rely on the importance of feminism for describing the phenomenon. Sapiro (1990), for instance, traces the creation of gender consciousness through the women's movement. Her argument rests on the centrality of the women's movement for bringing about gender consciousness in women. Beyond the importance of demographic characteristics such as education and labor force participation, Sapiro argues that "the presence of a women's movement is a necessary condition for the development of gender consciousness on a large scale" (Sapiro 1990: 272). Clearly, the women's movement to which she is referring is the one linked with feminism. The consciousness raising identified as a "first step in the development of gender consciousness" did not involve women talking with each other about the undue burden placed on them by greater opportunities in the workforce (Sapiro 1990: 274). The consciousness raising was feminist in its orientation, as illustrated by the "feminist rape crisis centers and shelters for battered wives, women's arts collectives, and some feminist commercial collectives (Sapiro 1990: 274). Thus, despite employing the label "gender" for describing consciousness, Sapiro's analysis clearly is about the impact of the women's movement on the development of *feminist* consciousness.

Similarly, in Gurin's 1985 analysis, responses to questions used to assess a women's gender consciousness are decidedly feminist. For example, one of the criteria for measuring gender consciousness is the extent to which a woman refutes the legitimacy of claims often used to justify women's secondary status. A woman who demonstrates

gender consciousness would endorse the following statement: “Our society, not nature, teaches women to prefer homemaking to work outside the home” (Gurin 1985: 155). The alternative to this was “By nature women are happiest when they are making a home and caring for children” (Gurin 1985: 155). Again, it is clear that the analysis of gender consciousness rests on a feminist orientation.

And finally, despite Tolleson Rinehart’s (1992) notable attempt to more broadly define gender consciousness as encompassing both feminist and anti-feminist strains, the bulk of her analysis rests on documenting the extent to which feminist consciousness has evolved. Use of National Election Studies (NES) limits her ability to pursue an anti-feminist variant of gender consciousness. The repeated question in NES data that asks whether women and men should have equal roles in society versus advocating a woman’s place in the home has incidences that become increasingly skewed toward the egalitarian end. While the response variance in the early years was quite good (50 percent of respondents supported women’s equality in 1972), over time the measure became relatively impotent as more and more respondents gave answers at the egalitarian end of the 7-point scale (roughly 70 percent in the post-1980 years). This leaves Tolleson Rinehart little to work with in her analysis of gender consciousness since the equal roles question represents half of the measure. As a result, the data are ill equipped to analyze those who do not endorse liberal feminist attitudes on the equal roles scale.

The point of this brief discussion is to base a claim for naming this analysis one concerning feminist instead of gender consciousness. Subsequent references will be to feminist consciousness and will refer to those women with the requisite emotional and

cognitive qualities consistent with feminist identification.²⁴

Feminist consciousness: structural, theoretical, and methodological limitations

Feminist consciousness has historically been defined by taking the principles of group consciousness and applying them to women. While numerous definitions can be found, group consciousness is generally understood to mean a “politicized awareness or ideology regarding a group’s relative position in society, and a commitment to collective action aimed at realizing the group’s interests” (Conover 1988b: 53).²⁵

Previous research (Gurin et al. 1980; Miller et al. 1981; Gurin 1985) is largely consistent in its finding that when compared to other minority groups, women are less infused with a “distinctively subordinate consciousness” (Gurin 1985: 160). For example, in her study of women and other minority groups, Gurin (1985) shows increases in the number of gender conscious women in the 1970s. Despite this, women do not resemble African Americans and others in the extent to which group members display traits consistent with group consciousness.

The structural reasons for why women may have a more difficult time developing a group consciousness were outlined previously and include their close, intimate relations

²⁴ Perhaps the tendency to label the term gender rather than feminist consciousness, despite its clear bias toward support for equality feminism, has been a political decision. Research into feminist consciousness may hold only limited appeal for readers of scholarly books and journals whereas gender consciousness may pique a broader interest. Or, it may simply be the case that anything labeled feminist is received with skepticism due to a perception that feminist inspired research violates the scholarly norm of value-free empiricism. Whatever the case, given the existing measures it seems to make more sense to call it what it is – feminist consciousness.

²⁵ Group consciousness is not the equivalent of group membership or identification. Group membership means simply that one shares the objective characteristics of others in a particular social group while group identification “connotes a perceived self-location within a particular social stratum, along with a psychological feeling of belonging to that group” (Miller et al. 1981: 495). Group consciousness politicizes the identification one feels with others of the same group through an awareness of the group’s position on the political and social hierarchy.

with men. Much of it the difficulty is owed to the relatively static condition of women's lives and, as argued, provide a compelling argument for why any relationship forged between feminist consciousness and participation is difficult to sustain. Adding to these are reasons centering more generally on American culture, such as the ethos of individualism and the problems this poses for seeing the benefits of group action to address group interests. The difficulties a woman faces in overcoming the "bootstrap" mentality of individual advancement complicates the development of feminist consciousness and its relationship to political participation. However, moving beyond the condition of women's lives and looking more closely at the indicators used to measure feminist consciousness suggests there may be more to the picture than meets the eye.

Measurement shortcomings

Some aspects of women's lives are unlikely to change. The difficulties of developing an identity that is sensitive to the collective interests of women will remain, and as a result there are likely to be obstacles to feminist consciousness rivaling other forms of group consciousness in its incidence. However, there are other issues unrelated to the static nature of women *vis a vis* men that offer hope for showing feminist consciousness to be a stronger predictor of political behavior than previously thought. The lack of evidence to suggest feminist consciousness bears a strong and consistent relationship to political participation is perhaps explained, at least in part, by a closer look at the measures used in the past to assess this phenomenon.

In general, there have been two recurrent themes in literature relevant to the measurement of feminist consciousness. One body of literature (Conover 1984; Gurin et al. 1980; Miller et al. 1981; Gurin and Townsend 1986; Lau 1989) assesses the

relationship between social group identification and politics and relies on a series of questions commonly referred to as the “close to” questions. Frequently included in National Election Studies, these questions ask respondents to identify to whom they feel the most “close.” A series of groups are presented to respondents who are asked to pick the one he or she feels the closest to. The choice is supposed to represent a measure of group identification.

In general, studies which employ the NES “close to” questions find that, not surprisingly, gender is the most important predictor of feeling close to women. But beyond that, what does feeling “close to” someone really measure?²⁶ Theoretically, these questions tap into whether a respondent feels psychologically attached to other women, or the extent to which a respondent displays a group identification. But the ambiguity in interpreting what is being asked calls into question the basis on which a response is formed. To some respondents, closeness may imply how warmly one feels, whereas for others it may mean degrees of sympathy. Without following up with a question that asks what is meant by expressions of closeness, it is difficult to imply a universal understanding of the term and its application to women.²⁷ Additionally, the degree of intensity is not accounted for unless respondents are asked also which group he or she feels “closest to.” In so doing, the measure becomes virtually useless because of the

²⁶ Conover (1984) is the only one to extend her analysis of group identification to the role it plays in political behavior. She finds that after controlling for objective group membership (i.e., being a woman), gender identified women tended to adopt positions on women’s issues that were both relatively extreme and consistent with the group’s interests.” Conover concludes that “although group identification in the absence of group consciousness may be insufficient to produce distinctive patterns of group participation, group identifications, in and of themselves, do appear to have a significant impact on the process of political perception” (782).

²⁷ A review of ANES technical and pilot reports did not reveal any research into the validity and reliability of “close to” questions, despite their frequent presence on ANES studies.

reduction in the number of people who might otherwise meet the definition for having a feminist consciousness. The assumption is that one can hold only one group identification. But how might an African American woman answer a question which asks her to choose to which group she feels the closest? Asking someone to artificially give primacy to one group over another when two or more groups may be central to one's identity can result in findings fraught with questionable assumptions.

Additionally, the "close to" questions do not distinguish between those who may be supportive of liberal feminism and those who, for lack of a better term, are considered "anti-feminists." As Cook (1989) points out, the "close to" questions do not clarify the underlying political meaning of the responses.

For feminists, closeness to women may indicate a sense of common purposes and a need for collective political action. For anti-feminists, closeness to women may be related to identification with traditional sex roles. Lumping together all women who feel close to women without determining the basis for their identification creates an ambiguous category (Cook 1989: 71).

In short, the "close to" questions are suspect due to their theoretical and methodological weaknesses.

The other commonly used questions to measure feminist consciousness have been the "equal roles" and "feeling thermometer" questions. Consistent with the "close to" questions, their frequent appearance on National Election Studies has made them an attractive choice for researchers interested in measuring feminist consciousness. The equal roles question has been present on every NES questionnaire since 1972, and the feeling thermometer has varied in its reference group, going from the "women's liberation movement" to "feminists" and finally to separate questions concerning "feminists" and "women." Unfortunately, both the equal roles and feeling thermometer

questions are plagued with empirically demonstrated problems and questionable assumptions which limit their ability to measure feminist consciousness.

In its common form, the equal roles question looks something like the following:

Recently there has been a lot of talk about women's rights. Some people feel that women should have an equal role with men in running business, industry, and government. Suppose these people are at one end of a scale, at point one. Others feel that a woman's place is in the home. Suppose these people are at the other end, at point seven. And, of course, some other people have opinions somewhere in between at points 2, 3, 4, 5, OR 6. Where would you place yourself on this scale, or haven't you thought much about this?

Those who have used the "equal roles" question as one component in a gender consciousness measure include Tolleson Rinehart (1992) in her overtime analysis of gender consciousness. Using the combined "feeling thermometer" and "equal roles" questions to construct a measure of gender consciousness, Tolleson Rinehart demonstrates a weak link between consciousness and participation. However, underlying her analysis are numbers that place the majority of respondents in support of women's equality, at least as measured by the equal roles question. In 1988, when she finds those most likely to be politically active are the "individualist/privatized" (i.e., *not* gender conscious), her analysis is based on a very small subset of the population, 8.8 percent to be exact. The majority (79.3 percent) of respondents in 1988 held egalitarian attitudes about gender roles. Thus, the lack of variance in Tolleson Rinehart's data calls into question the appearance of gender consciousness *not* leading to more participation. Little has changed in society since 1988 that would prompt more people to proclaim "a woman's place is in the home." Any measure which uses a question like the "equal roles" as a central measure of attitudes toward equality will likely yield the same problems

encountered by Tolleson Rinehart.²⁸ There simply is not enough variance when attitudes toward gender equality are measured in this way.

In a related point, the equal roles question likely suffers from a social desirability bias. One suspects that when given a choice between voicing support for sexist attitudes toward women (i.e., telling the interviewer a “woman’s place is in the home”) versus endorsing gender equality, it is increasingly common to give an egalitarian answer even if it is not a true reflection of one’s beliefs. This is perhaps especially true when the interviewer is a female. In short, the likelihood of giving a response inconsistent with one’s true beliefs is a salient reason for doubting the utility of the equal roles question.

A second issue raised by some concerning use of the equal roles question to measure the cognitive element of gender consciousness is its failure to differentiate between what Conover and Sapiro (1992) term “normative versus empirical gender equality.” In this, they are referring to the fact that at least in principle, most express support for the notion of gender equality. On some level, the equal roles question measures normative gender equality by asking respondents if women *should* have an equal place in society with men. But feminist consciousness goes beyond normative expressions of women’s right to equality. It also includes whether and to what degree a respondent perceives gender equality in society, across both public and private domains. An individual may voice support for the principle of gender equality, yet fail to recognize the persistence of inequality. The equal roles question does not measure to what degree people recognize inequality in society.

²⁸ In the 2000 NES, 80 percent of women gave answers in support of gender equality.

In a related point, the equal roles question suffers from its inability to distinguish between support for gender equality in both principle and practice. While the majority of respondents support global statements about the need for equal roles, how strong is that support once questions are broken into different policy domains? When asked the “equal roles” question, few are inclined to support the contention that a woman’s place is in the home. Yet, as has been demonstrated when questions regarding equality are broken into different public and private domains the percentage of individuals in support of gender equality varies (Sapiro and Conover 2001).

Regarding the feeling thermometer questions, problems with these lie in the subjective determination of what it means to feel “warmly” towards a group. While the question has improved over the years through its change in focus from the “women’s liberation movement” to feminists and women, two noted feminist scholars describe its use as “more likely to engender sniggers than serious scholarship” (Conover and Sapiro 1992: 18). If the point is to assess whether a woman feels a certain affinity with other women, whether in the form of concern or happiness for women’s overall situation in society, it is doubtful whether a question which asks how “warm” one feels toward other women suffices for accuracy. I, for instance, may have felt concern over Anita Hill’s treatment by the Senate in the Thomas confirmation hearings because of what it bodes for all women’s treatment in the workplace, yet I cannot say I necessarily feel tremendously “warm” toward the same women I express concern. Questions which ask about warmth toward other women are simply inadequate measures of emotional interdependence.

Additionally, questions arise when considering the cut-off point for demonstrating emotional interdependence. A score of 65 for a woman who meant it to demonstrate

warm feelings for other women may not be interpreted that way. Relying on some unstated rule of thumb for what constitutes warmth seems less than rigorous for empirical research.²⁹ This, however, is what is commonly done in studies purporting to document feminist consciousness among women. In short, what is “warm” to some may be interpreted as “cool” to another.

Another potential problem with existing measures of feminist consciousness are their limited dimensionality. Are two dimensions suitable for measuring the phenomenon, or are there reasons to suspect feminist consciousness is more multi-dimensional? Some who have used the 1991 NES Pilot data (Conover and Sapiro 1993), the testing ground for many of the questions used in 1992, and the 1992 NES data (Tolleson Rinehart, Davenport, Gilmour, Hood, Moore, and Shirkey 1994; Reingold and Foust 1998), have incorporated a feminist identity dimension in their measure of feminist consciousness. Including indicators that measure the saliency of “feminism” and “feminists” is important for defining the way in which a woman understands gender inequality. However, one possible reason a feminist identity has not been included in standard measures of feminist consciousness is the availability of indicators. The “close to feminists” question provides one option for measuring a feminist identity component to feminist consciousness. But it has been asked in only four surveys since 1992, making it difficult to become a consistent feature in a measure of feminist consciousness.

²⁹ Wilcox, Sigelman and Cook (1989) caution against using an arbitrary cutoff for measuring support for a particular group. Doing so, they argue, “runs the risk of producing a set of ‘false positive’ and ‘false negatives,’” or cases where a respondent’s score is interpreted independent of the general pattern of feeling thermometer evaluations given by that respondent to other groups.

And finally, absent from standard measures of feminist consciousness are indicators which address the importance of collective action, a criteria included in standard definitions of group consciousness. While there are obstacles to women embracing a collective action orientation, it is nonetheless a theoretically important part of feminist consciousness. A collective action orientation should act as a catalyst compelling a woman to become engaged politically. However, as one respected feminist consciousness scholar points out, “the availability of certain questions, rather than theory, has guided the operationalization of key concepts” (Conover 1988a: 55).

In short, findings which show group consciousness among women to be weak when compared with other similarly oppressed groups should not be taken at face value given the methodological problems just discussed. When added to the theoretical problems discussed earlier, measure inadequacy raises the possibility that the weak link between feminist consciousness and political behavior may not be a true reflection of reality.

True, many of the questions used to measure feminist consciousness are used to measure other forms of group consciousness, such as the case with African Americans. But many of the problems identified with the indicators’ application to women and the measurement of feminist consciousness are applicable to their use for other groups. Asking any minority group whether they feel close to members of their own group is likely to result in responses plagued with ambiguity. Furthermore, the growing diversity in the U.S. is making it extremely unlikely that many can say with certainty they identify with one primary group. Thus, while I am focusing specifically on the limitations of using

existing questions to measure feminist consciousness, my critique is not irrelevant to their use for other forms of group consciousness.

Envisioning new measures of feminist consciousness

Given the uncertainty of existing measures, the task is now to determine what might constitute better indicators of feminist consciousness. This is not to suggest abandoning the existing measures, but rather to think more creatively about what constitutes feminist consciousness.

Fortunately a survey exists which includes new and untested measures, relative to their relationship to political participation. Under the thoughtful guidance of Virginia Sapiro and Pamela Johnston Conover, the 1991 ANES Pilot Study included a battery of new indicators designed to measure feminist consciousness. Their uniqueness is owed to the careful consideration given to the multi-dimensionality of feminist consciousness. As Conover and Sapiro argue:

[G]ender consciousness – this politicized social identity – is a complex or ‘umbrella’ concept necessarily embracing interrelated elements that must each be tapped distinctly if we are to move toward more fruitful research on gender politics. Obviously, then, the key to an adequate conceptualization lies in a defensible identification of the components of gender consciousness” (Conover and Sapiro 1992: 2).

Conover and Sapiro (1992) identify two distinctive components of feminist consciousness.³⁰ The first, the *emotional* component, “is identity itself, the sense of relationship to a social and, for our purposes as political scientists, political group” (2). The second, the *cognitive* component, is “an awareness of and sensitivity to the unequal

³⁰ I will adhere to Conover and Sapiro’s use of the term “gender consciousness” rather than “feminist consciousness.” However, their definition of the cognitive component of gender consciousness (i.e., an awareness of and sensitivity to the unequal and gendered nature of society and an ideological commitment to ending or perpetuating the inequalities), is a term more aptly described as feminist in its orientation.

and gendered nature of society and an ideological commitment to ending or perpetuating the inequalities” (2). While both components are embodied in existing measures, Conover and Sapiro come up with alternate indicators based on a more nuanced and theoretically refined understanding of each concept.

Beginning with the emotional component, Conover and Sapiro argue that “previous NES attempts to measure gender interdependence have focused on women and their objective or material interdependence with one another” (18). I add to Conover and Sapiro’s assessment of previous measures a charge that the emotional indicators rely on the respondent’s subjective interpretation of closeness or warmth. The feeling thermometer and “close to” questions, in addition to suffering from an imprecise standard for what constitutes closeness or warmth from one respondent to the next, suffers also from their failure to locate an emotional connection to other women within a particular context. Respondents are faced with answering the question with little guidance on which to base their evaluation of feelings toward other women. As a result, when asked if one feels close to other women, a respondent applies her own subjective interpretation of contexts for which the question is applicable. This makes it difficult to interpret what is meant when someone says they feel close to other women.

Conover and Sapiro address these problems through new indicators of emotional interdependence among women. Specifically, they included questions which ask how often women feel pride toward other women’s accomplishments, anger when hearing about women’s ill treatment in society, and attentiveness to news items concerning women.

Each question asks women to gauge their emotional identification with other women not in a global sense, or leaving the respondent to subjectively choose a context from which to base her answer, but rather in relation to other women's accomplishments and the way women are treated in society. At face value, both questions go a long way in overcoming problems inherent in asking women to rate their emotional connection to others through vague measures of closeness and warmth. Each question was included in the 1992 NES.

As for the cognitive dimension of feminist consciousness, measures tested in the 1991 NES Pilot Study provide a multidimensional distinction in attitudes toward gender equality. As Conover and Sapiro as well as others have argued, feminist consciousness involves a cognitive awareness of gender inequality and a commitment to either preserve or bring about an end to women's unequal treatment. However, the manner in which researchers have gone about measuring this component has largely been through the equal roles question, a measure which has been shown to have its problems.

Conover and Sapiro begin by pointing out that cognitive measures must account for one's perception of things as they are, as well as one's commitment to gender equality. Thus, they distinguish between empirical and normative measures of the cognitive component. Looking back to the equal roles question, it asks only about gender equality in a normative sense. The question asks whether women *should* have an equal role in society versus remaining in the home. And, as has been noted, the overwhelming response trend has been to support normative equality.

The second distinction between previous indicators and the 1991 Pilot Study measures involves Conover and Sapiro's attention to the conceptualization of gender equality in domain-specific versus general terms. As they argue:

We need to know what is in people's minds when they respond to questions about equality in general...There is no reason to believe that people find gender equality in business, government, the family, or any other socio-institutional domain equivalent in any respect. One may desire to see gender equality in one domain but not another; it is possible for a relative degree of equality to exist in one domain but not another"(3).

Thus, their measures ask about gender equality in the family, politics and government, and business and industry. Again, these measures stand in stark comparison to the previous cognitive measure -- the equal roles question. In the past, respondents have been asked to ascertain gender equality from a global perspective. What, then, runs through a respondent's mind when they answer a question about whether women should have an equal role in society? Does that mean equality in all of society? Given surveys which show the public's continued ambivalence for women in positions of political authority,³¹ it is safe to assume support for gender equality varies across dimensions. The equal roles measure cannot address whether and to what extent this assumption is correct. In addition to the equal roles question, the 1991 NES Pilot Study tested measures which ask about how women perceive equality in government and politics, business and industry, and the family as well as normative perceptions for how things should be between the sexes across the same domains.

³¹ A 1999 CBS News poll found the public almost evenly split over the question as to whether "America is ready to elect a woman president." Although, the same survey found that nine out of ten would vote for a woman for president if she were qualified for the job.

Because of the similar response distributions among items concerning business and industry and politics and government, Conover and Sapiro recommended a combined measure (perhaps aptly labeled the “public” domain) and argued for maintaining a distinctive empirical and normative family measure (or “private” domain measure). And, as will be seen, the 1992 NES survey did just that, collapsing both public domains into single empirical and normative measures, and keeping the family questions separate.

Finally, the 1991 Pilot Study included a measure of collective action, a theoretically important concept for assessing feminist consciousness. It too was included in the 1992 NES.

The 1991 Pilot Study included only 242 female respondents whereas the 1992 survey asked 1013 women the same questions included in the earlier pilot study. Despite the loss of separate normative and empirical items for equality in business and government, the larger sample size in 1992 overshadows any potential loss and thus justifies proceeding in this analysis of feminist consciousness using the 1992 American National Election Survey.

Summary

Despite having come a considerable way since attributing gender differences in political behavior and attitudes to reliance on a husband’s authority, our knowledge of women and their relationship to politics remains clouded by methodological and theoretical shortcomings. Beyond understanding how women’s roles as wives and mothers help to explain their political behavior and attitudes, a more fundamental question involves if and to what degree one’s identity as a woman in a patriarchal society leads to distinctive patterns of political behavior, beliefs, and attitudes. Feminist

consciousness research has attempted to address this question. However, the limitations imposed by having to rely on only a few consistently asked indicators for measuring the phenomenon have led to shortcomings in our understanding of how and to what extent feminist consciousness operates in the minds of women. Additionally, relying on theoretical assumptions more appropriate for racial and ethnic minorities, such as centering our thinking about group consciousness around an ingroup/outgroup perspective, has weakened the extent to which feminist consciousness can be measured. As a result, contemporary research suggests group consciousness is not as apparent among women than it is among other minority groups, and therefore not as likely to have a significant impact on women's political behavior and attitudes.

In order to gauge whether findings such as these are simply an artifact of the limited number and nature of available measures, a data set including new measures of feminist consciousness is needed. Such data are available and the measures contained within offer a thoughtful departure from existing measures of feminist consciousness, both in the depth of their theoretical basis and in the sheer number of gender related variables.

Chapter 3: The Mismeasurement Hypothesis - Arriving at a new measure of feminist consciousness

The mismeasurement hypothesis argues that the inability of past research to find a relationship between feminist consciousness and participation is based on data plagued with methodological problems. Data that are better equipped to address these problems may reveal a more robust relationship between feminist consciousness and participation, assuming, of course, that question ambiguity, limited dimensionality, and a variety of other concerns have obscured the real effect of feminist consciousness on political participation. This hypothesis does not discount the obstacles women face in achieving a feminist consciousness; it argues simply that the historical disconnect between feminism and electoral politics is insufficient to expect feminist identity to bear no relationship to participation.

Thus, this chapter will serve two purposes. First, it will explore a new measure of feminist consciousness using data better equipped to address problems with the existing measures outlined earlier. Proper measurement of feminist consciousness includes attention not only to the ways in which the existing dimensions have been measured, but also to the possibility that its dimensionality has not been appropriately captured.³² While reducing a theoretically complex phenomenon to such a small number of dimensions (i.e., a cognitive and emotional component) is understandable in light of the dearth of repeated survey measures, it is important to consider whether this is true with a more complete

³² Feminist consciousness is also understood primarily through an “either/or” perspective of its presence – you either have it or you do not. However, as Henderson-King and Stewart (1997) find, the developmental model outlined by Downing and Roush (1997) for feminist identity is confirmed. Different patterns of relationships can be found between each of the stages of feminist identity and political beliefs. Their findings suggest the importance of going beyond the “either/or” conception of feminist consciousness and instead treat it as a continuous variable. This is difficult, however, with cross-sectional survey research because it does not afford the ability to see whether consciousness is achieved in stages over the course of one’s adult years.

battery of instruments. In addition to outlining which indicators offer the best reflection of feminist consciousness in its usual conception (i.e., a cognitive and emotional component), this chapter will explore whether there are other important dimensions to feminist consciousness.

Additionally, this chapter will explore the determinants of feminist consciousness. This is necessary in order to disentangle what is likely a complicated relationship between feminist consciousness and identification as a liberal Democrat. Because liberal feminism has historically been aligned with the Democratic party and liberal ideology, feminist consciousness is more apt to be found among liberal and Democratic women. However, the fact that liberal Democrats have been the most supportive of feminist principles does not mean feminist consciousness is synonymous with identification as a liberal Democrat. Feminist consciousness accounts for more than support for Democratic policies and a rejection of conservative political principles. Its usefulness as a politicized social identity rests on its awareness of gender's role in organizing the political world for feminist-identified women. Thus, before testing the mismeasurement hypothesis, it is important to document the extent to which feminist consciousness is distinct from Democratic and liberal identification. In short, this chapter will also demonstrate the importance of feminist consciousness apart from mere identification as a liberal Democrat.

Remeasuring feminist consciousness

Tables one through three identify the questions and response distributions for each measure organized by the dimensions that best represent an accurate measure of feminist consciousness.

Consistent with past research, table one identifies the emotional dimension to feminist consciousness and includes the measures I argue best represent psychological attachment to other women. While in the past, the close to women question has been used as *the* measure of emotional attachment, it is buttressed in the current analysis with feelings of pride toward other women's accomplishments, anger when faced with instances of women's poor treatment in society, and attentiveness to news items concerning women. The new indicators reveal that women are consistent in their feelings of emotional connectedness with other women. Sizable majorities give a pro-connectedness response in the pride, anger, and news measures (as measured by combining the two most "feminist" responses), although it is notable that only about a quarter to a third say they feel pride and anger most of the time and pay a lot of attention to issues specifically concerning women.

Questions Measuring Emotional Dimension

How often do you find yourself feeling a sense of pride in the accomplishments of women? Very often, some of the time, occasionally, or almost never?

How often do you find yourself angry about the way women are treated in society? Very often, some of the time, occasionally, or almost never?

When reading or listening to the news, how much attention do you pay to issues that especially affect women? A lot, some, a little, or not at all?

Here is a list of groups. Please read over the list and tell me the letter for those groups you feel particularly close to--people who are most like you in their ideas and interests and feelings about things...Women
Of the groups you just mentioned, which one do you feel closest to?

Responses to these questions offer more useful information when compared to the close to women item, both because their answers are interpretable (as opposed to inferring the meaning behind feelings of closeness) and because a good number of

women do not identify themselves as feeling particularly connected to other women in relevant situations.³³

Interestingly, however, there are differences in the extent to which women are said to express pride and anger. More women said they feel pride toward other women's accomplishments most or some of the time than did those who said they feel anger toward other women's treatment in society most or some of the time. While the difference is not great (approximately 10 percent), it does suggest feelings of anger may represent a higher threshold for those who feel truly connected to other women.³⁴

Table two reflects the response distributions for questions hypothesized to measure an egalitarian dimension, in that all ask about perceptions of gender roles and equality. In addition to the usual "equal roles" question there are four other questions which ask about normative and empirical conceptions of equality across the public and

³³ The "close to women" item is a combined measure that includes responses to a follow-up question which asks respondents to identify the group to whom they feel the closest.

³⁴ It is possible that anger invokes something very different in women's minds than the question concerning pride. Perhaps anger brings to mind uncomfortable thoughts of stereotypically radical, bra-burning women, whereas pride brings to mind a more comfortable place by invoking images of universally celebrated women, like early suffragettes or women pioneers in space. Or, perhaps the difference can be attributed to the degree of activism that is invoked by these two very different emotions. If I say I am angry most or some of the time about women's treatment in society, I may also link that anger to activism around rectifying the problem. Whereas if I say I feel pride most or some of the time toward other women's accomplishments, I may instead think about passive observance of women's history month. In short, the difference may lie in the extent to which women identify with "rocking the boat" versus benignly noting the accomplishments of other women. And finally, the difference in frequency between pride and anger may be attributable to the inability to identify with "other women's" accomplishments or treatment in society. A woman may not include herself when thinking about these questions and thus feel less comfortable with expressing anger over another's perceived injustice. It may be a bit easier to express pride in this context.

Nevertheless, the differences in responses to questions concerning pride and anger is worth further exploration. While fully half (52.8%) responded "some" or "very often" to both questions, almost a quarter (22.7%) were significantly less emotive when asked about anger (i.e., responding "almost never" or "occasionally" after having said they feel pride "some of the time" or "very often"). Only about one in ten said they feel anger more than pride.

private domains.³⁵ Combining responses to questions that ask about how things should be versus how they are allow for the measurement of status discontent, or whether women recognize male dominance while longing for equality. This element is similar to one posed by Miller et al. (1981), who argued that one dimension to group consciousness is polar power, or the “expressed satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the group’s current status, power, or material resources in relation to that of the outgroup” (496). In the case of women, they should come closer to having a feminist consciousness if they recognize inequality in public and private life and favor gender equality.

In addition to adding a new element to a measure of feminist consciousness, the status discontent measures address the problem of limited variance. At face value, the two questions that ask about how things should be in public and private life and the equal roles questions go together nicely, in that all assess normative conceptions of gender relations. However, the two measures specific to public and private life garner close to 90 percent support for the belief that both men and women should share power. Adding to the problem is the minimal variance in the equal roles question. Using only the three normative measures would result in a measure of egalitarianism that remains skewed toward the egalitarian end thus perpetuating the problem of limited variance.

Table two shows that while around three quarters of women express status discontent in the context of government, business and industry, 38 percent are discontent with the state of affairs in the family. These differences are owed to the extent to which women evaluate power in the family differently relative to the state of affairs in public

³⁵ The 1992 NES also asked about empirical conceptions of power in the public and private domains. These questions were an attempt to address concerns over the distinction between normative and empirical conceptions of gender equality.

life. Specifically, women are more likely to say men have power in families (46%) compared to more than eight in ten who say the same about male power in government, business and industry (85%).

The inconsistency between responses to questions about power in public and private life shows how difficult it is to measure accurately perceptions of gender equality. To begin with, assessing power in public life is arguably more straightforward than assessing it in the family. One woman may think power implies power over the family finances, and another may think about power over childrearing. Relative to the family, these questions suffer from their inability to direct respondents to a particular context from which to base their responses. While the same format is used to ask the question concerning government and politics and business and industry, power in this context is more clear-cut. It is unlikely that when asked about power in the public sphere women would be unsure as to what is meant. Power in the public sphere clearly implies decision making over public policy and employment practices. As such, these questions are much less ambiguous and provide more validity when used in the context of public versus private life. It is possible that the greater response distribution variance in the empirical family questions relative to others is more the result of poorly worded questions than uncertainty in women's minds.

In fact, women do give a great deal of thought to family dynamics and the division of labor. While the NES questions are not specific to how work is divided in the home, Sigel's (1996) research demonstrates that women are largely unhappy with how things get done around the house. While her initial focus was on gender equality in domains more likely to be identified as public, she found a recurrent theme in the focus groups she

Questions Measuring Egalitarian Dimension

People have different opinions about how much power and influence women have in society compared to men. Thinking about the way things really are in government, business and industry today, do you think men have more power and influence than women, OR that men and women have about equal power and influence, OR, that women have more power and influence than men?

People disagree about how much power and influence they think women ought to have compared to men. Thinking about how you would like things to be in government, business, and industry, do you think men should have more power and influence, OR that men and women should have about equal power and influence, OR that women should have more power and influence?

Thinking about the way things really are in most families, do you think men have more power and influence, OR that men and women have about equal power and influence, OR that women have more power and influence?

People disagree about how much power and influence they think women ought to have compared to men. Thinking about how you would like things to be in families, do you think men should have more power and influence, OR that men and women should have about equal power and influence, OR that women should have more power and influence?

Recently there has been a lot of talk about women's rights. Some people feel that women should have an equal role with men in running business, industry, and government. Others feel that women's place is in the home. Where would you place yourself on this scale, or haven't you thought much about this?

conducted that centered on gender relations in the home. Specifically, the unfair division of labor at home and the lack of cooperation women receive from their partners kept coming up in the group discussions. Sigel's "first inclination had been to bypass those conversations rather than to include them in a chapter on political involvement. I abandoned that idea when I realized what a central role these everyday activities played in the formation of their gendered perspectives" (96).

Given what Sigel heard, it is somewhat surprising that the NES data did not reveal a more sizable majority of women who identify the locus of power in families with men. If it is indeed true women find themselves beleaguered with domestic and childcare duties while at home, there should not be the ambivalence displayed over who has power at

home. Perhaps, however, power does not conjure up images of who does the laundry, goes grocery shopping, takes children to and from school but rather evokes whether and to what extent egalitarianism prevails in, for instance, decision making and the ability to engage in paid labor outside the home. Finding one saddled with too many domestic responsibilities may be experienced as part and parcel of womanhood and thus an inappropriate gauge for assessing whether gender equality prevails in family life. Despite these inconsistencies between public and private evaluations of equality, their use in a measure of egalitarianism provide for more variance than use of the equal roles question by itself.

Finally, table three presents the variables I believe constitute a feminist identity dimension, something alluded to earlier but worthy of more justification. First, for an index to purportedly measure feminist consciousness, it seems inadequate to assume its underlying structure is based on responses to questions with only women as the reference group. Sufficient attention needs to be paid to feminists and feminist goals as well. This is what will give feminist consciousness its theoretical usefulness as it will identify in what way gender is used as a salient guide in shaping a respondent's attitudes and behavior.

Second, it is possible that the relationship between consciousness and participation has been obscured by inappropriate measures as well as inappropriate theorizing about what constitutes the phenomenon. The limited array of indicators for measuring feminist consciousness in past research has undoubtedly made a more multi-dimensional conception difficult, but this does not necessarily mean more dimensions do

not exist. Going beyond the two-dimensional conception of consciousness may help to uncover a stronger relationship between feminist consciousness and participation.

There is also the work of others which suggests a feminist identity dimension may be part of consciousness. Conover and Sapiro (1993), for example, include a third dimension in

their analysis of specifically *feminist* consciousness and war by adding a feminist identity component. Their data, the 1991 NES Pilot study, is similar to that being used here since the 1992 questions were first tested in the pilot study. They arrive at a slightly different conceptualization of feminist consciousness, one that adds a second dimension to the emotional component through questions that ask “Do you think of yourself as a feminist?” and “Do you think of yourself as a strong feminist or a not so strong feminist?” Their assertion that “group consciousness is not simply an ideological stance toward a particular social group” but also includes a group identity component is well

Questions Measuring Feminist Identity Dimension

Feeling thermometer - Women's Movement:

Feeling thermometer - Feminists

Here is a list of groups. Please read over the list and tell me the letter for those groups you feel particularly close to--people who are most like you in their ideas and interests and feelings about things...Feminists
Of the groups you just mentioned, which one do you feel closest to?

Some people think that the best way for women to improve their position is for each woman to become better trained and more qualified, and do the best she can as an individual. Others think that while individual effort is important, the best way for women to really improve their position is if they work together. Which is closest to your view: is individual effort enough, or do women also need to work together?

Do you think of yourself as a feminist or not?
[If R identifies self as feminist] Would you describe yourself as a strong feminist or a not so strong feminist?

taken, and the usefulness of questions that ask specifically about feminist identity seems likely (Conover and Sapiro 1993: 1085).³⁶

And finally, a feminist identity dimension is theoretically important because it distinguishes between what Huddy (2001) calls “acquired versus ascribed” identities. Most women are born with their gender ascribed. Being female brings with it the implicit assumption that a woman’s identity will be determined in part by her gender. Over the course of her lifetime, she will undoubtedly gather and shed many more identities as she experiences career changes, marriage and possibly divorce, caregiving for children or parents, and a variety of other defining roles that help to define her identity in a multitude of ways. But her constant female-ness ensures that gender will be an enduring part of her identity. Gender is thus an ascribed identity, or one that is more deterministic and less subject to choice in the modern era (Huddy 2001: 137).

An acquired identity is one that an individual exercises more freedom in adopting. For a woman, her gender can result in both ascribed and acquired identities through her choice to see the world as desperately fraught with sexism and thus adopting a feminist identity. For Huddy, not distinguishing between ascribed and acquired identities is problematical for social identity theory and the extent to which it is able to shed light on when identities become politicized. As she argues:

Each of us has many potential identities derived from diverse group memberships, but relatively few of these identities or become politically consequential....If all group identities were simply ascribed to group members, a knowledge of group boundaries may be all that is needed to understand the consequences of group membership. But when group identities are acquired,

³⁶ Others who have incorporated a feminist identity dimension in their work on gender or feminist consciousness include Tolleson Rinehart, Davenport, Gilmour, Hood, Moore, and Shirkey (1994) and Reingold and Foust (1998).

the meaning of group membership may have a powerful influence over the voluntary adoption of identity and its consequences once acquired (137-142).

Huddy's argument is compelling when applied to the paradox of increases in support for the women's movement and feminist principles coupled with no significant effects on participation. By excluding measures of feminist identity, past measures of feminist consciousness have largely accounted for the ascribed aspect of gender identity. Beyond the methodological problems with questions about feeling close to women and recognizing inequality, these responses do not distinguish between women who identify with the women's movement and feminist principles and those who do not. The distinction between acquired and ascribed identities that are tied to gender may be what is critical to understanding when gender identity becomes politically consequential. By adding a feminist identity dimension to a measure of feminist consciousness, the theoretically empty term "gender consciousness" becomes politicized in a way that improves its chances of relating to electoral participation.

Thus, the following five indicators are those I believe best represent a feminist identity dimension to feminist consciousness. They are the women's movement and feminist feeling thermometer, whether one considers herself a feminist, feeling close to feminists, and favoring collective over individual action.³⁷

These five indicators form a seemingly coherent structure conceptually since all center largely around feminists and feminist goals. The feminist feeling thermometer and

³⁷ The "close to feminists" item is a combined measure that includes responses to the follow-up question that asks respondents to identify the group to whom they feel the closest. The item measuring feminist self-identification is a summary measure that also accounts for strength of identification.

close to feminists question both address affective feelings toward feminists as a group.³⁸

The women's movement feeling thermometer is similar in that the group most commonly tied to the movement are feminists, but distinct in that it avoids use of the baggage-laden label "feminist." The question that asks if a respondent considers herself a feminist, and if so, how strongly she perceives her identification is perhaps the most direct measure of feminist identity. And the final item, the one concerning preferences for individual versus collective action for solving women's problems, is a fairly direct indicator of whether the respondent defines gender inequality as the result of systematic discrimination, rather than idiosyncracies in individual behavior.

Taken together, these measures offer a departure from the traditional conception of the dimensionality of feminist consciousness. They provide the necessary meaning or direction which should be present in order to avoid use of the problematical term "gender consciousness." When included with the previous two dimensions, there is now a sense of how gender is operating to organize the world. Favorable responses to questions with the terms "women's movement" and "feminists" suggest that in addition to a respondent identifying with other women, perceiving and rejecting gender inequality, she is also likely to recognize the politicized nature of gender and the way it is used to subvert attempts to achieve equality.

These measures also demonstrate the importance of looking behind support for the women's movement as the sole measure of favorable attitudes toward equality

³⁸ The distinction between feeling close to women versus feeling close to feminists is not as subtle as the questions may seem. Saying one feels close to women does not imply identification with a cause or ideology, whereas expressing an attachment to feminists runs the risk of identification with the radical, abrasive image of feminists that has proven so difficult to disrupt (Huddy 1997). The simple fact that the same question wording is used in reference to both women and feminists does not mean that both questions tap the same dimension in a measure of feminist consciousness.

feminism. As numerous public opinion polls and some scholarly research (Buschman and Lenart 1996; Sigel 1996; Myaskovsky and Wittig 1997; Williams and Wittig 1997; Liss, O'Connor, Morosky and Crawford 2001) has found, a great many women fall into the "I'm not a feminist, but..." category, or those who support goals of the women's movement but reject the label or identity "feminist." To take just but a few examples, a 1997 CBS News/*New York Times* poll found that 69 percent of female respondents hold favorable attitudes toward the contemporary women's movement, while a 1998 CNN/*Time* magazine poll found that almost half (43 percent) of women polled have an "unfavorable" impression of feminists, and a 2000 NBC News/*Wall Street Journal* found that among women, two-thirds reject the feminist label for themselves. These percentages parallel what was found in the questions in table three. Questions specific to feminists garner the least support, whereas the women's movement feeling thermometer and collective action measure suggest the majority of women favor both. This suggests that while women are largely united in their support for the goals of the women's movement (i.e., ending job discrimination, pay equity, etc.), a good many are reticent about aligning themselves with those most likely responsible for bringing about changes that are generally considered positive in women's lives.³⁹ Thus, conflating support for the women's movement with a feminist identity runs the risk of overstating the extent to which women are supportive of both the women's movement and the group most associated with the goals of the women's movement. Since the point of this dimension of feminist consciousness is to assess a feminist identity, multiple indicators are needed,

³⁹ Drawing from a variety of surveys, Huddy, Neely, and LaFay (2000) provide a thorough account of overtime support for the women's movement.

some of which are useful in identifying the unique subset of women who not only support the women's movement, but who also do not shy away from the feminist label.⁴⁰

A preliminary analysis of how well these items correlate with each other in each dimension is included in table four. The first three are those which should constitute the egalitarian dimension. All are significantly and positively correlated with each other, offering some proof that a commitment to egalitarianism is one dimension in a measure of feminist consciousness. Before moving on, it is notable that the equal roles question correlates the strongest with the status discontent indicator for government, business, and industry. This provides some proof for the argument that the equal roles question was not getting at the various ways to assess gender equality, but was rather picking up conceptions rooted in public life only.

The next four variables in table four represent the proposed measure of the emotional dimension. Relative to the others, the close to women item performs poorly. Its coefficient with questions about specific emotions such as pride and anger are small. In fact, feeling close to women looks to be more related to questions in the feminist identity dimension. Theoretically, however, it makes more sense to keep the close to women question with the other emotional measures. Feeling close to women is not the same as saying, for instance, that one feels close to feminists or feels warmly toward the women's movement. Closeness to women is more akin to feeling pride at women's accomplishments. Furthermore, the reference group in all of the emotional questions is

⁴⁰ Huddy's (1997) work is helpful in demonstrating the stability of the feminist image. Changing the reference group connected to feminists in a hypothetical newspaper article proved futile toward encouraging more women to adopt a feminist identity. Specifically, Huddy's use of homemakers and clerical workers, or groups more consistent with everyday women, as opposed to leaders of the feminist movement, did not result in more women adopting a feminist identity even though their beliefs were largely consistent with those of the feminist movement.

women whereas the reference group in the feminist identity questions are largely feminists. Thus, while the correlation coefficients may point in another direction, keeping the close to women indicator with pride, anger, and news attentiveness to women-related stories makes more conceptual sense.⁴¹

The remaining five questions in table four list the indicators that should measure a feminist identity dimension. The correlations among these measures are all strong and positive, with the notable exception between the collective action measure and feeling close to feminists.

Thus, what emerges is a new feminist consciousness measure represented by three dimensions – two of which comport with previous thinking about the phenomena, and a “new” dimension which (at least theoretically) adds the necessary underlying political meaning to a measure of feminist consciousness. The next step is to confirm the hypothesized dimensionality of feminist consciousness or perhaps uncover some needed modifications.

All measures were coded on a one-point scale, ranging from -.50 to .50. Positive values indicate pro-feminist, pro-egalitarian, or pro-connectedness responses. A confirmatory factor analysis was estimated with three latent variables (egalitarian, emotional, feminist identity). The goodness-of-fit indices were close to 1.0 (relative fit

⁴¹ One issue comes to mind which may pose problems for some in accepting my assertion that attentiveness to news concerning women is an appropriate measure for emotional interdependence. The measure is regrettably vague. Women could be thinking about fashion or entertainment news when answering the question, rather than more substantive social or political issues. However, the correlation between news and feelings of pride, anger, and feeling close to women are reasonably strong and significant (see table four). This suggests attentiveness to news concerning women does have a place in a dimension purportedly related to emotional connection.

index = .993) indicating an excellent fit.⁴² And the chi-squared/degrees of freedom ratio was 3.653. Overall, the three dimension structure was confirmed.⁴³

Others who have used this dataset arrived at similar understandings of the dimensionality of feminist or gender consciousness. Reingold and Foust (1998) arrive at the following four dimensions of feminist consciousness: Feminist identification (“Close to feminists?” and the women’s movement and feminist feeling thermometers); emotional bond with women (attentive to news items concerning women, feelings of pride and anger); status discontent (normative equality in public and private domains); and collective orientation (comprised of the one item which asks whether women’s advancement can be brought about most effectively through individual effort or collective action).⁴⁴

Using the same data, Tolleson Rinehart et al. (1994) arrive at the following three dimensions after conducting an exploratory factor analysis on the fourteen gender-related

⁴² Unlike exploratory factor analysis -- a theory generating model -- confirmatory factor analysis is a theory-testing model. In confirmatory factor analysis, hypotheses are generated about the underlying structure of how a series of variables fit or “hang” together to form latent or unobserved variables. This model of analysis specifies which variables will be correlated with which factors (or latent variables) and which, if any, factors are correlated.

Statistics used to assess whether the underlying factor structure is “confirmed” are those that measure the amount of variance and covariances explained by the model (a goodness-of-fit index), and a chi-square/degree of freedom ratio. Goodness-of-fit indices that approach 1.0 represent a sound model; a ratio of no more than 4:1 is acceptable for well-designed models.

⁴³ An exploratory factor analysis using varimax rotation was conducted on the same items and virtually the same dimensions emerged with the slight exception being the primary factor loading for the close to women item. Using this method, the close to women item is most connected to the feminist identity dimension rather than the emotional dimension. I argue that it makes more theoretical sense to keep it with the dimension that taps psychological connection, because it is not specific to feminists or the women’s movement, and because it evokes emotions that are consistent with what is meant when someone says they feel emotionally connected to other women.

Each dimension was weighted equally in the final index.

⁴⁴ While they arrive at their understanding of feminist consciousness through an exploratory factor analysis, they do not provide the percent of variance explained, Cronbach’s alpha, or coding for their analysis

variables in the 1992 NES (percent of variance explained = 50.1): Feminist identification and awareness (feminist and women's movement feeling thermometers, feminist self-identification, individual effort versus collective action, and whether one feels close to feminists as a group); Anger (comprised of responses to the questions concerning pride and anger and attentiveness to news items concerning women); and a third dimension they call normative egalitarianism (comprised of responses to the two normative equality indicators and the equal roles question).

The similarity in dimensions across analyses suggests two things. First, the notion that feminist consciousness is a two dimensional phenomena is not confirmed. It appears to go beyond the standard understanding as comprised of a cognitive and emotional component. And relatedly, there is consistent evidence to suggest feminist identity plays a significant role in the development of feminist consciousness. When combined with the other indicators in the 1992 NES, both exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses identify feminist-specific measures as apart from the other two dimensions.

Predicting feminist consciousness

While the focus of much of the research on feminist consciousness and group identity among women has been on assessing its strength (Gurin et al. 1980; Conover 1984; Gurin 1985; Gurin et al. 1986; Conover 1988b; Cook 1989; Conover and Sapiro 1992, 1993; Lau, 1989) and relationship to political attitudes and behaviors (Miller et al. 1981; Tolleson Rinehart 1992), fewer attempts have been made to understand what characteristics define a woman who demonstrates feminist consciousness. In particular, the historical connection between the Democratic party and political liberalism and feminism make feminist consciousness ripe for dismissal as a variant of identification as

a liberal Democrat. Given this project's larger goal of testing the relationship between feminist consciousness and participation, it is first necessary to understand how, if at all, feminist consciousness is explained by political ideology. Doing so requires a systematic appraisal of the determinants of feminist consciousness, including the influence of partisanship and political ideology.

Those who have explored the determinants of feminist consciousness have done so through a variety of ways. The first to address the question of what leads to a feminist or gender consciousness is Ethel Klein (1984). Recognizing the sweeping social changes that had taken place in the latter half of the 20th century, Klein argues that many women developed a feminist consciousness because of their exposure to what she calls "nontraditional lifestyles." Increased participation in the labor force, delayed and often failed marriages, having fewer children and having them later in life resulted in women spending less time at home and more time exposed to the larger world around them. Women increasingly recognized the contribution they can make beyond raising the next generation, but they also began to experience discrimination and pay inequity in the workplace.⁴⁵ Finding themselves increasingly self-reliant, gender inequality went beyond mere symbolism and began to touch women's lives in a deeply personal and frightening way. As a result, Klein argues many women came to develop a group or feminist consciousness and embrace a collective orientation toward solving the problems of inequality. Finally, Klein defines in no uncertain terms the very feminist nature of

⁴⁵ The long-standing tradition of women earning less than men among similarly educated individuals continues. The U.S. Department of Census has documented this trend since 1970, when the ratio of female to male earnings for those with bachelor degrees was .50. In 1997, some quarter century later, women were still not making the same as men. While men were earning \$32,875, women were bringing home only \$25,558. Female to male earnings had increased to only a little over three-quarters, or .78 for every male dollar earned.

women's group consciousness. She argues, "women became feminists largely because the day-to-day experiences of a nontraditional lifestyle led them to reject traditionalism and demand equal opportunity" (Klein 1984: 23). Following Klein's lead, one of the big predictors of feminist consciousness in women should be exposure to nontraditional lifestyles, and would likely include working women, those with no children, and unmarried women.

There are those, however, who question theories such as Klein's (i.e., those which center around the importance of nontraditional lifestyles). Bushman and Lenart (1996), for example, argue that exposure to nontraditional lifestyles is no longer the exception to the rule. They point out "A progressively larger number of women in the paid labor force, an increased divorce rate, increased educational opportunities, and the rise in single-parent households are all becoming commonplace...Studies which operationalize support for feminism by measuring support for nontraditional gender-role behavior may simply be capturing the extent to which people approve of their own experiences and expectations and *not* the extent of their support for feminism" (62). They go on to show that much of what we thought we knew about the determinants of feminist consciousness has become moot. Among their sample of college women, "exposure to nontraditional gender roles are no longer definitive, or even relevant" (Bushman and Lenart 1996: 72).

In 1990, two years prior to collecting the data for the 1992 ANES, 58.4 percent of employed women were married, a little over half of adult women were married, and in households with children about six in ten were headed by married couples (Statistical Abstract of the United States, *Twentieth Century Statistics*). This suggests the indicators

used to measure exposure to nontraditional lifestyles are inadequate given the relative normalcy of defying traditional gender roles.

However, the possibility remains that older women may demonstrate a stronger feminist consciousness than younger women. Those who can recall a time when women's work was largely confined to the home may be better able to draw from the distinction between changes in women's roles over the years. Younger women, or those who have been referred to by some as the "post-feminist generation" (Bolotin 1982), are well-documented in their support for gender equality yet cautious in their support for feminism and identification as feminists (Buschman and Lenart 1996; Renzetti 1987; Cook 1989).

In addition to nontraditional lifestyles and its link to feminist consciousness, some literature points to the importance of experiencing victimization in some form or another for the development of feminist consciousness. Bushman and Lenart (1996) show that among college women, being the victim of rape, sexual harassment, and other forms of sexual violence is a potent predictor for positive attitudes toward feminism and the development of feminist consciousness.⁴⁶

And finally, ideological predispositions have been offered as possible determinants of feminist consciousness. The complicated relationship between nontraditional lifestyles and political beliefs and their effects on the development of feminist consciousness is explored in detail by Reingold and Foust (1998). As they argue, the kind of political beliefs one holds, such as ideological predispositions, party

⁴⁶ Other predictors which fall outside the scope of the data used in this analysis include exposure to women's studies courses and feminist pedagogy. Bargad and Hyde (1991) show that students in introductory women's studies courses were more likely to demonstrate attitudes and beliefs consistent with the development of feminist identity.

Similarly, Henderson-King and Stewart's (1999) analysis of students enrolled in women's studies courses found them to be more sensitive to sexism, positive toward feminists, and more self-identified as feminist over the semester than those not enrolled in women's studies courses.

identification, general egalitarian attitudes, and tolerance for changing morals and lifestyles, may lead one to either adopt or become exposed to nontraditional lifestyles thus contributing to the development of feminist consciousness. Having grounded their assertion that feminist consciousness develops in adulthood (see, for instance, Sapiro 1990) and noting the difficulty of exploring which comes first, ideology or lifestyle, they explore the direct relationship between both nontraditional lifestyles and ideology and feminist consciousness.

A preliminary look at the data suggests that relative to political ideology, there is some evidence pointing to the not-surprising link between liberal, Democratic women and feminist consciousness. Table five shows that most indicators reveal differences in the extent to which Democratic and Republican women give feminist responses to the fourteen indicators confirmed in the previous factor analysis. These patterns are consistent with the post-1960s link between the Democratic party and general acceptance of tenets of the modern day women's movement. Having been the party most identified with championing women's rights, a cause more in line with liberalism than conservatism, it comes as no surprise to find Democratic and liberal women more inclined to endorse feminist consciousness principles and attitudes.

Also, characteristics that may be considered "nontraditional" show some patterns consistent with a hypothesized link to feminist consciousness. Women who are educated, unmarried, and not identified as a homemaker tend to give feminist responses to most questions. Exposure to formal education broadens a woman's horizon and encourages her to challenge the assumptions of patriarchy and the normalcy of a male-dominated world as well as perhaps recognize the need to more closely identify with other women through

shared experiences of discrimination. Similarly, not being married and may make it more likely to recognize the systemic nature of discrimination.

At this early state, age offers little in the way of predictive insight, beyond noting the occasional tendency for the oldest cohort to demonstrate less of a proclivity toward feminism. This, however, is expected given that much of this cohort was socialized in the era preceding the heyday of the modern day women's movement.

The other characteristic that seems to define those who endorse feminist consciousness principles is race. Sizable and fairly consistent differences are apparent among white and nonwhite women in the indicators tapping the emotional and feminist identity dimensions. The fact that largely black, Asian American, and Latina women were more likely to identify with other women and embrace the feminist label more easily than white women is perhaps explained by their "dual minority" status. For example, minority women are more likely to express anger toward women's mistreatment because they have experience with racial discrimination as well. White women, on the other hand, have only their experiences with gender inequality from which to draw in expressing anger. Similarly, the sizable racial differences in support for collective action suggest it is minority women's (especially African American) historical connection with the Civil Rights Movement which may explain their greater commitment to this feminist consciousness principle.

Interestingly, many of the racial differences disappear or reverse once the questions turn to those that comprise the egalitarian dimension. White women are more likely to give egalitarian answers to the equal roles question and say men and women should have equal power in the family.

The preceding observations are preliminary and are better observed in multivariate analyses where a variety of salient characteristics are measured simultaneously. For example, an alternative to the early finding that minority women appear more feminist than white women may be their tendency toward more liberalism, Democratic identification, and a greater chance of being unmarried. However limited the usefulness of looking at response distributions by relevant demographic and political characteristics, they do reflect earlier findings that suggest political ideology and some lifestyle traits are useful in helping to explain who has a feminist consciousness. The goal is to now move forward in an attempt to gain a better understanding of what political, lifestyle, and demographic traits are the most salient in explaining feminist consciousness.

Measures: Independent variables - Lifestyle/Socialization

Taking a cue from both Klein (1984) and Reingold and Foust (1998), a series of variables were selected due to the likelihood that they tap the underlying consequences of being exposed to or adopting “nontraditional” (for lack of a better term) lifestyles for feminist consciousness. The following variables should demonstrate a positive relationship with feminist consciousness since by definition, the criteria for inclusion in these groups defies women’s traditional group definition. They are: Marital status (i.e., unmarried), employment outside the home 20 hours or more per week, being the sole, unmarried provider for a child (or children) 18 years or younger, having grown up with a mother who worked outside the home while the respondent was young, well-educated, and childless (or at least without children under 18 at home at least half time). All are coded on a one point range, with one representing the trait or characteristic.

Of course, the assumptions are far from perfect. The increasing normalcy, for instance, of raising children without a husband or partner raises questions as to how “nontraditional” of a choice this really is. However, it is not the frequency with which this type of living situation occurs that is important for this analysis; it is the experiences surrounding parenting in a society where the presence of a mother and father remains the norm. Theoretically, at least, a single mother is susceptible to the double insult of pay inequity and raising children with fewer resources (in both time and money) than her male counterparts. Working for less money while assuming total responsibility for her children may lead a woman to recognize the importance of her gender for understanding the difficulties she faces.

Similarly, it is difficult to make the case that working outside the home 20 or more hours per week exposes one to a nontraditional lifestyle. However, as with raising children without a husband, it is the experiences afforded by paid employment that are hypothesized to contribute to the development of feminist consciousness. Working brings women into contact with others whose life experiences are different from their own. Stories of discrimination may cause women to question their assumption that the inability of women to get ahead is the result of idiosyncracies in individual behavior, rather than sexism. Of course, the expectation that all jobs provide an environment ripe for the development of feminist consciousness is an overstatement. But the general idea that working challenges the assumptions of traditional gender roles should help along nascent feminist consciousness.

The liberalizing influence of education is well-documented. Women with advanced degrees are more likely to have been exposed to the principles of gender

equality, challenged to question the normalcy of equating women's work with the private sphere, and envision a life for themselves not limited by the traditional division of labor. However, there is also the possibility that the relationship between education and feminist consciousness is curvilinear. That is, women with little education may also have a feminist consciousness on par with those at the opposite end of the educational spectrum. Women with little, if any, formal education are more likely to work in low-paying, gender-stratified jobs, and be the sole provider for their children. These life circumstances may counter the effects of not having experienced the liberalizing influence of formal education. If true, little or no formal education as well as college education and beyond should show up as a positive indicators of feminist consciousness.

There is one other lifestyle variable that, contrary to those described previously, should bear a negative relationship to feminist consciousness. Women who are homemakers should demonstrate an inverse relationship to feminist consciousness because doing so reinforces the traditional division of labor and, implicitly, accepts traditional gender roles. Also, women with children who do not work outside the home are not as likely to have encountered discrimination at a level on par with a working woman. They are more likely to be commended for their decision to be a "stay at home mom," a choice most likely to be normalized and reinforced by those around her. Thus, for housewives, gender does not complicate a woman's ability to seek fulfillment (assuming her status is based on choice rather than circumstance).⁴⁷

⁴⁷ Response distributions for lifestyle variables can be found in the Appendix, Table A.

Political ideology

Variables used to represent the political ideology component of predictors are strength of partisanship and strength of ideology. Both are straightforward indicators, requiring little in the way of explanation for their hypothesized relationship to feminist consciousness. The historical connection between the Democratic party and support for gender equality strongly suggests Democratic women will show more feminist consciousness than Republican women. The same should be true for liberal women as compared to their conservative counterparts. These variables are scaled on one-point range, with one identifying those who are strong Democrats and liberals.⁴⁸

Demographic

The remaining few indicators are described as simply demographic and include age, race (i.e., nonwhite), personal income, and religiosity. They fit neither the lifestyle nor ideological predisposition categories but should demonstrate their own potency in predicting feminist consciousness. Younger women should be more likely to have a feminist consciousness since they have grown up in a time when challenges to patriarchy have been commonplace. Of course, the normalcy of challenging sexist assumptions about women may lessen the likelihood that young women have a feminist consciousness, but given that they are more apt to be single, childless, and in an educational environment, it seems more likely that age will serve to weaken the tie to feminist consciousness.

⁴⁸ In addition to partisanship and ideology, Reingold and Foust (1998) used moral and lifestyle tolerance, support for advancing the cause of equal opportunity, and a belief in the illegitimacy of racial inequality as additional variables in a model predicting feminist consciousness. They include these attitudinal variables because they believe they may supercede the importance of life circumstance or socialization variables. Using ordinary least squares regression, they find that attitudes are more powerful than lifestyle variables in a model predicting participation but do not trump the importance of partisanship and ideology.

Race (i.e., non-white) should lead to more feminist consciousness for reasons described earlier. Minority women may have more experience with both discrimination and ingroup/outgroup identification. The saliency of gender may be easier to recognize given how central race can be for defining an individual's place in society. If true, making the transition from race to gender may be less difficult for minority women relative to similarly positioned white women.

Regarding personal income, it is difficult to speculate as to how it may operate in predicting feminist consciousness. Higher incomes may be linked with more experience recognizing how hard women must work to achieve the same position and income as men. However, women at both ends of the income ladder come to recognize the centrality of gender, but for different reasons. Women making paltry incomes are likely to work due to necessity rather than choice. These women probably lack formal education, making them suitable for jobs where women's labor is likely to be exploited with meager hourly wages and few benefits in exchange for long hours and tedious work. Under these circumstances, women come to recognize gender's importance for dictating the conditions under which they live because of life experience. Women who make sizable incomes may too come to develop a feminist consciousness, but for them the impetus may be more the result of education and exposure to progressive thinking rather than oppressive working conditions. Whatever the case, personal income is expected to contribute to our understanding of what leads to the development of a feminist consciousness.

Religiosity is included in this group of variables because fervent religiosity is thought to indicate an acceptance of traditional gender roles, something anathema to the

development of feminist consciousness. While some religions endorse gender equality, there remain a great many who advocate traditional roles for men and women and interpret the Bible literally. The expectation would be that fervently religious women are the least likely to develop a feminist consciousness.

And finally, the 1992 NES included a question about personal experiences with sexual harassment.⁴⁹ Adding this question to a model predicting feminist consciousness makes both theoretical and empirical sense. Women who have first or second-hand knowledge of sexual harassment should be more likely to demonstrate traits consistent with feminist consciousness. And, as was pointed out earlier, sexual harassment was among the experiences that were found to bear some relationship to feminist consciousness (Bushman and Lenart 1996). While it may not fit with the other “demographic” variables, its place among the lifestyle or ideology groupings make less sense.⁵⁰

Analysis

The 14 predictors were used in a model to predict feminist consciousness, both in its full index and as each dimension as dependent variables. Ordinary least squares regression was used to analyze the effects of life circumstance, political ideology, and demographic variables on feminist consciousness. Separate analyses on the dimensions in addition to the full index provides insight into whether similar or distinct groups of variables are operative in predicting the parts of the whole.

⁴⁹ Among women, 43 percent of those women asked in 1992 said they or someone they know had been the subject of sexual harassment in the workplace.

⁵⁰ Response distributions for demographic variables can be found in the Appendix, Table A.

First, the big picture. Consistent with Reingold and Foust's (1998) analysis, ideological predispositions do a considerably better job at predicting feminist consciousness than does exposure to nontraditional lifestyles and relevant demographic predictors. As table six demonstrates, partisanship and ideology are strong and significant predictors across the full index as well as most of the three dimensions. Also, both are predictive in the right direction. It appears ideology, and in particular an ideology informed by liberalism, is far more useful in predicting feminist consciousness than is exposure to or the adoption of nontraditional lifestyles.

The other significant predictors are education, personally experiencing or knowing someone who has experienced sexual harassment, and religiosity. The increasing normalcy of women attending college does not seem to have diluted the importance of education as a significant predictor. Women are no longer attending college to find a suitable husband (a reason frequently ascribed to the motivations of earlier generations of female baccalaureates). Either out of economic necessity or career aspirations, most women plan to work after graduation rather than settle down and start families. Women with diplomas are more likely to embrace tenets associated with feminist consciousness because of what having an education buys them – the skills necessary to enter the upper echelons of the workforce. They also are likely to benefit from an environment which challenges the assumptions of gender stereotyping, both in its curriculum and in the day-to-day experiences of learning with both men and women. Colleges and universities provide -- either wittingly or unwittingly -- potent environments from which to challenge sexist assumptions about women's proper roles in society.

Similarly, personal experiences with on-the-job sexual harassment is a strong predictor across all components as well as in the full index. Since this question does not discriminate against unemployed women because it asks about first and second-hand experiences, simply knowing someone who lived the humiliation of sexual harassment appears to be enough to promote the development of feminist consciousness. However, perhaps not surprisingly, it makes its strongest showing as a predictor of the emotional dimension. With the exception of education, it is also the strongest variable in the model predicting emotional connection. Women who have personal experiences with sexual harassment appear more inclined to feel psychologically attached to other women, perhaps due to a shared sensitivity for this kind of humiliation.

Women whose lives are guided by religious rituals (i.e., pray, read the Bible, and attend religious services frequently) are considerably less likely to have a feminist consciousness. Religiosity's significant relationship to feminist consciousness is testimony to the regressive thinking which characterizes much religious thought and its orientation toward women and their proper role in society. This finding does not implicate one particular religion since the measure asks about practices rather than identification with a particular religious order. Women may consider themselves faithful adherents to a particular religion and yet still demonstrate a feminist consciousness. It is the extent to which religion, through ritualistic behavior, influences one's daily life that implies a belief in the often sexist assumptions inherent in much religious thought.

Despite sizable differences in the response distributions of white women and women of color, race does not appear to be a significant predictor in a multivariate analysis. This is likely due to the importance of other known variables such as party

identification among non-whites which may account for racial differences when accounted for simultaneously.

The importance of political ideology in these analyses appears to put to rest arguments that nontraditional lifestyles are central to understanding who does and does not develop a feminist consciousness. Perhaps this is because many of the indicators used to represent nontraditional lifestyles have become increasingly moot in that more and more women embody these characteristics. Not being married, for example, is a choice women make either consciously or find themselves living through deceased spouses or divorce. Gone are the days when women would set out to be married and with children by their mid-twenties. Today, marriages are less frequent and when they do occur, divorce is more likely than in the past. The likelihood that not being married is the result of some conscious defiance of traditional gender roles is becoming less likely. Contemporary women are doing what many others have chosen to do – either marry later in life or avoid matrimony all together.

However, there is the equally compelling possibility that some of the nonsignificant measures are being suppressed in an analysis measuring only the direct effects of variables on feminist consciousness. It is possible, for instance, for work status and single motherhood to influence the political ideology variables which in turn help to predict feminist consciousness. Proceeding without at least considering an alternate method of analyzing feminist consciousness as a dependent variable accepts the contention that feminist consciousness is simply an outgrowth of one's political beliefs. This may be true, but feminist consciousness should be shaped by things other than ideology and party identification. First, while there is an historical connection between

liberalism, the Democratic party and the contemporary women's movement, they are not inextricably linked. Secondly, feminist consciousness is intimately connected to one's identity as a woman, something that should transcend political beliefs and be shaped in part by some of the life experiences that did not turn up as significant predictors in the multivariate analysis with the exception of sexual harassment.

In order to test the true saliency of political beliefs relative to the other predictors, a path analysis is warranted. Doing so will provide insight into whether political ideology acts as an intervening variable in the path leading to feminist consciousness.

Table seven shows results from a path analysis predicting feminist consciousness via party identification and ideology. The model, while imperfect, is driven by past research and informed estimates regarding the indirect effects of party identification and ideology on the remaining variables.⁵¹ Education, for example, is expected to influence feminist consciousness through ideology; sexual harassment is expected to work through party identification. Assumptions based on reasons other than past research are certainly open to question, but the path model reflects the best guess as to which demographic or lifestyle variables should demonstrate a stronger connection to feminist consciousness via endogenous variables. Coefficients are standardized regression coefficients.

Variables that stand out for their notable improvement through the intervening influence of partisan or ideological strength include religiosity, not being married, age, sexual harassment, status other than a homemaker, and income. Religiosity, sexual harassment, and marital status start from positions of strength as they were significant and relatively strong predictors of feminist consciousness in a straightforward regression

⁵¹ In cases where past research was unable to guide expectations about the indirect effects of party identification and ideology, bivariate correlations were used to guide my thinking

testing for main effects. Income and status other than a homemaker more than double their impact on feminist consciousness. The importance of youth for predicting feminist consciousness increases, but the importance of ideological strength helps things along only a little. Education, a consistently significant predictor of feminist consciousness in the previous analyses, gains a little more influence through ideology. But overall, it appears education works most of its magic on feminist consciousness directly rather than indirectly. And interestingly, being a single mom, perhaps one of the most highly suspect life circumstance variables for its non-performance in the earlier analyses, still gains virtually nothing through the intervening influence of partisanship. Theoretically, single motherhood should gain importance through partisanship because of the likelihood that they are among those most sensitive to the Democratic party's historical connection with championing women's issues. However, single motherhood appears to have only limited effects on the development of feminist consciousness, either directly or indirectly.⁵²

Summary

This chapter has served two purposes. First, it has identified the dimensions of feminist consciousness. Contrary to the conventional understanding of feminist consciousness as comprised of two equally important components – a cognitive and emotional component – this analysis has confirmed a third dimension – a feminist identity dimension. It is this dimension that provides feminist consciousness with its underlying political meaning since it provides insight into how women organize and see the world around them. This component distinguishes feminist consciousness from other variants of gender consciousness, in particular those that account for the attitudes and

⁵² Response distributions for political ideology variables can be found in the Appendix, Table A.

orientation of conservative women (see, for instance, Klatch, 1987 and Schreiber, forthcoming). Women are not a monolith and cannot be described by reference to an all-encompassing gender consciousness. They come to understand things differently and, in particular, the way in which gender may or may not come to be a central tool for organizing the world around them. Conflating feminist or liberal women's interests with those of their conservative but equally "conscious" counterparts needlessly confuses any attempt to understand how gender operates as a variable in political and social analyses. This analysis confirms the presence of feminist consciousness and offers a step forward in research into women's group consciousness.

Secondly, this chapter reaffirms the importance of ideology for feminist consciousness. Contrary to the hypothesized link between feminist consciousness and exposure to nontraditional lifestyles, feminist consciousness is predicted largely by political ideology, such as party identification and liberalism. Even a path analysis that takes into account the possibility that factors such as raising children by oneself and working outside the home would influence feminist consciousness indirectly turned up little to rival the importance of political ideology as a group of predictor variables. Of course, the measures for exposure to nontraditional lifestyles may be a problem because of the increasing normalcy of doing the things described as nontraditional lifestyles. There may simply be insufficient measures for capturing what living a "nonconformist" life really means today.

The importance of political ideology, combined with the only modest increase in magnitude for a few of the lifestyle coefficients in the path analysis, presents a potential obstacle at this juncture. The clear intersection of feminist consciousness and political

ideology makes it difficult to make convincing claims that one's identity as a woman is of paramount importance for understanding her orientation to politics. It seems the same could be said of political ideology. Some may even argue that given the importance of political ideology for predicting feminist consciousness, gender can be dismissed as a variable since it appears so intimately related to ideology and only modestly related to lifestyle and socialization. However, such an argument is wrong because it is based on empiricism alone. Theoretically, feminist consciousness should be of importance apart from political ideology because of the additional meaning attached to the behavior and attitudes of those who have a feminist consciousness. A feminist-identified woman may respond favorably to a policy initiative, such as equity in health care, not only out of a belief that equality should prevail in all areas of life, but also because she believes prescription drug coverage for Viagra is unfair if the same coverage is not offered for birth control. In essence, feminist-identified women bring an added dimension of understanding to politics that may be lost if feminist consciousness were simply equated with a liberal political ideology. In short, feminist consciousness is not akin to ideology. It is a unique and worthy dimension that provides necessary insight into understanding the diversity of women's political behavior and attitudes.

Chapter 4: The Mismeasurement Hypothesis

The mismeasurement hypothesis argues that data which addresses the methodological problems outlined earlier, coupled with a more appropriate method of analysis, could uncover a relationship between feminist consciousness and participation. This argument does not dismiss theoretical and empirical claims about the difficulty women encounter in forming a politicized social identity. It argues that despite these obstacles, some women are nonetheless capable of achieving a state of group consciousness consistent with the expectation that their feminist identity promotes engagement. A measure that combines a feminist identity, emotional, and an egalitarian component may bear a stronger relationship to political behavior and attitudes than past research has shown.

Using a more robust measure of feminist consciousness for assessing its relationship to behavior and attitudes is important for reasons beyond methodology. First, it has the potential to disrupt attempts at referring to women by their overriding commonalities. Assessing the relationship between feminist consciousness and behavior and attitudes will demonstrate that women are capable of distinguishing themselves politically from each other as well as from men. Rather than arrive at an understanding of women's political behavior informed from the assumption that women are more alike than they are dissimilar, this analysis should further an understanding of women as complex political actors.

It will also add to an understanding of the much discussed gender gap in attitudes, preferences, and behavior. While past research has focused largely on objective indicators, such as party identification, to explain the gender gap, scant attention has been

paid to the subjective importance of gender for shedding light on why women differ politically from men.⁵³ This analysis may find that the combined influence of a feminist identification, emotional connectedness to other women, and egalitarian attitudes toward gender equality will help to explain why women and men diverge politically and why the gender gap in behavior has become a persistent part of the political landscape.

Thus, in addition to this chapter providing insight into how, if at all, a new measure of feminist consciousness yields a stronger relationship to participation, it contributes to the overall research on why women are politically distinct from men.

The paradox of participation

The search for a relationship between feminist consciousness and behavior is reflected in a few notable studies. While not labeling it feminist consciousness, Miller and his colleagues (1981) examined whether group consciousness helps to predict electoral and nonelectoral participation among a variety of social groups including women. Their model of consciousness, comprised of four components which tap group identity, ingroup and outgroup preferences and power differential, and individual versus system blame, found group consciousness among women to be correlated with turnout. However, women's group consciousness was correlated the least with turnout relative to other groups they considered (i.e., businessmen, the poor, whites, blacks, and the young and old). The same was largely true for nonelectoral participation.

Tolleson Rinehart's (1992) overtime analysis of gender consciousness from 1972 to 1988 found that identified and egalitarian women (i.e., those who fit the criteria for having a feminist consciousness because of their expressed closeness to women and

⁵³ Exceptions are Conover 1988 and Cook and Wilcox 1991, both of whom examine the importance of feminist attitudes for understanding the gender gap.

responses at the egalitarian end of the equal roles question) were less likely to participate than individualistic and privatized women by 1988. This had not been true in the preceding election years, suggesting either the waning influence of feminist consciousness, or problems associated with the measures, in particular the equal roles question, which were described in some detail earlier.

Feminist consciousness appeared to have a more consistent, liberalizing influence on the policy positions, party identification, ideology, and vote choice of women in Tolleson Rinehart's analysis. Across all the election years Tolleson Rinehart looked at her in analysis, feminist-identified women were more likely to be liberal and Democratic and report voting for the Democratic candidate in the recent presidential election than were non-feminist-identified women. They also were more likely to express policy positions in a "women's" direction than those whose attitudes placed them at the opposite end of the feminist consciousness spectrum.⁵⁴

Taken together, these two studies suggest an interesting paradox. Generally speaking, group consciousness is expected to have a positive relationship to participation. As individuals recognize the *collective* disadvantages they face as members of certain groups, they become more politicized in their thinking and behavior. A decision to

⁵⁴ Others to discern the importance of feminist attitudes for political behavior include Conover (1988a) and Cook and Wilcox (1991). Using a measure of feminist identity comprised of a 1985 NES Pilot study question that asked how often the respondent thinks of herself as a feminist and responses to the feminist feeling thermometer, Conover found feminist-identified women were more likely to endorse a liberal ideology and egalitarianism, reject symbolic racism, and express sympathy for the disadvantaged. Furthermore, when compared to men, Conover finds the much touted gender gap in public opinion is partly explained by feminist attitudes. When compared to men and non-feminist-identified women, feminists account for much of the difference between men and women in many domestic and foreign policy issue preferences.

Cook and Wilcox (1991), however, arrive at a different understanding of the gender gap. They divide men into two groups largely consistent with Conover's identified and non-identified criteria and find that it is liberal and not feminist attitudes per se, which accounts for much of the gender gap in public opinion.

become politically active is based on a wider conception of what is at stake because group as well as individual interests are accounted for in, for instance, a request to contribute money to a party or candidate. This is why African Americans of similar socioeconomic status are more participatory if they demonstrate a group consciousness. The earlier discussion of the unique obstacles women face in forming a feminist consciousness cannot address the paradox of feminist consciousness and its nonsignificant relationship to participation. Feminist women should be acting on their politicized identity as women by being more engaged than non-identified women. The failure of research to demonstrate a link can either be explained by accepting women's anomalous behavior, or questioning the existing measures. This analysis has reached the point of testing the latter with the new measure uncovered in the preceding chapter.

Measuring feminist consciousness the standard way

In order to test the usefulness of the new measure in predicting participation, a working measure of the conventional method for measuring feminist consciousness is needed. Only then can a fair comparison be made as to the methodological importance of one measure versus another. Tolleson Rinehart (1992) provides the most useful guide for comparison as well as for measurement.⁵⁵ Her overtime analysis of gender consciousness

⁵⁵ Tolleson Rinehart's analysis is not the only choice for comparing the new versus old measure's utility in predicting behavior. In particular, Miller and his colleagues (1981) examined the relationship between participation and consciousness among groups including women. While their finding that gender identified women did not participate on par with others who demonstrated a group identity is ripe for reanalysis using the 1992 measure of feminist consciousness, the variables used to construct their group consciousness measure are not included in the 1992 NES. Those items not included are those which measure "individual-system blame," which Miller and his colleagues operationalized through a "series of forced-choice questions in which respondents were asked to explain the causes of poverty and the causes of sex and race differences in income, occupational status, and general position in American life" (Miller et al., 1981: 509-510). The replicable dimensions used by Miller et al. are those that measure "group identification" and "polar power," or those that assess status discontent.

While I am unable to measure what, if any, differences arise in the relationship between engagement and consciousness when the Miller measure is compared with the 1992 measure, the possibility remains that many of the measures Miller and his colleagues used, which were drawn from the 1972 and

used the two most common indicators on National Election Surveys to track gender identification – the equal roles question and “close to” women item. Her measure of consciousness is defined by two common dimensions, one emotional and one cognitive, and is hereafter referred to as *gender consciousness*.

Tolleson Rinehart’s measure of gender consciousness combines the equal roles and close to women indicators to form an index comprised of six discrete categories. The seven-point equal roles scale was collapsed into three categories, with those who responded at the “a woman’s place is in the home” end of continuum labeled as “privatized,” those who scored in the middle of the scale “ambivalent,” and those who gave answers at the “women and men should have equal roles in society” end of the scale “egalitarian.” Regarding responses to the close to women item, all who said they feel close to other women were labeled “identified,” and those who did not express closeness were deemed “individualist.” When combined, Tolleson Rinehart arrived at the following six categories for her measure of feminist consciousness:

Individualist/Privatized, Identified/Privatized, Individualist/Ambivalent, Identified/Ambivalent, Individualist/Egalitarian, Identified/Egalitarian. Using the 1992 NES data, this results in the following distributions:⁵⁶

1976 NES, would suffer from the same social desirability bias plaguing the equal roles question today. For instance, in measuring individual-system blame, respondents chose between “It’s more natural for men to have the top responsible jobs in a country” versus “sex discrimination keeps women from the top jobs.” It is hard to imagine many today endorsing the “naturalness” of male superiority in business. As a result, it is unlikely that replicating the Miller analysis would yield much insight into the relationship between consciousness and engagement due to the skewed distribution in the independent variable.

⁵⁶ The distributions in 1988, the last year included in Tolleson Rinehart’s analysis, were similar (8.8% - Individualist/Privatized, 6.4% - Identified/Privatized, 8.2% - Individualist/Ambivalent, 7.3% - Identified/Ambivalent, 28.9% - Individualist/Egalitarian, 40.4% - Identified/Egalitarian). The biggest increase between 1988 and 1992 occur at the egalitarian end of the continuum, continuing the trend Tolleson Rinehart uncovered in her overtime exploration.

Gender Consciousness Distribution - 1992		
	N	%
Individualist/Privatized	60	7
Identified/Privatized	37	4.3
Individualist/Ambivalent	69	8.1
Identified/Ambivalent	48	5.6
Individualist/Egalitarian	240	28
Identified/Egalitarian	404	47.1

Consistent with what was found in her overtime analysis, the vast majority of cases cluster at the egalitarian end of the equal roles continuum. Three out of four respondents in 1992 are identified as “egalitarian” in their attitude toward gender equality, making it difficult to account for any significant variance in an analysis relating consciousness to political behavior.

Conversely, the 1992 measure, hereafter referred to as *feminist consciousness* (i.e., the twelve item compilation of measures available in the 1992 NES) allows for a wider distribution and is more discriminatory in identifying those with more feminist consciousness. Of course, there are significant limitations to comparing across such distinctive indices, however it is logical to assume the egalitarian end of the measure of gender consciousness is reflective of someone with a feminist consciousness. If true, it appears the measure of feminist consciousness allows for greater variance and the potential to reveal a significant relationship with political activism.

Feminist Consciousness Distribution - 1992		
Score	N	%
0.1	7	0.7
0.2	17	1.7
0.3	63	6.4
0.4	122	12.3
0.5	192	19.3
0.6	231	23.2
0.7	172	17.3
0.8	116	11.6
0.9	63	6.3
1	11	1.1

Defining participation

Brady (1999) defines participation as “Action by ordinary citizens directed toward influencing some political outcomes” (737). Participation, then, can range from persuading others to vote a certain way to actively campaigning on someone’s behalf. Adherence to Brady’s definition could also include signing and forwarding email petitions and working in a collaborative and informal setting to address a problem in one’s community. Participation, in its various incarnations, can range from behavior that is related to electoral politics to engagement that is more individually inspired and directed. By definition, however, the data being used in this analysis, a National Election Study data set, is heavily oriented toward measuring behavior that is driven by electoral politics. As such, the subsequent analysis is limited largely to electoral behavior.

Since it is important to first replicate Tolleson Rinehart’s earlier analysis, the indicators chosen to represent participation include some which do not necessarily meet

the standard definition of participation. Using variables such as party identification, internal efficacy, political interest, and attentiveness to politics in addition to those that represent discrete political acts are included because of their use by Tolleson Rinehart. She includes these non-participatory indicators because her analysis is one concerning engagement rather than participation. Her index encompasses

[T]he spectrum of politicization, from internal feelings of confidence and interest, the connection to the political system and the commitment to acquire political information, to the performance of actual participatory acts (Tolleson Rinehart 1992: 128).

The ten indicators used to form Tolleson Rinehart's participatory index include: Whether or not a woman voted in the 1992 presidential election, displaying preferences for a particular candidate such as placing a sign in her yard or wearing a button, attending a meeting, rally, speech or dinner in support of a candidate, attempting to persuade others to vote for or against an issue or candidate, volunteering time to work on a campaign, major party identification, internal political efficacy, attentiveness, and information. All variables were scored zero or one, with one indicating more activity or identification.

Tolleson Rinehart demonstrates that by 1988, gender identified women were less likely to participate than non-identified women. Using 1992 data and the same participation indicators, it is possible to compare whether this is true across both measures of group consciousness.

Table eight shows the mean number of activities by one's score on each consciousness measure. This replicates Tolleson Rinehart's analysis in 1988. A nonlinear relationship is apparent between each measure of consciousness and participation. Both measures show the most and least identified to be the most active, with those in the middle of the two scales less participatory. However, the skewed distribution, especially

relative to gender consciousness, complicates the ability to arrive at any meaningful comparisons across both measures.⁵⁷ Also, while not reflected in table nine, the bivariate correlations between both measures and the participation index used by Tolleson Rinehart are weak but significant ($r = .103$ gender consciousness; $r = .120$ feminist consciousness measure).

In terms of replicating what was done in the past, this is as far as the analysis can go. Tolleson Rinehart did not control for a variety of factors in any multivariate analysis. Unfortunately, this limits the ability to arrive at a more informed conclusion about the nature of the relationship between consciousness and participation. However, given the conventional wisdom that feminist consciousness is unrelated to participation, it is necessary to incorporate more sophisticated analyses in order to assess whether this is truly so.

To that end, a redefinition of participation is in order. From here forward, participation is redefined to *exclude* party identification, efficacy, interest, and information and *include* monetary contributions to political parties, candidates, and/or other organizations that support or oppose candidates. This results in a measure that reflects true behavior – voting, displaying preferences for a particular candidate, attending a political meeting or rally, attempting to politically persuade others, volunteering time to work on a campaign, donating money to a candidate, party, and/or any other group that supported or opposed candidates – rather than what are often

⁵⁷ It is worth noting the inconsistency in findings from 1988 to 1992 relative to gender consciousness and mean scores on the participation index. In 1988, Tolleson Rinehart found Individualist/Privatized women to be more participatory than Identified/Egalitarian women (2.55 versus 2.39, respectively). This is inconsistent with what the 1992 data shows, with non-identified women engaging in an average of 2.32 political acts versus 2.96 for women with a gender consciousness.

considered precursors to behavior. When combined, respondents can receive anywhere from zero to eight points on the index.

As table nine shows, women are heavily concentrated at the low end of the participation index. Most women scored a mere one on the index, and close to nine in ten of those who register their only point on the scale do so from having voted, perhaps the least demanding and response most prone to social desirability bias.⁵⁸ Additionally, close to one in five did nothing participatory.

While most women appear to be relatively unengaged, both measures of consciousness correlate weakly but significantly with the eight-item participatory index. Table ten shows that while the strength of the relationship may be small, gender and feminist consciousness bear some effect on participation. Differences are apparent in the variables measuring voting and monetary contributions. Voting correlates with both measures of consciousness, but feminist consciousness is also correlated with displaying political preferences and monetary contributions to campaigns or parties. One explanation may be that because gender consciousness is far less restrictive in determining who is gender identified, it correlates with nothing beyond the most prevalent of all political acts (i.e., voting). Whereas the more restrictive measure – feminist consciousness – is associated with activities that challenge a woman to go beyond conventional activity. Since income did not turn out to be a significant predictor of feminist consciousness, the correlation between feminist consciousness and monetary contributions suggests it is

⁵⁸ For a discussion of the widely reported tendency of individuals to overreport their voting, see Abelson, Loftus and Greenwald, 1992; Hill and Hurley, 1984; Presser, 1990; Sigelman, 1982; Silver, Anderson and Abramson, 1986; Traugott and Katosh, 1979; and Belli, Traugott and Rosenstone, 1994.

better able at identifying those who distinguish themselves from conventional participators.⁵⁹

In order to more fully understand the extent of the relationship between feminist consciousness and participation, other variables need to be accounted for simultaneously in a multivariate analysis.

Two groups of variables are used for predicting participation. The first resemble many of those used in order to predict the dimensionality of feminist consciousness. They are included as independent variables in this analysis because of the possibility that they too could contribute to a woman's political engagement and include marital status (i.e., unmarried), working outside the home, fulfilling the role of a homemaker, single motherhood, and being childless or without children under the age of 18 at home. All are coded on a one-point scale, with one identifying respondents who embody the particular characteristic.

This group of independent variables derive their importance from the effect they potentially have on a woman's time. *Not* being married, for example, has the potential for freeing a woman from the demands of home life and thus increasing the possibility that she is politically active. Similarly, not having children to look after may make it more likely that a woman has the time necessary to be politically active through a variety of channels.

Conversely, those who are primarily responsible for the care of children, such as single mothers and perhaps homemakers, may be less inclined to be politically engaged,

⁵⁹ A combined contribution variable was created due to the low incidence of respondents who report giving money to parties, candidates, and/or other political organizations. This measure, rather than the three separate contribution measures, is used to correlate with feminist consciousness.

simply because their time and energy is taken up with the more immediate demands of child-rearing. Additionally, because single motherhood and employment often go hand-in-hand out of economic necessity, women who fit this description are expected to be the least participatory.

As for working women, a case can be made both for and against a positive relationship to participation. On the one hand, many of the precursors to engagement are acquired at work, such as efficacy and public speaking skills. However, that assumes all working women are in jobs where they are encouraged to take an active role in shaping their working environment. While this may be true for managerial women, it is hard to make the same assumptions for women employed in clerical or lower paying jobs. Thus, the extent to which work may increase participation is questionable and open to interpretation. Also, adding to the uncertainty is the time drain work provides. Working women may have more difficulty finding the time to participate than non-working women. As a result, work may be either a participatory boon or debilitating time drain.

The second set of independent variables are the usual suspects for predicting participation. Time and again they are used in participatory analyses because of their potency in helping to explain participation. They are: Party identification, ideology, education, age, personal income, race, religiosity, and mobilization. Party identification and ideology are coded to reflect strength rather than direction, race is defined as NOT a person of color, and mobilization is an additive scale of three questions about whether the respondent was contacted to do something for a candidate in the 1992 election.⁶⁰ The remaining variables are consistent with what were used in the analysis concerning the

⁶⁰ The variables include being contacted in order to influence her vote, an invitation to political rallies or meetings to support a candidate, and being asked to work for a candidate or party.

dimensionality of feminist consciousness. Thus, all are coded on a one point scale, with one reflecting more of the defining characteristic and all are expected to show a positive relationship to participation.

Three ways of analyzing the relationship between feminist consciousness and participation are presented in tables 11 and 12. Table 11 shows findings from a multivariate regression analysis predicting participation using additive indices of gender and feminist consciousness. This means that the two and three dimensions, respectively, are combined in two additive measures of consciousness. In this analysis, both gender and feminist consciousness are nonsignificant predictors of participation, at least as measured by the eight-item index used to measure electoral engagement. Instead, it is the usual suspects who do the best job in predicting participation among women – mobilization, education, and partisanship.

Table 13, however, reveals a different story. Here, interaction terms are added to each model. The dimensions, or main effects, are included as separate variables, and each main effect is interacted with the others, resulting in two- and three-way interaction terms. This analysis is important for addressing the concern that an additive index is insensitive to the unique contributions made by each dimension. Going to the effort of uncovering a multidimensional measure of feminist consciousness, only to combine all responses into one cumulative index, seems an inconsistent analytic choice. Furthermore, understanding how a dimension predicts (or does not predict) participation in conjunction with the other dimensions is important for getting at the nuances of feminist identity's influence on engagement. Table 12 shows that while the old measure of gender consciousness continues to add nothing to a model predicting participation, feminist

consciousness is behaving otherwise. The two dimensions measuring feminist identity and emotional connection are significant on their own, but they are stronger still when their effects are assessed in an interaction term. Interestingly, having a feminist identity – in the absence of having no other feminist consciousness traits – suppresses participation. But when it is combined with an emotional connection to other women, the interactive influence surpasses the importance of everything else to predict participation.⁶¹ Table 12 also reveals that accounting for the separate and interactive influence of the three dimensions does not change the effects of the other variables. Mobilization, strength of partisanship, education, age, and being white all remains significant in the model with interaction terms.⁶²

These findings are striking. In light of what is commonly understood to be feminist consciousness's non-relationship to participation, it appears as if a new analytical approach, combined with a revised way of measuring feminist consciousness, casts doubt on this assertion. In particular, the combined influence of a feminist identity and emotional connection to other women heightens a woman's chance that she will be

⁶¹ A variant of this analysis includes doing away with the interaction terms and using the separate dimensions of feminist and gender consciousness separately to predict participation. Results for this analysis can be found in the Appendix (Table B), but the important finding to note is that the feminist identity and emotional dimensions show the same relationship to participation that they reveal in table 12. Feminist identity is negatively although insignificantly related to participation while the emotional dimension retains its positive and significant relationship to participation. As for gender consciousness, the egalitarian dimension is unchanged, but the emotional dimension coefficient becomes positive and significant.

⁶² Running the analysis in table 12 again, but excluding the egalitarian dimension and its interaction terms, as well as the total interactions, does not change the findings. Feminist identity remains inversely related to participation and the same variables offer the most predictive insight.

engaged politically. And, it is interesting that feminist identity works to predict behavior in they hypothesized direction only with feelings of emotional connectedness.⁶³

Expanding the definition of participation provides a new opportunity to assess how far feminist consciousness reaches in influencing engagement. Civic engagement, or “those forms of communal and associational life which are organized neither by the self-interest of the market nor by the coercive power of the state,” is best measured through behavior that is more community-centered (Wolf 1997: 9). This can include volunteering, working informally with others to solve a community problem, taking part in charitable events, and a variety of other non-system directed behaviors.

Traditionally, women have appeared more engaged when participation is defined broadly to include informal or community-centered activities.⁶⁴ Because National Election Studies are, by definition, concerned with measuring activism around elections, there are few questions that measure community-centered and informal behavior. What few there are should nonetheless provide insight into whether feminist consciousness operates differently when paired with non-system directed activities.

Two questions included in the 1992 NES offer the best chance of testing whether the relationship between feminist consciousness and participation appears once activism

⁶³ It is important to note the consistency of findings in an analysis controlling for liberal Democratic identification. The earlier analysis predicting feminist consciousness reinforced findings by others (Reingold and Foust 1998) that ideology and partisanship are strong predictors. The model presented in table 13 includes *strength* of partisanship and ideology, rather than *direction*. As such, it is difficult to disentangle the significant and close relationship that exists between feminist consciousness and identification as specifically a liberal Democrat (Pearson’s $r = .277$). One way to account for this is to include dummy variables that identify liberal respondents and Democratic respondents in the same model predicting participation. Their inclusion do not change the results shown in Table 12. Feminist identity and an emotional connection to other women remain significant, and their interactive influence exceeds the importance of all other variables in the model.

⁶⁴ For a thorough review of literature documenting women’s participation in community-centered work, see Flammang (1997), especially pages 105-114.

is defined more broadly. They are: Many people say they have less time these days to do volunteer work. What about you, were you able to devote any time to volunteer work in the last 12 months?; and In the last twelve months, have you worked with others or joined an organization in your community to do something about some community problem? These questions are consistent with what Verba, Schlozman and Brady (1995) have in mind in their Civic Voluntarism Model of participation, which accounts for the “embeddedness of political activity in the non-political institutions in civil society” (Verba, Schlozman and Brady 1995: 40). Volunteering is often a politicizing force, awakening individuals to the link between political solutions and social problems, and working with others to tackle a community problem often brings one into contact with a wide array of political elites at various levels of government. Thus, while these are acts which clearly fall outside the realm of electoral behavior, they are nonetheless political in nature.

While women are thought to be more participatory in these kind of activities, there is little to suggest what role feminist consciousness might play in influencing this type of behavior. Relying on the same hypothesis that links feminist consciousness and participation makes sense for the following reason. A woman’s politicized social identity – or feminist consciousness – will make her more outwardly oriented and engaged than non-feminist-identified women. This is because feminist consciousness implies an awareness of the world and the individuals within it that goes beyond self-interest. Feminist women may spend time working with local women’s organizations or charitable groups who help battered and victimized women. They may also spend time volunteering for causes non-specific to women, such as working to end the homeless problem. It is the

politicization of a woman's identity that suggests feminist conscious women should be more inclined to seek social and political change, regardless of whether the activity is electoral or not.

Relative to the electoral dimensions of participation, women are more engaged in informal than electoral activism. (See table 13) Women who report volunteering (35 percent) and doing informal community work (21 percent) are more numerous than those who report working on campaigns, displaying preferences, and contributing money. The proportion of women who are informal activists rival the number who report persuading others politically. Only voting, an exceptional act because of its normalcy, exceeds the rate of informal activism.

Table 14 shows that when feminist or gender consciousness are included among an array of other explanatory variables, each is helpful in explaining who engages in voluntary activity. For feminist consciousness, each dimension is significant, and consistent with the earlier analysis feminist identity appears to suppress engagement in voluntary activity. However, when it is combined with the egalitarian dimension, both work together to promote voluntary activity. For gender consciousness, it is only the egalitarian dimension (or equal roles question) that is related to voluntarism, albeit negatively.

As for feminist consciousness and informal community work, the negative influence of feminist identity is once again counteracted in the interaction term with the emotional dimension. The combined influence of both dimensions appear to bear a strong

and positive influence on community engagement. However, gender consciousness offers nothing in the way of insight regarding informal community work.⁶⁵ (Table 15)

All in all, feminist consciousness shows some proof of being related to civic engagement. The most notable finding to emerge from these analyses is the consistent pattern between civic and electoral engagement and the two dimensions measuring feminist identity and emotional connection. Across both types of behavior, these two dimensions show a pattern that suggests the importance of emotions for giving feminist identity its positive influence on engagement.

At this point, it appears that measurement and the kinds of analyses used to assess the relationship between feminist consciousness and participation are not trivial concerns. Whether an additive index of gender consciousness or one sensitive to the influence of each dimension is used, gender consciousness reinforces the belief that women's group consciousness is unrelated to participation. Yet, when feminist consciousness is used, the picture changes. Allowing each dimension to have an influence, alone and in conjunction with the others, casts doubt on the assertion that women's group consciousness bears no effect on participation. In particular, a measure sensitive to *feminist* consciousness does

⁶⁵ A somewhat different picture emerges when the analyses are run with the additive gender and feminist consciousness indices. Feminist and gender consciousness show a significant and negative relationship to voluntary activity; consciousness in either incarnation offers nothing in the way of insight regarding informal community work.

Finally, running the same analyses but limiting the measures of feminist and gender consciousness to only the dimensions, rather than their interactive influences, reveal the following differences from those seen in tables 14 and 15: The three dimensions of feminist consciousness become insignificant predictors of voluntary activity, although the direction of their relationship remains unchanged. The same dimension of gender consciousness (egalitarian) helps to predict voluntarism and the relationship stays negative.

As for informal community work and feminist consciousness, the only substantive change that results from excluding the interactions occurs when the feminist identity coefficient becomes insignificant. Both gender consciousness dimensions remain insignificant.

provide support for the underlying theory about consciousness and its relationship to participation. But how this relationship comes about is an unanswered question.

Feminist consciousness and efficacy

The analyses presented so far assume a direct relationship between consciousness and participation. However, research on black consciousness and its relationship to participation points to the possibility that the relationship is indirect. In particular feminist consciousness may operate through internal political efficacy on its way to promoting more participation. Shingles (1981) questions the theoretical explanation given by those who had found African Americans to be more participatory than whites of similar socioeconomic status. Among the issues he raises involve why African Americans emphasize political solutions to their problems, relative to comparable whites. He suggests that the explanation offered by, in particular Verba and Nie (1972), is insufficient because it assumes blacks, but not poor whites, rely on “participatory norms” of group pressure to participate in politics to achieve collective goals” (Shingles 1981: 77). What, Shingles asks, has politicized blacks but not whites?

To answer this question, he turns to internal political efficacy and distrust of the political system in an attempt to document what he considers are the missing links in the relationship between black consciousness and participation. “[M]istrusting or cynical individuals who nevertheless have a strong sense of political efficacy have both the motivation (the belief that public officials will not be responsive if left to their own devices) and the confidence (the belief that action taken to make public officials responsive will be effective) which are necessary for active political participation” (Shingles 1981: 78). His analysis confirms the prevalence of distrust and efficacy among

group conscious blacks compared to those who do not see commonalities in opportunities and oppression based on race. He then goes on to show that low income individuals with the combined feelings of efficacy and distrust are more participatory than comparable individuals who lack efficacy and distrust.

Are these findings comparable among feminist-identified women? Theoretically, it makes sense to think of a feminist awakening as a transformation that promotes political empowerment, rather than understanding these two dynamics as unrelated in a woman's life. Feminist consciousness awakens women to the reality of politics as a man's game. As a result, they may come to believe that male politicians will be nonresponsive if left alone to look after women's interests. Participation becomes more attractive when newly empowered women come to believe they can have an impact on policymakers.

However, at the same time, distrust of the political system could work to depress participation. Feminist-identified women may recognize the underrepresentation of women in legislative bodies, link it to deeply entrenched sexism, and conclude the system is designed to thwart women's attempts to achieve parity. Feminist-identified women may rationally ask, "Why legitimate an illegitimate system through the charade of participation?" Under these conditions, the unattainability of change makes participation seem futile and not worth the effort.

Despite the potential limitations of Shingles' theory and its application to women, his work provides another compelling avenue to explore in the search toward a better understanding of the relationship between feminist consciousness and participation. A variety of internal efficacy and system distrust questions were asked in the 1992 NES.

Thus, there is ample opportunity to pursue the hypothesized indirect relationship between consciousness and engagement via efficacy and/or distrust of the political system.

Bivariate correlations between feminist consciousness and indices for internal political efficacy and distrust of the political system reveal some support for Shingles' theory and its application to feminist consciousness.⁶⁶ Internal political efficacy bears a strong and significant correlation (Pearson's $r = .259$) with feminist consciousness while suspicious attitudes toward government do not (Pearson's $r = .004$). The notion that consciousness awakens a woman to the futility of political action is incorrect; feminist consciousness and political empowerment seem to go hand in hand.⁶⁷

Taking this a step further, it is possible to test whether efficacy provides important insight into the relationship between consciousness and participation. First, a model predicting participation that includes efficacy is proposed. Second, assuming consciousness precedes efficacy in the causal ordering, a model predicting efficacy is proposed in order to test for the indirect effects of consciousness on participation via internal efficacy.

⁶⁶ Questions used in an index of trust in government include: How much of the time do you think you can trust the government in Washington to do what is right--just about always, most of the time, or only some of the time? Do you think that people in government waste a lot of the money we pay in taxes, waste some of it, or don't waste very much of it? Would you say the government is pretty much run by a few big interests looking out for themselves or that it is run for the benefit of all the people? Do you think that quite a few of the people running the government are crooked, not very many are, or do you think hardly any of them are crooked? How much do you feel that having elections makes the government pay attention to what the people think -- a good deal, some or not much? Over the years, how much attention do you feel the government pays to what people think when it decides what to do -- a good deal, some, or not much?

Questions used in an index of internal political efficacy include: Respondent agrees/disagrees that...People like me don't have any say about what the government does; Sometimes politics and government seem so complicated that a person like me can't really understand what's going on; I feel that I have a pretty good understanding of the important political issues facing our country; I consider myself well-qualified to participate in politics; I feel that I could do as good a job in public office as most other people; I think that I am better informed about politics and government than most people.

⁶⁷ Efficacy and participation are also significantly and strongly correlated (Pearson's $r = .412$).

As table 16 shows, the addition of efficacy to a model predicting participation changes the picture somewhat from that seen when efficacy was not included (see table 13).⁶⁸ In the absence of any other feminist consciousness trait, having a feminist identity suppresses participation, but a positive effect can be seen when it is interacted with the emotional dimension. Whereas the emotional dimension contributed positively to participation in the model without efficacy, its significance is lost in the analysis presented in table 16.⁶⁹

To some extent, the relationship between feminist consciousness and participation strengthens when the indirect influence of internal efficacy is taken into account. Table 17 demonstrates results from a path analysis predicting participation via efficacy. Rather than use all dimensions and their interaction terms, I opted to use only feminist identity and emotional connection. It is they, either alone or in conjunction with each other, that offer the most power in predicting participation.

Also, I chose to establish a hypothesized link between all variables in the model and efficacy. Mobilization, partisanship, ideology, education, income, and religiosity are fairly straightforward in their promotion of efficacy. The others -- age and white -- are less so, but are nonetheless defensible as traits that promote internal efficacy.

Standardized regression coefficients are used to compute the total effects of all variables on participation via efficacy. Feminist identity gains some strength in its negative relationship to participation. But the coefficients for the emotional dimension

⁶⁸ Given the impotency of lifestyle variables in predicting participation, I chose to remove them from these and subsequent analyses.

⁶⁹ Replacing the interactive terms with an additive index of feminist consciousness reveals a significant but negative relationship between consciousness and participation.

Excluding the interactive terms and using only the dimensions changes things only a little. The feminist identity dimension loses its significant but maintains its negative relationship.

and the interaction term pick up quite a bit when their indirect relationship via efficacy is taken into account. In particular, the highly significant interaction between feminist identity and emotional connection grows by a notable amount. While the emotional dimension failed to register a significant direct effect on participation, its magnitude more than doubles when the indirect effect of efficacy is added. Thus, the added power of the emotional and feminist identity interaction term looks like it derives most of its strength from the way emotional closeness works to heighten efficacy.

In short, a modified version of the Shingles' theory works for feminist consciousness. The positive and significant influence of emotional closeness and feminist identity on participation gains strength through its significant influence on efficacy. Efficacy, then, appears to come about when these two dimensions interact in women's lives, making them more likely to see that their engagement is not futile.

Feminist consciousness and the political environment

There is one final area to explore in an attempt to better understand how feminist consciousness influences participation. This involves the context in which the 1992 survey was conducted. As it is so often referred, "The Year of the Woman," or the 1992 elections, were characterized by record numbers of women candidates who both ran for and won congressional seats.⁷⁰ A number of high-profile scandals involving sexual misconduct toward women elevated the prominence of women candidates who addressed women's concerns, many of which had been unaddressed by a largely male Congress. In particular, the Clarence Thomas-Anita Hill hearings highlighted the problem of sexual

⁷⁰ According to the Center for American Women and Politics, a record 119 women were major party candidates in the 1992 November elections for the House of Representatives and Senate. Out of these, 53 were elected. This resulted in a record 10 percent of Congress represented by women.

harassment in the workplace and the disgust women felt for those accused of perpetuating it. Women candidates, hoping to seize on the momentum created by outrage over sexual misconduct, spoke about the need to elect women in order to more equitably represent women's interests, such as protection from workplace harassment and reproductive rights. Regardless of whether a woman lived in a congressional district or state with one or more female candidates in the general election, it was difficult to be unaware of gender's centrality in the 1992 elections. Because of this, 1992 seems a particularly relevant year for feminist consciousness to make its mark on participation.

The unique opportunity to explore the relationship between feminist consciousness and participation in a year rife with gender politics raises the following questions: Was feminist consciousness a stronger predictor of participation in places where a female candidate was present? Given the potency of feminist consciousness – in particular the feminist identity and emotional dimensions – in influencing participation, do the same relationships hold up if a female candidate was present and perhaps raising the importance of gender for the campaign? These are questions that can be addressed because of the fortuitous combination of the “Year of the Women” in electoral politics and a new measure of feminist consciousness.

These questions rest on the possibility that feminist consciousness operates best when paired with participation in specific contexts. That is, while women's interests were a salient feature of the 1992 presidential elections, feminist consciousness may have become more potent in predicting participation when women were exposed to female candidacies at a level closer to home, such as House or Senate candidates. Candidates who talked about the importance of women's interests and the need to increase women's

representation in Congress may have had their greatest impact on feminist-identified women who could act on calls to elect more women by becoming engaged politically.

The importance of the political environment for group identity has been documented in a number of studies. As Conover (1984) argues, “To a certain extent, the political significance of various group identities may depend on the nature of the political environment. If the political rhetoric and issues that define the environment contain references to particular groups, it becomes more likely that those group identities will have an impact on political perception and evaluation” (782).

Among those to examine this possibility is Lau (1989). He found that social identities can become salient when a member of an individual’s social group runs for an important political office. Lau suggests it is the candidacy that helps to elevate the group to unusual prominence in society.⁷¹ Also, Dolan (1998) uncovered a relationship between the importance of gender-related issues and group identity (measured by the feminist feeling thermometer and the 7-point equal roles scale) and voting for women candidates in the 1992 November elections. For House or “low information” races, gender and egalitarian attitudes on the equal roles question were important predictors for voting for women candidates, whereas for the Senate or “high information” races, attitudes toward gender-related issues (abortion and sexual harassment) were important along with attitudes toward feminists.⁷² Her work acknowledges the central place of gender in the

⁷¹ Lau found that for some groups, a candidacy from the same social group increased the likelihood of expressing a group identity. However, women fell short of statistical significance. His data was from the early to mid 1970s, a time when comparatively few women were candidates for office.

See Bobo and Gilliam (1990) for a discussion of how political elites contribute to group identification among African Americans.

⁷² Low and high information in this context refers to the extent to which voters are provided with information that goes beyond obvious candidate traits such as party identification and gender. McDermott (1997) in particular notes the importance of gender as a voting cue in races where information is difficult to

information flow of the 1992 campaigns, and adds credibility to the hypothesis that a political environment with many woman candidacies may help to unlock the relationship between feminist consciousness and participation.

Similar findings were uncovered by Paolino (1995), who looked specifically at 1992 Senate races with women candidates in the general election. As he argues,

With the [Hill-Thomas] hearings priming group-salient attitudes concerning, specifically, the government's ability and willingness to protect women from sexual discrimination and, generally, women's under-representation in government, the presence of women candidates could have provided an outlet for these attitudes and led women to support female candidates in 1992. Moreover, female candidates for the Senate may have encouraged women to act on these attitudes and increased the salience of these issues in women's behavior (298).

His analysis clearly demonstrates that women voted for female Senate candidates based not on gender alone, "but because of a concern that the descriptive underrepresentation of women in Congress increases the possibility that gender-salient issues are overlooked" (Paolino, 309: 1995). Where a candidate stood on issues such as sexual harassment encouraged women voters to support like minded female candidates.

These findings demonstrate the importance of the political environment for the saliency of group identity. They also suggest that feminist consciousness makes a significant and positive difference for women's participation when they experienced a female candidacy in their state or congressional district. In short, these scenarios suggest that feminist consciousness not only maintains its significant relationship to participation, but that its importance also increases in an environment with numerous references to women's interests.

come by, such as House races. Whereas Senate races, with their greater visibility and reduced information costs, are considered high information races.

Testing this hypothesis involves identifying those respondents who reside in districts or states with female candidates. The 1992 NES includes women from 22 states with House districts where women were major party candidates in the general election and ten states with women Senate candidates.⁷³ Participation will be limited to whether a woman reported voting in House and/or Senate elections only.

Tables 18 through 20 show results from logistic regression models predicting a respondent's vote in the 1992 House and Senate election. Taking each table one at a time, table 18 reflects the basic model predicting participation, with an added categorical variable measuring whether a female candidate was running in the general election for the respondent's House district or Senate race (if the respondent lived in a state with a 1992 Senate election). The various dimensions of feminist consciousness – by themselves or with the others – offer no insight into participation in the 1992 House or Senate races. However, in both cases, the effects of having a female House or Senate candidate improved the chances that a woman would cast a vote in the respective race.⁷⁴

Table 19 adds onto the previous model the interactions between the three dimensions and the categorical variable for female House or Senate candidate.

⁷³ House races with a woman candidate in the general election and were part of the 1992 NES sample include the following states and districts: Alabama (4); Arizona (6); Arkansas (1); California (1, 4, 8, 35, 36, 39, 44, 45); Colorado (1); Connecticut (3); Florida (3, 4, 18, 20, 22); Georgia (1, 4); Illinois (7); Indiana (4); Iowa (3); Kansas (3); Maryland (4, 8); Michigan (9, 15); Missouri (2, 6); New Jersey (5, 11); New York (14); Pennsylvania (13); Tennessee (3); Texas (25, 30); Washington (1, 8); Wisconsin (5, 9).

Senate races with a woman candidate in the general election and were part of the 1992 NES sample total ten and include the following states: Arizona, California, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Maryland, Missouri, Pennsylvania, and Washington.

⁷⁴ Excluding the interaction terms results in no changes in either the House or Senate analysis. The three dimensions of feminist consciousness maintain their insignificant relationship to participation and the direction of each coefficient is the same.

Similarly, using an additive index of feminist consciousness shows no relationship to participation in House or Senate races. Regardless of whether the index was interacted with a measure for female candidacies, its individual or interactive influence showed no relationship to voting in congressional elections.

Interestingly, this does nothing to reverse the non-significant influence of feminist consciousness on voting detected in table 18. Feminist identity becomes negatively related to voting in the Senate election, and both coefficients for the presence of a female House or Senate candidate lose the significant effect they had earlier.

Finally, table 20 shows what happens when the model now includes interactions between the categorical female candidate variable with the two-way dimension interactions. Regarding the feminist consciousness variables, little appears to be going on in this model that is easily explained. The interactive term between the categorical female candidate variable with the emotional and egalitarian dimensions becomes a significant and positive predictor of turnout. And the positive influence of having a female candidate running in a House race returns. As for voting in the Senate election, feminist consciousness demonstrates nothing of significance.

All in all, the political environment appears to bear little influence on feminist consciousness' relationship to participation.⁷⁵ The mere presence of a female candidate neither heightens nor reduces the importance of feminist consciousness, at least when participation is defined solely as voting. What may need to be accounted for is the extent to which a female candidate uses her platform to address feminist concerns. The assumption of the previous analyses was that by simply having a female candidate in a high profile race, feminist consciousness would interact with the political environment in a positive way to get more women to the polls on election day. It is possible that

⁷⁵ Changing the analyses a bit and using only the interaction between the feminist identity and emotional dimensions (i.e., those that have shown the most significant relationship to participation so far) does not change things. Similar results to those seen in the House and Senate analyses in tables 19 and 20 were found to be true using only these interaction terms.

information about the campaigns themselves are what is needed in order to uncover this effect.

Summary

Feminist consciousness matters, at least in its new incarnation and when different analytic approaches are used to assess its relationship to participation. These findings suggest that despite the historical disconnect between the women's movement and electoral goals, women are able to use their feminist identity and emotional connection to other women together to inspire their engagement in politics. However, key to understanding how these dimensions are politically consequential involves looking at their effects both separately and together. Using an index that is insensitive to how each dimension makes a unique contribution to electoral engagement has proven an unworthy choice.

The feminist identity dimension showed a pattern of being inversely related to participation. Its addition to the measure of feminist consciousness proved to be beneficial, but by itself, having an *anti-feminist* identity is politically consequential. This is contrary to the expectation that a feminist identity helps to politicize women and thereby encourage engagement. Why this is so is unclear. Were it not for its inverse relationship to civic engagement, one explanation may have been that a feminist identity contributes to feelings of futility that surround political action. However, the same identity could promote civic engagement because of a belief that efforts are not likely to be wasted. Tables 14 and 15 cast doubt on this assertion.

The plot thickens when the emotional dimension is added to the equation. Its consistently significant and positive relationship to participation points to the critical

importance of feeling connected to other women. The affective component to feminist consciousness emerges as more salient to understanding behavior than the egalitarian (or cognitive) component. What women feel is clearly more significant than what they think about gender inequality in attempts to understand their motivations for engagement.

More importantly, when feminist identity is combined with emotional connectedness, a transformation occurs. Feminist identity only works to predict behavior in the hypothesized direction when it is combined with emotions. This finding was seen for both electoral and civic engagement. In the context of these analyses, emotions appear to be the key to understanding behavior that is often thought to be driven by rational self-interest. In light of these findings, the addition of more specific questions for measuring emotional closeness was a good choice. Using only the close to women item, with its muddy conception of measurement, may have obscured the surprising significance of how women feel in attempts to explain engagement.

Chapter 5: A Qualitative Approach to Feminist Consciousness

Demonstrating that a relationship *does* exist between feminist consciousness and electoral participation is only half the story. What is left unanswered are questions regarding women's ability to connect their feminist identities with politics when given an opportunity to talk about their identities in an unstructured interview setting. At the heart of the theory connecting consciousness to politics is a belief that a politicized identity triggers active engagement in politics. However, given the uphill battle women face in forming a collective identity based on the recognition of sexism and inequality, and being spurred to take part in behavior that most choose to avoid, do feminist-identified women talk about their identities in a way that reinforces the theory? Or, does qualitative research provide support for the alternative hypothesis – namely that feminist consciousness and engagement is complicated by the unique problem of sexism and its uneasy relationship with electoral politics?

These and other important questions can only be addressed through qualitative research. Using in-person, unstructured interviews, this chapter will explore the complexity of measuring feminist consciousness and accounting for its relationship to electoral engagement. In so doing, it will examine how women reconcile their identities as feminist women with other salient traits and how this may or may not complicate their relationship to politics. Most importantly, this chapter will use the insights of feminist-identified women to explore the second central question of this dissertation. Namely, does the historical disconnect between the women's movement and electoral goals, combined with the unique problems associated with gender inequality, make the relationship between feminist consciousness and electoral politics difficult to foster? In

so doing, it will address whether feminist consciousness is often insufficient to promote engagement, even among those women who are quite capable of articulating why their identity as women is important to them politically.

Measuring identity

In the search for qualitative insight into the nature of the relationship between feminist consciousness and electoral politics, the first task is to establish whether women believe their gender is important to them politically. Doing this involves the card sorting procedure for measuring identity described earlier.

Among all 56 respondents, 68 percent included “my identity as a woman” among those traits most influential to their political orientation. Gender identity was the most frequent choice overall among all the traits included in the first pile. The next most frequent choice was ideology; 61 percent included it in their first tier.⁷⁶ As table 23 shows, there is a significant drop off going from ideology and gender to the next most common traits to be included in the first tier. Age, career or major, and social class attracted anywhere from around a third to half of all respondents. Party identification, often thought to be an important part of one’s political identity, is the trait that is least often cited as an important political consideration. And not surprisingly, the overwhelmingly white group of respondents did not rate race and ethnicity high on their lists of salient traits.

With the exception of “My identity as a mother,” there are few generational differences in the traits most likely to be considered important for politics. Gender

⁷⁶ A majority of respondents who selected gender identity to include in their first pile also identified themselves as liberal or somewhat liberal (61 percent). Nearly a third said “it depends on the issue” to the question concerning political ideology (32 percent). Only 8 percent identified themselves as conservative or somewhat conservative.

identity surpasses the importance of all other traits (with the exception of motherhood among the mothers) and is rivaled only by ideology. Not surprisingly, motherhood was almost universally chosen among gender identified graduates of Douglass College (92 percent), with age and ideology chosen less often (62 and 54 percent, respectively).

Ideology is the most commonly paired trait with gender identity. (See table 24) Fifty-eight percent of those who included gender identity in their first pile also chose ideology, followed closely by age.

The fact that gender identity was recognized by so many as an important tool in shaping their political orientations provides ample room to explore, in their own words, the meaning of a politicized gender identity. However, gender identity does not appear to operate independent of other considerations. No one chose “my identity as a woman” to be the sole trait in the first or most salient pile. This multiplicity of identities offers some insight into the difficulty of establishing a relationship between gender identity – regardless of whether it is feminist or not – and political behavior.

The meaning behind the importance of gender identity

It is one thing to ask a woman if her gender identity is important to her understanding of politics. However, it is quite another to ask her to articulate *how* it is important. The thinking behind asking an open-ended question about how one’s identity as a woman is important to her politically is to test whether theoretical assumptions hold up empirically. Group consciousness research is founded on the belief that because individuals hold a unique constellation of attitudes and beliefs, they are more likely to politicize their group identity. This results in political behavior and attitudes that are distinct from those who lack a politicized group identity. However, since all of these

suppositions are founded on quantitative data that explores group consciousness through closed-ended questions, this data set provides an opportunity to explore whether the individuals themselves recognize this connection. That is, do they connect their identities as women with electoral politics in a way that is consistent with the theoretical expectations? Unlike many in the general population who have not been exposed to prominent speakers in the women's movement or gender related courses, those interviewed for this project should be able to provide some insight into the meaning behind a gender identity.

Ideally, those who chose "my identity as a woman" among their first tier of politically important traits would say something along the lines of the political underrepresentation of women or the extent to which politics does not reflect the issues and concerns of women in order to justify their belief in the political saliency of gender. Not all women offered such specific links between their gender identity and politics in their responses. But those who did said things such as the following to explain why their identity as women is important:

It [being a woman] makes me aware of women's needs, my needs as a woman. And since women are under-represented in politics...there is all this sort of big pile of women's stuff that should be addressed politically. So as a woman I am aware of that. And politics seems to be getting pretty genderized.

I think it's because when I learn more and more about politics, really how the government doesn't lean in favor of women's rights and women's views on politics, and just the under-representation again of women in politics and positions of power. You really can't be a democratic society if you have no input from a section of that population. It's not a good representation.

I guess I am just aware of maybe what people will try to do that may threaten my rights or equality.

A variant of these responses are those that point to specific issues. These women respond with answers that are consistent with a politicized social identity since they recognize the political significance of their gender for these issues. But they are distinct from the earlier group who did not link their response to certain issues. Instead, these women offer insights that suggest the importance of their identity is contingent on the political environment.

Just that when people are talking about political issues such as abortion or equal rights, it is just the fact that I am a woman that this is important to me right now. That is how I see it. It doesn't really affect men as much as it does women.

Because what I feel like with abortion and jobs and all these things that affect women, they are being addressed in a political movement. And they are being addressed in a positive way and a way that I see them, then that is where I am going to head towards.

I just think that when issues come up about women, being a woman, I have to care about them. I have to be concerned. So they are of the utmost importance. I don't know.

Responses that establish the importance of gender identity for politics in specific terms were the exception to the rule. Most women were clearly committed to the political importance of their gender identity, but could articulate why in less specific ways. For some, they know there is something politically consequential to being female, but cannot identify why. For example:

That is my identity. That is who I am in society, who I am in the world, how I am and what I am. So of course I am going to look at that relative to myself.

I think it is an intrinsic thing for me, it is who I am, how I think about things. It is just an intrinsic part of me.

I am a woman and that is my identity. If I am going to think politically, I have to think in terms of who I am. My identity, I view the world as a woman. I have to make decisions based on the fact that I am a woman.

I think me being a woman is a part of me, and it affects my decisions, how I think. It is something that I try to embrace. I think it affects who I am and how I think. I am not trying to shut off that I am a woman, and I have different needs because of being a woman. That is not something I feel I have to hide.

I put my identity as a woman because I am a woman in this society. And I know instinctively when I talk about political issues, that from my perspective as a woman, that is how I think about it. So does that make sense? Just that I am a woman, I feel there is really no way you can not identify with your womanhood.

I think that I filter everything through a woman's eyes.....I don't know how to say this, I understand I filter things through a woman's eyes, so I think my identity as a woman is going to impact whatever I am doing.

Despite evidence to the contrary, this group of women has thought about specific instances of how gender operates to define women's lives, even if that does not translate into direct political connection. Following up on her rather general answer to the question about how a female identity is important for politics, one woman went on to reconsider her response by adding the following:

Personally, I don't think I can separate out the fact that I am a woman versus just being a "person" in how I look at things. I care about women's issues deeply, the things that affect women. I mean I care about things that affect men too, but I think I certainly think about things that affect women much more strongly than I think about things that affect men...I see that constantly at the high school where the boys get new uniforms every couple of years...And when my oldest daughter played soccer at the high school, they wore just plain old ugly t-shirts in one color that said North Penn High School on it. Things have changed a bit. My middle daughter who plays soccer now has a "soccer t-shirt"... but I still think girls far out weigh the things that they have to deal with more than boys.

For another group of women, gender identity seems explainable through the kind of emotions evoked by politics. These women use word such as "empathy" to describe why their gender is important to them politically. They can "feel for others" more so than men and believe this is so largely because of their sex, rather than through socialized

gender norms or life experience.⁷⁷ Those who believe a politicized gender identity is reducible to sex explain themselves in the following ways:

I think I am a little more compassionate, but also more passionate about issues.

I think it is the compassion thing, and the relational, women being interested in relationships. And compassion, and empathy.

I think that being a woman, in terms of how I look at political issues, I think I tend to look at social issues more differently than males might. I think that women also tend to be more liberal, and they tend to vote more than men do. I just think that women bring a different perspective. I think as a woman I am very sensitive to people's feelings and life experiences. That is why I try to relate, no matter what the issues are, I try to relate it to what it means to the average person.

I am looking to hear more about children oriented things, I don't know if that is because I am a woman. Education, health benefits, for women, children, anybody. I am more focused in on the next generation. This is their world and we are taking care of it. That is why I am big on education. Is that because I am a woman? Maybe, I don't know. Don't know any men with that view, I don't know if that is just a coincidence or what.

I think as a woman you are faced with a different set of issues and problems than men. I don't think a man is ever forced to think about whether he will have a career when he has kids. And it something that every woman has to make that decision. Whatever way you go, you still have to consciously make that decision. And things like whether you are going to take some guys name when you get married. And no guy would ever think twice about that, why would he.

It matters a lot, not just in political issues, because being a woman is your own class. We feel different than men, we are like almost a different, well, I don't want to say species or anything. But we are different than men, and I think that influences how we look at the world. I actually had this argument with my

⁷⁷ This group of women gave responses that are reminiscent of what some feminist theorists have argued is women's caring or moral approach to politics (Gilligan, 1982; Tronto, 1989). In particular, Ruddick's (1984) conception of maternal thinking is contingent on the development of feminist consciousness. "The work of mothering can become a rewarding, disciplined expression of conscience. In order for this opportunity to be realized, either collectively or by individual mothers, maternal thought will have to be transformed by feminist consciousness...Feminist consciousness will first transform inauthentic obedience into wariness, uncertain reflection, and at times anguished confusion...Out of confusion will arise new voices, recognized not so much by the content of the truths they enunciate as by the honesty and courage of enunciation. They will be at once familiar and original, these voices arising out of maternal practice, affirming its own criteria of acceptability, insisting that the dominant values are unacceptable and need not be accepted" (Ruddick, 222-223: 1984).

boyfriend last night. He said something about abortion, well, something really careless. And I got really mad at him and said you can't possibly understand how that feels to somebody. You could never have to go through that, and there was nothing I could say in relation. There isn't anything equal. I could make a comment about are you getting your tubes tied, but it's not the same thing. Men and women can do that, only women can experience that. Only women have that maternal, I mean I don't have children and I am not going to for a long time. But just the fact that it's my body. I guess I spent too many classes talking about identity politics, but I think you can't not decide on political issues, I mean you can't ignore where you are coming from. That is why I think party affiliation is arbitrary. Because as far as I am concerned, everything is emotional, everything has an emotional starting point.

Others who rely on affective descriptions offer similar responses, but base their assessment on the learned aspect of gender identity. There is something about being a woman that results in political differences. But whereas others believe the differences are inescapable, these women insist differences arise from socialization.

I just think when you are a girl, you are raised so much differently. You go about looking at things totally differently than men would. The environment, I am always considering future generations or like my kids. Do I want then not to be able to go in the Delaware River or something? If we are going canoeing, do they have to be afraid that there is toxic waste in there? Or the ocean dumping, like my grandchildren might not ever be able to go swimming if we keep dumping all this crap in the ocean. I guess I am always going back to that maternal instinct or something.

I think that my identity as a woman affects the way I look at things in a very fundamental way; because just in the way that socially women live their lives, different issues are going to affect them greater. I guess I just see them as affecting women, these issues such as child care or health for senior citizens, these are social problems or issues that affect women greater than men. Because very often it is women that take care of children and aging parents. I guess I look at them from that perspective. In terms of abortion, it is something that, I mean it is an argument that occurs over a woman's body. As a woman, that affects my opinion. I definitely think I always see something through a woman's eyes. I always look to see how does this affect women differently than men? Is there a real difference or is it a large or small difference? I think I am always looking to see what the woman's perspective is or how it will affect women every time I look at an issue.

R: Well, I am a woman, and I can't escape that. Everything that has happened to me in my life is probably happened to me because I am a

woman. It is just a very intricate part of me, and being a mother is part of that too.

Q: Does it influence how you feel about certain political things?

R: Probably very much, because I think things like education and child care and things like that are important.

The preceding quotes serve to demonstrate the variety of ways women articulate the political importance of gender. Whether a woman argued its importance in specific terms, such as through the political underrepresentation of women, or through the inextricable but hard to define link between her female-ness and politics, the responses are largely consistent with what is thought to underlie a politicized social identity.

Additionally, the responses offer some proof regarding the collective dimension to group identity. Of particular relevance are those who said things such as the following:

And if it is something else, like discrimination on the job or something, my feminist side starts coming out. That is my identity as a woman, I feel I have the obligation for other women to fight for them, even if it is not directly affecting me.

I understand that poor women have a hard time because they have a lot of kids and can't afford to have child care. So I would be sensitive to that.

I keep going back in my head thinking about the statistics I learned in one of my political classes about women and public policy. And how we kept talking about the statistics of who makes the most, white male, and then it's white female, and then black man and then black female. Just knowing that and knowing how subtle everything affects your life based on your race and gender; and that may not seem subtle, like the major economic differences, but when it comes down to every day life, I think it is. A black woman is making \$50 a day that they are not making compared to the black male, that is just a subtle daily difference, but there is that difference. And I know it exists.

Probably like just discrimination in general. Just because I think personally I have, like I kind of consider people being discriminated against just because as a woman I can be discriminated against. So I think overall that personally white men don't really think about it as much as white women would. Because like I could be discriminated against, whereas they probably wouldn't be.

These women's remarks show how a politicized gender identity helps women see beyond their own self-interest and become sensitive to the needs of other women.

Regardless of whether she has personally experienced discrimination, the woman cited above draws a direct link between her identity as a woman and fighting for those whose experiences are not hers.

Finally, in addition to the card sorting way of measuring gender identity, the interview included a question that asked respondents if their gender makes a difference in how they evaluate or understand politics relative to men.⁷⁸ For those who responded yes to this question, a follow-up was asked about the degree of difference – “With respect to politics, how much difference would you say exists between you and most men... A lot, quite a bit or not that much.” And finally, respondents were asked to elaborate on where they think political differences arise between themselves and most men.

Women's responses to these questions echo the outward orientation to politics many feel. “Women's issues” was a common refrain in these answers, suggesting they see a connection between women as a group and issues of particular importance. For example:

Just the importance of issues that usually apply to women, child care, working mothers, maternity leave and stuff like that.

Well, on lots of different issues. Day care, the whole abortion issue, wages, earnings, fair treatment in the work place, sexual harassment, lots of issues.

I see it in what I would say are specifically women's issues. They would be maybe in child care, in women's health issues, in maybe overall health issues, because men are lame when it comes to taking care of themselves anyway. So again, when it comes to women's issues, I just think men don't put a lot of

⁷⁸ Two thirds (66%) of those who selected gender among their most salient political traits also believe being a woman brings about a different way of understanding or seeing the political world relative to men.

thought into it. When it comes to men issues, like sending off 17 year olds to get shot at in a war, I think that men aren't thinking either. So there are differences.

I see women as more fighting against the people who are making the rules, and the rules are predominantly the men.

For example, on the issue of abortion, men look at it as very cut and dry, you know, you shouldn't have it or shouldn't have it. But there is a lot of gray. You never have to experience it, so why are you evaluating it in the first place. And about women staying at home or going to work and making the decision, you never have to experience that. It has always been traditionally a mother's role to stay home with the children, and ultimately her responsibility as to how these children wind up. I don't know if you could be a judge of that, you look at it from a different perspective, from your perspective and what tradition has told you. Whereas women are coming from certain issues on a different platform altogether.

Similarly, many referenced the “emotional” differences between men and women, which lead women to give greater attention to the concerns of others.

I really think they are, because a woman no matter I don't care if you are a lesbian or completely hate children, you are raised to nurture. You are raised to take care of your teddy bear, of your doll when your doll isn't feeling well; you are raised to fix your truck if you played with trucks. You are raised to nurture. Men aren't raised to nurture. Some men are, I don't want to say all men, but women are raised to nurture. I think that is what plays into politics, because they want to make everything all better.

Okay, I think women and men look at politics in different ways. Women look at it in a more intuitive, well, I hate using the word emotional. Then it is like such a cliché kind of word to use. I think women feel the issues more, whether it is having to deal with child care, especially with education, health care, having to deal even with things like capital punishment. I think women are more empathetic and really feel those issues, not so much clear cut black and white... Women feel it, they are involved with it on a more intimate level. They have children, they work, they have parents they help care for. They see it in their neighborhoods, they are more involved with it than men are. I think men see it more from a distance, as far as how they come to terms with what their political views are.

I feel I become much more emotionally involved when I consider different political issues. And I think some men are more or less, I don't know if the word I want is objective; but they will argue about politics almost as a past time. Whereas, I can't speak for all women but for myself, when I think about

important issues, I always know I come with a very sensitive perspective to it, and I don't think most men do.

I think women are more inclined to understand human needs and human issues. I mean all you ever hear is men are concerned about balancing this and balancing that. And I guess women are more sensitive, so they just view things differently. Guys can be more cut throat and more bottom line.

Taken as a whole, the variety of responses given to questions about gender identity confirm the importance of being a woman for politics. More proof of this can be seen in the responses of those who did not include their identity as women in the first pile. Occasionally, women who opted to give secondary or less importance to their gender identity would, when pushed, follow up with comments similar to those described earlier. But in general, these women responded with comments illustrative of gender's unimportance for their political identity.

It is more what I am doing that relates. The fact that I am a woman, more it is the fact that I am a mother or that I am a teacher, not that I am a woman. I don't get it, like say there is something there, do I look and make a decision because I am a woman? No, I don't look at it, say there is a law. And you have to vote to say whether we should have this law. I don't look and say, oh, I am a woman so I should vote that way. I vote based on what I think the ramifications of the law would be.

I think I put it there because it is not a very strong influence.

I don't really think it makes a difference in looking at the world... If I was a man or a woman, I think I would feel the same way about the issue, because I am the same person.

Well, what would interest me politically are related to being Jewish. So that doesn't matter if you are a woman or a man. Other political issues, I am not so interested in.

I don't know how much difference it makes. To me it doesn't make that much difference.

It would be the literature I have read, what I know about what men have done since the beginning of time, that is what would influence me, but not some politician or whatever.

The difference in responses between first and second or third “my identity as a woman” placement is so great that it clearly separates those with a politicized social identity from those without one.

Responses to all of the questions posed so far provide proof not only for the respondents’ usefulness in exploring the relationship between feminist identity and electoral politics, but also for confirming the theory underlying group identity research. Women who are asked to articulate why gender is politically relevant do so in a way that recognizes the political consequences of being a woman. Women justify the saliency of gender identity through reference to women’s collective disadvantage in society, the need to look after “women’s interests” (as opposed to their own individual interests), and their tendency to sympathize more generally with those in need. At times, their comments regarding gender differences border on essentialist by suggesting women are, because of their nature, different than men. Explaining gender’s political saliency through affective traits is inconsistent with what is thought to underlie a politicized social identity. However, in many cases women were able to go beyond a perception that women bring an ethic of care to politics by explaining how that translates into differences in policy preferences.

A feminist consciousness?

The interview schedule contained no direct link between the saliency of gender and the extent to which gender’s importance for politics was evaluated through a feminist lens. The remarks of women who selected their “identity as a woman” among the most important traits suggests many are indeed sympathetic to feminist predispositions. Mentioning pay inequities, reproductive rights, and women’s under-representation in

elective office suggests that when women recognize the importance of gender for politics, they do so from a feminist framework.

However, another way to gauge the extent to which the gender identity of these women is feminist in nature is through their support for the contemporary women's movement. All women were asked about the degree to which they hold favorable attitudes toward the contemporary women's movement. Of those who rated their identity as women high on their list of politically salient traits, 63 percent said they felt "very favorable" with another 32 percent reporting "somewhat favorable" attitudes. When asked to assess the historical usefulness of the women's movement, 87 percent believe "it was good then, and still needed" as opposed to "it was good earlier, but no longer needed," "bad then and still bad for women," or "none of the above."

Supportive attitudes are not as present among those who eschewed their identity as women for other salient traits. Only 56 percent of non-gender identified women expressed supportive attitudes toward the women's movement. Of those remaining (8 total), half said they felt "somewhat unfavorable" with the rest expressing neutral or "very unfavorable" attitudes. Interestingly, negative attitudes toward the women's movement were not seen in evaluating its historical usefulness. Three-quarters believe the women's movement was and still is necessary for improving women's lives.

Finally, an indirect way to gauge the nature of women's gender identity is through a series of questions that asked whether the respondent agrees or disagrees with "statements often made about women." The statements ranged from the virtues of motherhood, to emotional differences between women and men, to workplace inequality.

<i>% of respondents who gave feminist response to...</i>	Gender identified	Non-gender identified
• Employment means as much for women as it does for men	90	100
• There are great emotional differences between women and men	71	22
• Motherhood provides more self-fulfillment than a career	37	39
• Although rape is a terrible crime, some women bring it on unintentionally through, for instance, their dress or behavior	89	83
• Women who do not work outside the home have better marriages	92	95
• Women's sexual drive is as strong as mens	71	56
• Women who seek important positions in business or government have to work harder and be more competent than men	90	83
• For women, marriage is more important than a career	55	56

By and large, all women in the sample agreed or disagreed with the statements in a manner consistent with a feminist orientation. Regarding the statements about motherhood and marriage relative to careers, many respondents said they felt neutral toward those statements. For the current Douglass undergraduates, this is likely because they have no experience from which to base their assessment; for the mothers (or former Douglass undergraduates), a feminist response may have implied a personal indictment of their roles as wives and mothers. Nevertheless, slight differences can be seen between gender identified and non-gender identified women across most statements. This is especially true for the statement about emotional differences. These patterns provide additional confirmation of the feminist leaning among those who placed their identity as women in the first pile of politically important characteristics. As such, the rest of the

analysis will proceed through reference to those with a feminist consciousness or who are feminist-identified.

Participation and identification

The women interviewed for this project were asked a series of questions about their political behavior and attitudes. While comparisons to the NES findings are not possible given the vast differences between the two data sets, it is possible to gain some insight into whether feminist-identified respondents act on their politicized social identities more so than those who are not feminist-identified. Information on their political behavior and attitudes toward politics gleaned from qualitative research is helpful for understanding when, if at all, feminist identification encourages electoral participation.

Questions that asked about political behavior include:

- How would you describe your own interest in politics?
- Do you generally vote in elections? (Mothers only)
- Do you think you will vote in the 2000 presidential election this November?
- Do you think you might participate in a campaign?
- Have you ever held a public office – either elected or appointed, at the local, state or national level?
- Have you ever considered holding or running for a public office, either elected or appointed, at the local, state, or national level?
- Have you ever attended or participated in a meeting or demonstration on behalf of or in opposition to a public issue or cause?

Beginning with voting, feminist-identified mothers are less likely to report regularly voting than mothers who did not choose their identity as women as a salient political trait. None of the non-feminist-identified women said they do not generally vote in elections, whereas two out of the 14 feminist-identified mothers said no to the same question.

The same pattern is apparent in the question about prospective voting in the 2000 presidential election. Feminist-identified women reported plans to vote about on par with

non-identified women (79 versus 71 percent, respectively). However, when it comes to a definitive no, the only women to give this response were the feminist-identified women. Most of those who did not plan to vote in the election were current Douglass undergraduates, although mothers gave this response as well.

Slight differences can be seen in political interest. 32 percent of feminist-identified women describe their interest as “very great” or report having “a lot” of interest compared with 39 percent of everyone else. These patterns do not vary by age.

No differences are apparent in questions about campaign work. About three out of four women in each group said they had no plans on working for a campaign during the upcoming elections. Having attended a protest or demonstration of some sort does appear to be more common among those with a feminist identity. About 60 percent of feminist-identified women have protested something compared to 44 percent of the others. The incidence is considerably higher among the feminist-identified mothers than current undergraduates (78 versus 48 percent, respectively), which is probably attributable to having been exposed to more opportunities and more life experience to have done so.

As for the two questions about public office, two mothers in the sample have been public officials at some point in their lives, and both are feminist-identified.⁷⁹ A willingness to at least consider future office holding is most common among the feminist-identified (58 versus 39 percent, respectively). Mothers are the most likely to consider these roles; about 70 percent of mothers said “yes” or “maybe” to the question, compared to only about half of the current undergraduates.

⁷⁹ Both were appointed officials at the municipal level.

With the exception of questions about voting and to a lesser extent political interest, feminist-identified women in this study do not distinguish themselves in any meaningful way from non-identified women. The fact that feminist-identified women are slightly less likely to report regular voting and are not inclined to vote in the upcoming election is notable. However, what is more important and interesting for the link between feminist consciousness and electoral participation is what these women had to say about their distaste for politics.

In addition to being asked what they do, women were asked two questions about their perceptions of elected officials attentiveness to their interests.⁸⁰

How much attention do you feel that government pays to what people like you think when it decides what to do? Does it pay a great deal of attention, moderate attention, little attention, or no attention?

When government has to make a decision about issues traditionally considered “women’s issues,” how much attention do you think government pays to what women like you think when it decides what to do? Does it pay a great deal of attention, moderate attention, little attention, or no attention?

Following the question specific to women, respondents were encouraged to elaborate on their response and explain why they do or not think elected officials are attentive to the concerns and interests of women.⁸¹

When combined, these questions were designed to gauge the extent to which respondents distinguish between governmental responsiveness to interests specific and non-specific to women. Despite there being the distinct possibility that women would give the same responses to both questions, it was hoped that feminist-identified women would

⁸⁰ These questions resemble those commonly used to measure internal political efficacy.

⁸¹ Reference to “women’s interests” was intentionally vague. This was done in order to ensure women could self-define what was in their mind when responding to the question rather than interpret it through a liberal feminist framework.

be more prone to evaluate government's responsiveness to women's issues differently. However, trying to predict their answer leads down two equally plausible paths. One the one hand, identified women could deem a disproportionately male government inattentive and not interested in improving the lives of women; but feminist women could also argue that women are too numerous to ignore on election day.

As it turns out, the picture painted by the closed-ended responses suggests women are not as discriminatory in their evaluation of government as was expected. Thirty-eight percent of all women rated governmental responsiveness differently. However, feminist-identified women evaluate government differently depending on the issue to a greater degree than do non-feminist-identified women. Five of the 18 non identified women (28 percent) gave divergent responses, compared to 43 percent of feminist-identified women. Among both groups of women, divergent responses often gave the benefit of the doubt to government over issues non-specific to women.

But the numbers themselves do not do justice to the real feelings underlying the responses. Some feminist-identified women argued that women are a force to be reckoned with and politicians can no longer afford *not* to pay attention to their interests. Others argued that government is hopelessly a man's game. According to these women, men will never pay the kind of attention to women and their concerns that feminists have been trying to get for decades. Younger and older women gave responses both attesting to women's power and decrying their political impotence. However, a generational pattern is apparent which begins to hint at why feminist identification may not lead to more political engagement.

The mothers were the most likely to say women are ignored by elected officials. In many cases, their remarks offer insight into lives spent watching politicians pay lip service to women voters, only to shy away from advancing a feminist or pro-woman agenda when in office. Their comments attest to the futility they feel about getting involved to advance women's concerns. These seasoned cynics say things such as the following:

R: Are they going to have a big press spread? That is what it depends on [laughing] I would say little, depending on what the atmosphere is like at the time of the election.

Q: Why do you think that is so?

R: I think that government only cares about money basically, how to obtain money. And I think the power people who contribute the money, the lobbyists, they are the ones who control the decisions the politicians make.

R: It doesn't, none. Otherwise we would have decent health care and child care.

Q: And why do you think it pays no attention?

R: I don't think we have enough influence monetarily. That is the bottom line. Men still hold the bulk of the power and money in this country, and until that is altered, I don't think we will ever have true representation in the government.

Well, I would say mostly because most governments are run by men. They might listen to what women have to say, but they really aren't influenced to any great degree as to what women's rights are or what women's viewpoints are.

R: I say moderate because I think they probably pay a lot of attention to women who are involved in politics or maybe are advocating for specific issues. But for the silent majority of women who maybe have opinions, but aren't involved, I don't know if sometimes they pay attention.

Q: What are some issues the government isn't paying attention when you talk about those women? What are some things you have in mind?

R: In general they don't pay too much attention to women who call themselves pro-life. My daughter and I get into many discussions about this, because that is one of our areas of disagreement. But I just think, especially with the partial birth abortion issue, I think that a lot of politicians are afraid to listen to women who argue maybe one side; because they feel pressured that if we give in we are seen as being anti-women, if we consider different viewpoints. I think politicians are

so worried about what their perception is and how different people will categorize them that they can't be open-minded maybe to listen to different opinions.

R: None.

Q: Why do you think this is so?

R: Because the government is all men. And because the government is a business.

Current undergraduates have a more hopeful outlook on government's responsiveness to women. A good many argued that like it or not, elected officials are ill-advised to ignore the interests and concerns of women. In their eyes, government is already attentive to women, either through the voices of women voters or the increasing numbers of female elected officials.

I think that sometimes our government is like the old boys club. They just don't always consider what women are really thinking. They think we're little women and we have to stay in the house. Doesn't matter what the government is doing because we just have to run the household and things like that. But I think now that more stronger women are getting into politics, more stronger, I mean stronger women are getting into politics, voicing their opinions and making people realize that we do have voices and there are a lot of issues in the country that pertain to us.

I think government is reaching a point where they realize women have a bigger say than they once thought. For example, the abortion issue. I think more government officials are paying attention to women's needs and getting in tune with them. You see more and more public figures speaking out for pro-choice and it is a woman's body, doing what she needs to do; which I don't think you saw ten years ago nearly as much as you see today. So I think it is becoming more and more they want to get in touch with women, because they realize women are becoming more of a voice. So I think they are taking women into consideration more than they used to.

Yes, because there are so many women voters, they have to.

Because they want to keep their political power, and I think there are also women in more power. There are women in government. The governor of the state of New Jersey. Lobbyists, Supreme Court justices, so you have women now who are the voice of women in these power positions. So I think it is we have a stronger voice, so now they have to listen.

- R: Because women is a special issue. Not that it is separate from other issues, but it demands different attention. With issues such as...
- Q: What do you mean it demands separate attention?
- R: Because maybe if it is a lot of men that are in office, it is not affecting them specifically. They've got to take into consideration, though, that it does affect a big population. So now it is a lot of women who are becoming active, and they are kind of forcing these people that they've got to start paying attention and seeing it. But up until now they weren't paying so much attention to it.
- R: I think the government, in order to get appointed, for anyone it is like a sales thing right now. So they are going to tell people what they want to hear. And right now, with women being the successful career people, that is something that people are going to buy.
- Q: In other words it is women's power.
- R: Yes.

The somewhat different approaches to understanding government's responsiveness to women voters is not universal. There were mothers who expressed the cautious optimism of the current undergraduates, and a few younger women who were cynical toward government. However, the pattern illustrated in the comments above was clear and reflects the sentiments of enough older and younger women as to warrant more exploration.

The cynicism expressed by the mothers suggests that regardless of their level of feminist identification, they have come to believe that attentiveness to women voters is a political ploy designed to get elected. Or, perhaps, they recognize the targeted nature of appeals to women's interests.⁸² They are only addressing the needs of certain women, or those who are likely to turn out on election day. This sentiment is reflected in the earlier

⁸² Carroll (1999) argues this in her work documenting the 1996 elections and use of the term "soccer mom." In particular, she argues that soccer moms – or those "in their 30s, harried, family oriented, carpool-palored, ethnically diverse, with (their) vote up for grabs" – were targeted by candidates and parties as a way to legitimately claim to be addressing the issues and concerns of women voters. In so doing, "the soccer mom news frame actually led to the disempowerment of most women through its narrow portrayal of women voters and their interests" (8).

comment of the mother who said politicians are not inclined to listen to pro-life women out of fear of angering women voters and looking as if they are “anti-woman.” Whatever the case, their cynicism offers insight into the complexities of assuming feminist consciousness leads to more electoral participation.⁸³

Their comments in response to other questions are helpful in expanding on the cynical portrait they paint of governmental responsiveness. For example, in response to a question about the frequency of family political discussions, one feminist-identified mother said the following:

- R: Not very often. There doesn't seem much point, after having tried to change the world and getting smacked up in the head a couple of times, you go okay. You play your game and I'll play mine.
- Q: So there is a sense of very little efficacy there, they are just not going to listen.
- R: Yes, I think it is its own beast eating its tail. I was so involved for so long, and put such passion into it. I think realizing that unless I had a tremendous amount of money or genetic hereditary background to get where I needed to be, it really wasn't going to make much difference. We would like to claim that student protests stopped the war in Viet Nam, but that is just B.S. They stopped the war because it was no longer economically feasible for them to continue it. That is the bottom line. We can pat ourselves on the head all we want, they would have continued another 30 years if they thought they could get something out of it. Don't I sound awful, so jaded.

The same woman went on to elaborate on why she believes government is non-responsive to women's interests:

- R: I see it as an economic issue. I think those who hold the key to the money are the ones who are calling the shots. That is the bottom line, unfortunately.

⁸³ The two questions asked in the face-to-face interviews that come the closest to replicating participation measures in the 1992 NES are the two voting questions. The fact that an overwhelming majority of feminist-identified respondents report regularly voting and most likely voting in the upcoming presidential election should not draw attention away from cynical attitudes toward government. As voting research has repeatedly demonstrated, respondents are apt to overreport due to memory confusion and social desirability bias. Therefore, it is possible that despite claims to the contrary, feminist-identified women who express cynical attitudes toward government do not participate at self-reported rates.

- Q: Do you think having more women in office would change that?
- R: I don't think so. I think the system is so mired, I mean I think it would be positive to have more women in. I think their brains function better than men. I really do. I think they are less fixated than the male species, they tend to see more of an overview. But whether or not they would actually be able to do anything, I don't know.

Others to talk openly about their lack of faith in the political process said things such as:

Get out there and stomp, shake hands like they used to, meet the people, press the flesh. All this media stuff, it is just a game, and the guy who has the most toys wins.

I just dislike politics. I think it is filled with hypocrisy and deceit.

The cynical and distrustful attitudes that characterize many responses to governmental responsiveness suggests a difficult connection between feminist consciousness and electoral engagement. The more optimistic remarks of younger respondents could be chalked up to limited experience with politics. In years to come, they may sound more like former Douglass undergraduates who now reflect on the futility of expecting male dominated government to respond to female concern.

However, more important are what feminist-identified respondents had to say about the women's movement and the extent to which organized activity was responsible for improvements in women's lives. It is here that the previously outlined concerns regarding the historical disconnect between the women's movement and electoral goals, coupled with the unique challenges posed by politicizing solutions to the problem of gender inequality, come to light in the remarks of identified women.

To begin with, many feminist-identified women gave comments that point to their perception that the movement is no more. In its place has evolved an ethic of individualism. "Get ahead on your own" is what some see as the defining characteristic of today's women's movement. Of course, there are limits in the extent to which claims

about feminist-identified women in the general population can be made from the comments of those reflected here. But the repeated claim among this group of identified women with a shared history of attendance at an all female college that the women's movement is no longer recognizable is worthy of exploration. If they are unlikely to identify the movement today, it is even more improbable that a woman without a similar background will be apt to see things otherwise.

The following is a sample of responses from the mothers:

Yes, because I don't see a movement right now. I just see a pattern of behavior, but not like a conscious movement.

I don't know that there is much of a women's movement today. I don't see it being as visible, if it even still exists in a visible, political form.

I don't think there is much of one. I don't see it in that sense. You know what I see is a whole movement on domestic violence. You want to call that a women's movement, fine.

I don't think they have a mission any more, I don't think they know what the movement is. I think it is unfortunate, because it's gone a couple of different directions. And unfortunately, as I discovered at the Douglass campus, the loudest mouths are the minority. And I don't mean that racially. I mean that sexually. What was in my day construed as perverse, and in some cases not just lesbian activity, people really, women who are really going to flaunt the fact that they'll do anything under any circumstances, any time, any where, with any one. This isn't freedom, this is another kind of imprisonment.

Others were less direct in their questioning of a recognizable movement, but still unsure as to where it is found today.

I think women now are less radical or I don't know what words to use. Things have really changed in the past 25 years. You hear less about it now than you did then. It is not like in the forefront of the news topics or things like that. Women are different, I don't know how to say it. It is not as proactive now as I think it was back then 25 years ago. I don't know why, but that is just my impression.

I think the initial movement was centered more on developing a sense of unity as women and seeing that we had common issues, more so than today. I think

today the movement has become more political, and it is kind of like the Democratic and Republican parties, it is hard to see the differences. It has just become another organization.

These comments are important for demonstrating that even among those who are sympathetic to a feminist identity, there is a belief that the collective nature of the women's movement is no more.⁸⁴ In its place is now an effort directed toward one particular issue, a "pattern of behavior," or worse, a movement coopted by partisan politics.⁸⁵

As for the younger women who were interviewed, their more rosy appraisals of government's responsiveness to women voters suggests that they are among those most likely to translate their feminist identification into more participation. The futility the mothers feel toward political action appears to be missing from younger women's attitudes. The statement from one young woman is telling in this regard. In response to a question about why she believes the government is attentive to women's interests, she replied "Because it's women like me who push the issues."

⁸⁴ Katzenstein's (1998) work is particularly helpful on the subject of where the contemporary women's movement has gone. She argues that feminist protest is alive and well, although it has moved into institutions, such as in the case of Catholic nuns who organize for reform in the church, and female military personnel who work to improve women's treatment and opportunities from within. In addition to these examples are women's professional associations, athletic clubs, and other women's organizations who challenge sexism and gender inequality from inside institutions, instead of through visible protests. This is perhaps why women in this study were unlikely to see a recognizable women's movement.

⁸⁵ Comments such as these were often heard around the time of the Clinton-Lewinsky scandal. Political observers noted the apparent contradiction between women's organizations' support for Clinton despite strong objections to Clarence Thomas and Oregon Senator Robert Packwood over charges of sexual harassment. One public airing of grievances against the women's movement for this supposed betrayal included sentiments such as the following: "If feminism no longer has either political currency or high principle, blame the well-known women's advocates who have abandoned their beliefs, in support of Clinton's presidency... There hasn't been this much duplicity exhibited in the name of women's equality since right-wing Republicans adopted Paula Jones. The gutting of the modern women's movement by the very feminists who founded it, nurtured it and gave it political clout is a grievous betrayal – more disturbing than Clinton's sexual misadventures" (Tucker, 1998).

However, similar to what was found in responses to other questions made by the mothers, younger women also hinted at an inability to see a clear movement.

R: Definitely the 60's and 70's were big times. Now I feel like it is not as big, because you have to be very careful, the whole thing about sexual harassment, women are backed up on their jobs a lot more.

Q: So the women's movement has peaked ...

R: Yeah, I think it is a little less now, because it is important, and people have to be very careful about it.

R: When I think women's movement, I think that women finally realized that they were just as good as anybody else, they could do anything anyone else could do. I think of when women finally stood up for themselves, and said, you know what? I can do more than answer telephones. I can be the one who is operating on that person on the table...They knew what they were doing. And women are powerful. Women, when they finally put their minds to something, they do it.

Q: So you see it as more of a collective effort or individual women doing these types of things.

R: I think it started as a collective effort, but I think everything is individual. You are only going to be as good, it is only going to get as far as you want it to get. You have to work on it for yourself, no one is going to do it for you. No one is going to be in that office with you when you try to get that promotion, except for you.

Thus, it is possible that similar to what was found among older women, younger women's activism is hindered by their inability to identify an organized movement for women's interests.⁸⁶

⁸⁶ Kamen (1991) found similar sentiments in her research on young women and feminism. Through interviews across the country with young college women, she concludes "One result of a lack of voice is the overall message that no one is carrying the torch. This generation associates feminism with the radicals from the Sixties, not with themselves. The feminists feel isolated and the 'uninitiated' do not generally see an available route for becoming active" (84). She goes on to point out a number of reasons for why this is so. The media, for one, "which is largely run by the Baby Boomers, misses its opportunities to spotlight young leaders. Instead, it tends to direct the spotlight to older and established activists" (87). This might explain why many of the women she spoke with, and even Douglass undergraduates, identified older personalities with the women's movement, such as Gloria Steinem and, less often, Betty Friedan.

Of course, there are signs that an organized women's movement is not dead. The National Organization for Women, NARAL, Emily's List, Feminist Majority, the Concerned Women for America, and the Independent Women's Forum are all groups that represent women's interests across a variety of issues and from different perspectives. Representatives from these groups may not share the same name recognition as Gloria Steinem, but their presence casts doubt on the assertion that young, feminist-identified women have no movement to turn to.

Given these assessments of the women's movement by both younger and older respondents, feminist consciousness faces an uphill battle in mobilizing women to become active in politics. The inability of feminist-identified women to see a coherent movement may make it less likely that they recognize what is at stake for women politically. A recognizable movement, per se, acts as a cue for feminist-identified women to get involved and for what reasons. More importantly, the perception of a movement helps women overcome the belief that they alone cannot affect change through their engagement.

The women in this study indicated more than a belief that the women's movement is no longer recognizable today. They also revealed that the movement is absent from many women's assessment regarding who or what is responsible for changes in women's lives over the last half century. Those who recognize the critical role of organized activity in bringing about social, economic, and political change for women should be more likely to understand their role as part of a larger whole in continuing progressive efforts. If, however, women have come to believe that overtime gains for women are the result of individuals acting alone to improve their own personal lives, the link between feminist consciousness and participation may be difficult to achieve.

This subject was addressed in the interviews with current and former Douglass College undergraduates. Specifically, women were asked to whom they attribute responsibility for bringing about changes in women's lives over the last few decades.⁸⁷ The question was open-ended and respondents were free to give whatever answer came first in

⁸⁷ Ninety percent of feminist-identified women said "a lot" of change had occurred in women's lives since their mothers were the same age; all but one (97 percent) said they believe the change has "been for the better."

their minds. A few surprising themes were heard from feminist-identified women, none of which naturally grouped women into the two age groups represented by these women. Past and current undergraduates were just as likely to give responses indicative of each theme.

First, many said simply “women.” Not women working together, but simply women. For example:

I think just women in general have brought about the change. They've gained the resources and been able to express their ideas. They've become just more courageous and more brave and been able to assert themselves more. They've just made the general American public realize what is going on and how it should be changed.

Just I guess the women that are visible in the media and the people that do stand up for women's rights.

R: The women have made the changes. People who had hard times getting into certain job fields opened doors for me and for people of my generation who want to do similar things. They won't say you're just a girl any more really.

Q: So would you say women individually or organized women's groups?

R: Just women individually. Just going for what they want, individually, going through doors.

Women in more untraditional roles, like engineering, doctors, leadership positions. I that has definitely come a far way since that time.

Absent from these responses is any discussion of how women were able to accomplish the things mentioned in their remarks. How, for instance, have women gained the resources required to become professionals in nontraditional fields? How did doors get opened for future generations of women to enter into fields previously dominated by men? Do they mean to imply that through television appearances, prominent women alone have brought about the changes? Perhaps readings between the lines answers these questions through an awareness of organized activity, but at face value, their remarks are telling in an inability to more definitively link organized activity with real change.

Another surprising theme to emerge from these responses is a belief in society's natural evolution toward gender equality. "Things just changed" is one way to characterize the beliefs of this group of feminist-identified women. Individual or collective efforts are largely absent from the responses of women who explain change through forces seemingly out of one's control. Some argue that women simply benefitted from the larger changes taking place in society in the 1960's. Societal change occurred and women were the beneficiaries of a progressive evolution.

I think it was part of the whole social liberal revolution, the civil rights movement, anti-war movement. The whole liberalization of the country. And it was a part of that.

There were always women in each generation that were stomping for women's rights; but the social mores of the time prevented them from making great inroads. The '60s was a time of great upheaval and cultural change, so it was a perfect time for the women's movement to make great strides. And it did.

Rather than recognize the unique contribution made by organized activity on behalf of women, these remarks seem to suggest that other issues, such as civil rights for African Americans, got the ball rolling and predisposed society to accept, or at least tolerate, efforts toward gender equity.

Others were less explicit regarding when change began, but echo the sentiments of others in their belief that change was inevitable.

I think it is also one of those things that is not a thing that just happens out of nowhere; but it sort of grows continually over time. So if we have some women educated in one generation, then there will be more women educated in the next generation. And you're going to open more opportunities for the others. That is something that just happens, it has been progressing for a while.

I think women just constantly fighting for their rights. And then society as a whole agreeing and realizing that this is a problem that needs to be addressed. And once they realize that it has gotten better.

R: Sixties, seventies, the eighties.

Q: So time. But was there anything happening during that time in particular that caused that.

R: A different mindset. Things were completely changing. It seemed like people became more liberal with their ideas, things were opening up. And not necessarily benefitting from things like drugs, but they just started seeing things different.

I would adjust it to the times. Times change. As women have become more prevalent in the public eye, I think minds have changed. Minds have become more open and have enabled women to have opportunities to do more. So I would say as generations come in and go out, it has changed the perspective.

Part of it is consciousness raising, but part of it is economics. Women work now and have careers a lot because they have to. My mother stayed home because she could afford to.

Most of the change is based on education. And information, computer access to information, newspapers, books. People are much more literate than they were then. Travel.

R: Technology.

Q: In what sense?

R: My mother had a wringer washer, she ironed her linens. My mother sprinkled the linens, roll them up, put them in the refrigerator. Overnight. The next day she would iron them. You have never in your life experienced something like getting out of a hot tub, putting on clean jammies, and sliding into freshly ironed, hot sheets. Oh my. But she ironed hankies. And I think socks. Permanent press, technology, dishwashers. Microwaves, washing machines.

Q: And do you think there is anything in addition to technology that has brought about all this change?

R: Truthfully no, well, education.

In short, both groups of women largely abstain from explaining the improvements in women's lives through reference to collective efforts. Rather, for many, changes were inevitable and the result of society waking up to the foolishness of expecting women to be happy only in their roles as wives and mothers. The fact that concerted collective efforts are, for the most part, not included in feminist-identified women's understanding of how changes came about offers insight into why a relationship between feminist consciousness and participation has not been found. The futility of individual action, coupled with a

belief that efforts are not necessary given the seemingly progressive orientation of society, suggests electoral politics is not seen as an important tool for improving the conditions of women's lives.

Lastly, notably absent from these remarks is an acknowledgment of the role of government and legislation in improving women's lives for the better.⁸⁸ On occasion, the role of politics and legislation would come up during the discussion of agents of change.

Reminded of this, some would endorse government's role.⁸⁹

Q: What about politics? Do you think legislation and laws have done anything?

R: Absolutely, the legalization of abortion was a major factor. The fact that we have recourse in the courts when we feel we are being discriminated against. Those things are monumental. At least we have the outlets, the ability to pursue the issues.

Q: How about policies, pieces of legislation that have been passed?

R: I think those are the two major ones.

Q: So your answers were mainly court cases?

R: Right

Q: And do you think legislation has played a role in this change?

R: Yes, I think so. I think it has forced many company's hands. Affirmative action did, that is why I got the job that I did. A woman had to fill it. I think as companies have filled the affirmative action, for minorities or women, I think they've found in many cases that women or minorities can be as successful given the chance and encouragement and education.

Q: How important do you think politics and legislation has been?

R: I don't have a lot of faith in politics and legislation. I think it is a cheap game. It is big business. I think the United States government is the largest non-profit in the world, with the possible exception of the Roman Catholic Church. And when people look at me quizzically, I say

⁸⁸ Only one feminist-identified woman mentioned the importance of "legislation, politics, politicians" in her response to the question of who or what brought about changes in women's lives.

⁸⁹ Given the open-ended nature of these interviews, interviewers were instructed to probe respondents on interesting themes that arose during the interview. This resulted in a few respondents who had been particularly opinionated or verbose regarding politics being asked about the importance of legislation for changing women's lives. This was not systematically asked of all respondents.

what do they do to earn their money? They don't do anything, they take your money. That is a non-profit. It takes your money and it spends it on what is its mission. But they don't want to spend any of their money on social missions. Because social missions, which is what the women's movement is all concerned about, do not return on the investment. Spending money on the military returns on the investment.

These comments suggest a definite awareness of the importance of government, even if that awareness is tied to a sense of futility. However, the fact that politics and legislation came up only when the interviewer asked reinforces the finding that individual agency is most responsible for societal reform. The hesitancy of these comments provide additional insight into why a relationship between feminist consciousness and participation was not found. Lacking a salient awareness of government assisted changes, women may simply not recognize the importance of participation for promoting gender equity.

Summary

Through use of qualitative data, this chapter has explored the extent to which feminist consciousness shares an uneasy relationship with electoral politics. In so doing, it has explored feminist identification in an experimental way and has confirmed that feminist-identified women conceptualize the relationship between gender and the political world in a way that is largely consistent with the theoretical underpinnings for group consciousness research. Specifically, feminist-identified women are inclusive in their orientation to politics and often consider the needs of other women, rather than understanding the political world through the prism of individualism. They also recognize how historically gender has been used to define and restrict women's opportunities.

More importantly, this chapter has demonstrated that the relationship between feminist consciousness and electoral politics is complicated by the disconnect between changes in women's lives, the women's movement, and politics. By and large, feminist-

identified women believe things other than collective action and legislation led to substantial improvements in women's lives over the latter half of the 20th century. Many believe individuals, working on their own, led to gender equity reform. Others believe change was inevitable and women simply benefitted from the inevitable wave of progressivism to sweep across the country. In general, women in this admittedly atypical sample do not attribute electoral politics with improvement in women's lives.⁹⁰ Lacking a belief that organized activity resulted in legislation favorable to gender equality, it is difficult to believe that feminist consciousness will work to unconditionally foster more engagement. Given this orientation, it is understandable for women to see the usefulness of individual agency in small environments, such as in discriminatory workplace settings; it is equally understandable for women to believe individual efforts are futile when used as a way to bring about changes in politics through mass level electoral behavior.

⁹⁰ It is particularly striking that among this group of women, few seemed to *not* recognize the importance of organized activity for bringing about an improvement in women's lives. Their shared histories of attending a women's college where women's studies courses are part of the curriculum makes these findings even more interesting.

Chapter 6: An Informed Approach to Measuring and Understanding Feminist Consciousness

In attempting to resolve the paradoxical relationship between feminist consciousness and participation, two important findings have emerged:

- 1) Women are not the anomaly. Feminist consciousness is not unrelated to electoral and civic participation, but is rather dependent on how the concept is measured and how its relationship to participation is assessed.
- 2) Getting women to recognize and act on the connection between feminist consciousness and politics is not easily achieved.

Taking these findings one at a time and elaborating on what they mean for the study of women's political behavior leads to the following discussions.

Lessons learned from the quantitative approach

In the previous quantitative analyses, feminist consciousness has been proven to be an important and useful tool for understanding women's political behavior. The keys to unlocking the relationship that past research was unable to find involve better measurement and a new analytic approach. Women who identify with feminists and feel an emotional bond with other women are clearly distinct in their patterns of political behavior. They vote more, donate money more, and engage in a variety of other electoral behaviors in numbers that cannot be explained away through the powerful effects of education, income, and race. Furthermore, feminist consciousness is not synonymous with ideology or partisanship. The fact that the relationship between feminist consciousness and electoral participation remained even after controlling for liberal and Democratic identification is testimony to its uniqueness as a variable. In short, feminist consciousness matters, and it matters in a way that lends support to the argument that perceptions of

gender inequality are not easily summarized through an all-encompassing gender consciousness.

More specifically, however, measurement and the kinds of analyses used to examine the relationship between consciousness and participation are the key elements to come from the quantitative approach to measuring feminist consciousness. The insights gleaned from using a new measure of feminist consciousness and a new analytic approach yield the following useful information for the future study of feminist consciousness.

First, measurement clearly matters. The old way of assessing consciousness through the close to women question and equal roles question is plagued with methodological problems and provides no insight into women's political behavior when it is used in a model predicting participation. Social desirability, skewed variance, and question ambiguity have taken their toll on the usefulness of these indicators in measuring the key elements of having a feminist consciousness. Adding to problems with the old measure is its limited dimensionality. Feminist consciousness is more than feeling close to women and believing equality should prevail. It needs a dimension that addresses attitudes toward feminism in order to give it its necessary underlying political meaning. Lacking that, it becomes a theoretically empty term – gender consciousness. Through this measure, we may know which women are unhappy with the state of gender relations, but what is unknown is how these same women understand the ways in which gender operates to define a woman's life. For some, unhappiness with women's treatment in society could stem from a belief that women are overburdened with responsibilities best left to men. For others, unhappiness rests on frustration over sexism standing in the way of women's advancement in politics, business, and industry. Adding a new dimension to the measure

of consciousness, or one that assesses feminist attitudes, links gender inequality with pervasive and systematic sexism.

The 1992 NES provided the first opportunity to address these problems. Consistent with the expectation that a new measure was out there waiting to be uncovered, the 1992 data revealed a more methodologically sound measure of feminist consciousness. The 14 indicators included in the 1992 survey proved to all be worthy measures of elements critical to a thorough measure of feminist consciousness. Unfortunately, they have not been asked on any subsequent NES questionnaire. Lack of space is clearly the issue when considering to include a 14-item measure of feminist consciousness. However, should there be an interest in going beyond the usual two item measure of gender consciousness, insights gleaned from this analysis could help determine which items to use in subsequent surveys with limited space.

Emotional indicators -- In light of concerns over the ambiguity of what it means to feel "close" to women, the measures specific to pride and anger do a considerably better job at specifying emotional closeness among respondents. As such, if the task is to provide better measures of feminist consciousness, there are compelling reasons to replace the close to women item with those such as pride and anger. In addition to its ambiguity, it correlates the least with the other emotional closeness items.

Also, the question that asks about attentiveness to news items concerning women could be made more clear so that respondents understand what is meant by "issues that especially affect women." Its usefulness could be improved if it specified issues a feminist would consider important to women, such sexual harassment or pay inequity. Otherwise, the measure runs the risk of counting a response as "feminist" someone who answers the

question with anti-feminist issues in mind, such as attentiveness to the recent Title IX debate because of a belief that the interests of male athletics outweighs the benefits of expanded opportunities for women.

Lastly, given the repeated significance of the emotional dimension in predicting behavior, measures that provide respondents with more specificity regarding what is being asked are an important addition to a measure of feminist consciousness. The analysis predicting electoral participation (Table 12) is telling in what it says about the usefulness of the single-item measure of emotional closeness (the close to women question) versus the multi-indicator measure used in feminist consciousness. Clearly, the close to women item is insufficient for capturing the importance of this critical dimension.

Feminist identity indicators – The two most direct measures of this dimension are the collective action and feminist identification (i.e., think of self as feminist?) questions. The two feeling thermometer questions (women’s movement and feminists) and the close to feminist question all suffer from the same ambiguity that affects the close to women item. Their relatively consistent presence on National Election Studies makes them an attractive choice if the point is to measure overtime changes in these attitudes. But if space is limited, their ambiguity is best addressed by asking the collective action and feminist identification questions. Furthermore, concerns over past measures not including a question about collective action are addressed by opting for fewer ambiguous questions with one theoretically important question and a straightforward assessment of feminist self-identification.

Egalitarian indicators -- The egalitarian dimension is, I believe, best captured by the four questions that ask about normative and empirical conceptions of gender

inequality. When combined, they are useful in measuring the extent to which women are committed to egalitarianism yet unhappy with the state of affairs. Status discontent goes beyond measuring just a normative commitment to gender equality and helps to compensate for the problems associated with skewed variance. Respondents were overwhelmingly likely to say equality should prevail in public and private life, but when combined with questions about how things really are, responses become more varied. As for the equal roles question, beyond its appeal of being a consistent part of National Election Studies, I do not believe it is contributing anything to a measure of feminist consciousness that the new normative equality measures are not already picking up.⁹¹

Taking things a step further, the analyses using the new measure of feminist consciousness suggest an even starker recommendation for the egalitarian dimension. In particular, they point to the dimension's limited use in helping to explain engagement. Time and again, it turned out to be a non-significant predictor of participation, either alone or in conjunction with the other dimensions. One possible explanation for its non-significance may be that a feminist identity, in and of itself, denotes status discontent and an overall commitment to egalitarianism. A woman who identifies herself as a feminist is almost certain to see gender inequality and want things to be different. If true, the addition of egalitarianism to the model when feminist identity is already present and measuring the same thing may explain why this dimension turns out to be of little use.

Of course, excluding the egalitarian dimension would lead to a revised measure of feminist consciousness, or one that limits its definition to feminist identification and

⁹¹ A case could also be made for cutting the measures about power in the family. Specifically, given the ambiguous nature of what it means to have power in the family, it is possible that an inconsistent array of contexts inform responses to these questions.

emotional connectedness to women. The theoretical importance of egalitarian attitudes suggests that before excluding it from a measure of feminist consciousness more work could be done to refine the way the concept is measured.

Despite the limitations of some, the indicators used in the 1992 NES to measure feminist consciousness were a great improvement over the earlier ones. Their helpfulness in remeasuring an important concept proved fruitful in the search for understanding women's political behavior. The fact that they have not been used subsequently is unfortunate. Continued reliance on the close to women and equal roles question to measure women's group consciousness has been proven to be a methodologically poor decision.

Finally, the way in which feminist consciousness and its relationship to engagement is analyzed makes a difference in what the findings say about women's political behavior. Having demonstrated the multi-dimensionality of feminist consciousness, combining all responses into an additive index is a poor choice. The varying significance of the three dimensions would not have been uncovered if their separate influences had not been accounted for. Taking things a step further, the interactive approach revealed the surprising interplay of emotional closeness and feminist identification. In short, the analyses presented in this dissertation point to the use of separate dimensions for estimating feminist consciousness' impact on participation, rather than assuming all dimensions affect participation in the same way.

Lessons learned from the qualitative approach

While the quantitative analysis yielded new and significant findings regarding the politicization of feminist consciousness, the interviews with mothers and daughters

provide insight into how difficult it is for women to think about the political implications of gender. Thus, while there is some confirmation for the mismeasurement hypothesis, there is also proof that the uneasy connection between feminism and electoral goals makes it uniquely difficult for women to link their feminist identity with political engagement. The qualitative approach to measuring feminist consciousness brings the analysis full circle by demonstrating what goes on in women's minds when they try to connect their affinity with feminist principles with politics, legislation, and participation.

Feminist consciousness does not enjoy an easy relationship with engagement because the problems of gender inequality are not solved through politics and legislation. Gender inequality stems from the insidiousness of sexism. It manifests itself in discriminatory attitudes toward women holding positions of power, sex, the role of mothering, women's athletic abilities, and countless other ways that infringe on a woman's right to happiness. What is key to understanding the problems of gender inequality are attitudes and the extent to which politics and legislation can promote attitude change. They can help things along by making it illegal to discriminate against a woman because of her sex, but individuals need to accept egalitarianism in order for gender equity reform to be valued and embraced by society. The remarks of one woman in the Douglass interviews are telling in this regard:

Q: I just want to follow up on a few things really quickly. When you talked about things that had changed women's lives, you talked about the pill and Roe vs. Wade, and something else. You didn't really mention legislation. Do you think legislation and public policy has had any impact on changing women's lives? Or is that not really a lead factor in it?

R: Well, legislation, they all follow. It is all connected. The point was if there wasn't the pill to take away that guillotine hanging over your neck, and then you were free to look at things differently... You could consider a career, you weren't going to be sidelined by kids if you didn't

want them. You wouldn't be just sandbagged by accident if you didn't want to be. The point was to have a choice, and that is the whole issue... And it all just followed where people looked at every day life and to see where legislation was needed, to make sure that your choices were available to you. What things were anti-female, what things were blocking us. It was a whole concerted attack, what needed to be changed. And you just worked your way in it, and it affected an attitude change in time, and of course, when more women got in office, they really brought their different perspective; and in effect, they forced the whole thing. It was on a roll and it just kept going. The legislation comes in because you have to, something would pop up and you would say that is not right. You can't tell me I can't do that, you can't have a law that says that. We have to do something about that. The point was it was a concerted attack. It just takes time to do that, but that was the whole point.

Q: But society had to change before the laws changed.

R: Really, yes. They are the ones that trigger it. You had to have enough people saying we don't like this, that is not right. You can't tell me that any more, I am not going to stand for it. And I am an elected official now, I am not just knocking on your door, stuffing your envelopes, I have a vote. So that was the whole thing, a rolling stone, it just kept going.

Keeping things going are women who challenge on a daily basis sexist assumptions of what it means to be a woman in U.S. society. The central importance of attitude change is perhaps why the contemporary women's movement began as consciousness raising groups. Women who would gather together and talk about sexist remarks, outright discrimination, and the extent to which these experiences are not idiosyncratic encouraged women to challenge their second-class status. Thus, key to understanding the complex relationship feminist consciousness shares with electoral politics is egalitarianism. Without this, politics and legislation face an uphill battle in addressing the problems of gender inequality.

The importance of attitudes can also be seen in the sweeping changes that have affected women's lives over the last half century. As one recent article argues:

Here's what today's single girl can get that she couldn't get 100 years ago (or at least not without a truckload of grief): a decent job, the pleasure of walking down the street by herself without being hassled by the cops, her own rental apartment, credit, effective contraception and, of course, the opportunity to vote. Today, if she wants children she can adopt or bear her own without marrying and without suffering under a crushing stigma. And, if she's lucky enough not to want kids, then she has that much more time and money to live as she pleases – without accounting to or cleaning up after anyone else – an unimaginable liberty for well over 99 percent of women throughout human history, including most of those alive today (Miller, 2002).

An overstatement? Perhaps. This description may be best applied to freedoms enjoyed by educated and better off women. But overall, the sentiments expressed in this recent commentary on the state of single life for women are directly relevant to the study of feminist consciousness in the U.S. Looking over this list of freedoms, the connection between gender inequity and politics may seem obvious. After all, the right to vote did not magically come about through spontaneous change in male attitudes toward suffrage. Neither did the right to credit untethered to a husband. These are changes that came about through pressuring policymakers to make the laws in this country more equitable toward women.

However, equally compelling is what the above excerpt mentions in addition to the right to vote and credit reform. It also mentions powerful reforms such as relaxed social norms about marriage and motherhood. The fact that women today can postpone or choose not to marry, while still being a mother reflects changes in attitudes. Of course, the stigma of an out-of-wedlock birth can be found to varying degrees in the U.S. But the fact remains that women have more freedom in their personal lives than ever before. They are no longer subjected to a life of childbearing thanks to the availability of contraception and changed attitudes toward women's sexuality. Formal education is no longer seen as the sole province of men. Gone is the stifling need to suffer in joyless or abusive marriages.

All of these are changes that may have some connection to the political world, but they primarily reflect attitude shifts about women and the diversity of roles they can play in society. And unlike the right to vote, attitudes cannot be legislated. Reforms that arise principally from egalitarianism are difficult to think of in political terms.

More proof of how difficult it is to politicize solutions to gender inequality can be seen in a recent Gallup Poll (1999). Women were asked to rate how much of an impact a variety of reforms had on women's lives in the 20th century. The reforms included changes in divorce law, the women's movement, opportunity for higher education, access to jobs, women's athletics, the right to vote, changes in abortion law, political representation, and birth control. The following is how each rated in having the "highest impact":

• The right to vote	73%
• Birth control	63%
• Opportunity for higher education	56%
• Women's athletics	39%
• Changes in abortion law	37%
• The women's movement	37%
• Changes in divorce law	29%
• Access to jobs	29%
• Political representation	22%

Looking across this list, it is clear that many of the changes women believe to be responsible for impacting their lives are not reforms inextricably linked to politics. The top three – or those where a majority of women rated the reform as among those having the highest impact – include two that are not expressly political (birth control and the opportunity for higher education) and the right to vote.

Interviews with current and past Douglass College undergraduates echo the sentiments reflected in the Gallup Poll. Education was mentioned as one of the things

many believe to be responsible for changing women's lives for the better. And others mentioned divorce, abortion, and contraception. Similar to Gallup Poll respondents, few mentioned the importance of reforms or rights that are blatantly tied to politics and policymakers.

It is important that women identify reforms and rights that are not expressly political because of what this says about the likelihood of connecting their feminist identities to electoral politics. While voting is clearly a political right, the same cannot be said for educational reforms, safe and effective contraception, and the freedom to divorce. Of course all of these reforms have some connection to politics since, for example, oral contraceptives would not have been approved without government's consent. But these are reforms that can take root in society only through changes in societal attitudes toward gender equality. This involves changing peoples' attitudes about women and the diversity of experiences to which they are entitled including sexual autonomy, access to formal education, and the freedom to dissolve marriages. However, legislation cannot force attitude change on individuals. This is something that must come from within.

Finally, changing an individual's attitude toward gender equality may result in only quiet victories, but the extent to which these victories resonate with women cannot be overstated. One young woman puts it this way:

We're definitely making changes as women now, but they aren't as visible. They're in our relationships with our co-workers, with our colleagues, with our families, with our bosses, our fathers or brothers or husbands or lovers. It doesn't get a headline. It's not like 'Julie's father stops using sexist language.' That doesn't get a headline, but that's a major change in a person's life, in one man's life, and that's happening all over the country because of women like me, who I believe are all over the country (Kaman 1991: 89).

It is the quiet victories that pave the way for the larger ones to take root through politics and legislation. And, it is because the quiet victories are unaccounted for in the theory underlying feminist consciousness' relationship to electoral behavior that the quantitative approach must be informed by the insights of women interviewed here.

Table 1:
Distribution of responses to emotional measures
(*Female respondents only*)

How often do you find yourself feeling a sense of pride in the accomplishments of women? Very often, some of the time, occasionally, or almost never? N = 1004

Almost never	5.4
Occasionally	22.1
Some of the time	47.7
Most of the time	24.8

How often do you find yourself angry about the way women are treated in society? Very often, some of the time, occasionally, or almost never? N = 999

Almost never	9.3
Occasionally	27.8
Some of the time	39.4
Most of the time	23.5

When reading or listening to the news, how much attention do you pay to issues that especially affect women? A lot, some, a little, or not at all? N = 1004

Not at all	4.0
A little	15.2
Some	46.3
A lot	34.5

Combined summary measure of "close to women" and "closest to" group: N = 903

Not close to women	43.2
Close but not group closest to	47.6
Women the group R feels closest to	9.2

Table 2:
Distribution of responses to egalitarian measures
(Female respondents only)

Status discontent (public) combined summary measure of the following:

- People have different opinions about how much power and influence women have in society compared to men. Thinking about the way things really are in government, business and industry today, do you think men have more power and influence than women, OR that men and women have about equal power and influence, OR, that women have more power and influence than men?

N = 1003

- People disagree about how much power and influence they think women ought to have compared to men. Thinking about how you would like things to be in government, business, and industry, do you think men should have more power and influence, OR that men and women should have about equal power and influence, OR that women should have more power and influence?

N = 988

Men have power but equality should prevail	70.0
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Status discontent (private) combined summary measure of the following:

- Thinking about the way things really are in most families, do you think men have more power and influence, OR that men and women have about equal power and influence, OR that women have more power and influence?

N = 987

- People disagree about how much power and influence they think women ought to have compared to men. Thinking about how you would like things to be in families, do you think men should have more power and influence, OR that men and women should have about equal power and influence, OR that women should have more power and influence?

N = 986

Men have more power but equality should prevail	38.1
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Recently there has been a lot of talk about women's rights. Some people feel that women should have an equal role with men in running business, industry, and government. Others feel that women's place is in the home. Where would you place yourself on this scale, or haven't you thought much about this?

N = 1010

Women in home	1	3.6		5	6.3
	2	2.6		6	12.2
	3	4.9	Men and women equal	7	57.0
	4	13.5			

Table 3:
Distribution of responses to feminist identity measures:
(*Female respondents only*)

Feeling thermometer - Women's Movement: N = 976; Mean = 64.30

0-25	5.9
26-50	26.9
51-75	35.4
76-100	31.8

Feeling thermometer - Feminists N = 934; Mean = 54.24

0-25	11.0
26-50	39.3
51-75	34.4
76-100	15.3

Combined summary measure of "close to feminists" and "closest to" group: N = 903

Not close to feminists	85.6
Close but not group closest to	13.6
Feminists the group R feels closest to	.8

Collective action: Some people think that the best way for women to improve their position is for each woman to become better trained and more qualified, and do the best she can as an individual. Others think that while individual effort is important, the best way for women to really improve their position is if they work together. Which is closest to your view: is individual effort enough, or do women also need to work together? N = 982

Individual effort	37.2
Work together	62.8

Combined summary measure of "think of self as a feminist or not" and strength of identification? N = 936

No, not a feminist	47.9
Feminist, but not strong	40.2
Strong feminist	11.9

Table 4: Correlations between items measuring feminist consciousness

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1 Status discontent - public												
2 Status discontent - private	.320**											
3 Equal roles	.262**	.160**										
<i>4 Pride</i>	.194**	.071**	.151**									
<i>5 Anger</i>	.211**	.127**	.171**	.393**								
<i>6 News attentiveness</i>	.244**	.114**	.217**	.353**	.298**							
<i>7 Close to women</i>	.154**	.123**	.209**	.183***	.169***	.256**						
<u>8 FT - WM</u>	.183**	.095**	.281**	.304**	.340**	.354**	.261**					
<u>9 FT - Feminist</u>	.181**	.091**	.308**	.260**	.319**	.307**	.246**	<u>.694**</u>				
<u>10 Close to fem</u>	.109**	0.06	.170**	.160**	.185**	.231**	.288**	<u>.314**</u>	<u>.363**</u>			
<u>11 Work together</u>	0.03	0.02	0.06	.144**	.232**	.114**	.261**	<u>.355**</u>	<u>.302**</u>	<u>.154**</u>		
<u>12 Feminist?</u>	.105**	.118**	.179**	.253**	.287**	.308**	.293**	<u>.477**</u>	<u>.589**</u>	<u>.473**</u>	<u>.238**</u>	

**Sig. \leq .01* Sig. \leq .05.

Table 5: Response distributions to feminist consciousness measures

		Percent giving feminist response to...Emotional dimension			
		Pride (Most of the time)	Anger (Most of the time)	News (A lot of attentiveness)	Close to women
PID	Democrat	30.3	30.6	40.3	58.8
	Republican	22.3	14.9	27.3	58.1
Ideology	Liberal	29.1	27.7	44.9	67.2
	Moderate	24.5	23.2	37.6	56.7
	Conservative	21.3	20.5	26.4	52.4
Race	White	21.8	21.3	32.8	54.6
	Non-white	39.6	34.4	44.3	67.4
Employment	Work	25.4	24.6	36.5	58.6
	Not working	24.2	22.3	32.3	54.9
Housewife	Yes	22.3	18.3	30.1	55.3
	No	25.5	24.9	35.6	57.2
Marital status	Married	21.8	19.9	31	55.8
	Not married	28.7	29.3	39.7	58.1
Education	≤HS	22.4	23.7	30.5	53.6
	Some college and beyond	29.4	23.3	44.1	64.6
Age	18-24	13.6	31.6	31.4	62.4
	25-34	19.1	18.9	37.6	66.4
	35-49	29.7	26.2	36.1	58.6
	50+	27.8	22	31.8	47

Table 5: Response distributions to feminist consciousness measures (contd.)

		Percent giving egalitarian response to... Egalitarian dimension		
		Status discontent - private	Status discontent - public	Equal Roles (Egalitarian end of 7-point continuum)
PID	Democrat	39.1	70.2	78.9
	Republican	37.8	71.1	68.5
Ideology	Liberal	45	85	89.9
	Moderate	41.8	75.9	80.2
	Conservative	35.8	68	63.8
Race	White	39.1	71.4	76.4
	Non-white	34.7	64.1	71.1
Employment	Work	41.8	75	81.3
	Not working	33.7	64.4	68.5
Housewife	Yes	34.3	64.3	63.7
	No	39.2	71.5	78.3
Marital status	Married	39.6	73	73
	Not married	36	65.5	79.2
Education	≤HS	35.1	66	71.6
	Some college and beyond	45.6	79.4	84.6
Age	18-24	40	68.1	83.8
	25-34	40.2	73.4	82.9
	35-49	44.2	75.5	85.8
	50+	30.6	63.4	66.3

Table 5: Response distributions to feminist consciousness measures (contd.)

		Percent giving feminist response to...Feminist Identity dimension				
		Women's movement feeling thermometer	Feminist feeling thermometer	Close to feminists	Collective action	Is R Feminist?
PID	Democrat	74.2	52.1	84.7	67.3	35.1
	Republican	53.3	30.3	8.7	56.5	17.5
Ideology	Liberal	79.2	56.8	26.8	68.8	37.1
	Moderate	69.4	45	13.8	63.4	24.5
	Conservative	57.9	30.4	8.2	56.9	19.5
Race	White	63.9	42.6	14.3	59	24.8
	Non-white	82.2	40.7	14.3	80.6	36.1
Employment	Work	67.6	41.3	17.2	58	25.8
	Not working	65.8	43.2	11.3	68.8	27.6
Housewife	Yes	66.3	46.5	10.5	66.6	24.9
	No	66.9	41.1	15.4	62	27.1
Marital status	Married	62.2	41	13.4	58.2	22.8
	Not married	73.9	43.7	15.9	69.8	32.2
Education	≤HS	65.3	39.4	10.9	62.9	24.2
	Some college and beyond	71.4	48.7	23.1	63.4	31.1
Age	18-24	79.3	40.1	16.8	65.8	25.5
	25-34	69.2	42.9	18.8	57	26
	35-49	67.1	46.2	15.8	61.7	29
	50+	60.4	38	9.6	66.9	25.2

Table 6: Ordinary least squares regression predicting feminist consciousness

	Full Index	Emotional	Egalitarianism	Feminist Identity
Strength of partisanship	.101*** (.019)	.077*** (.023)	.050 (.032)	.141*** (.024)
Strength of ideology	.109*** (.027)	.074** (.031)	.129*** (.044)	.131*** (.034)
Education	.074*** (.022)	.098*** (.025)	.105*** (.036)	.056** (.027)
Sexual harassment	.063*** (.012)	.094*** (.014)	.063*** (.020)	.048*** (.015)
Not married	.049** (.021)	.025 (.022)	.011 (.035)	.078*** (.024)
Mom work	.005 (.112)	.000 (.014)	-.013 (.021)	.015 (.016)
Childless	-.002 (.015)	.005 (.017)	-.001 (.025)	-.007 (.019)
Single mom	-.009 (.023)	.030 (.027)	-.040 (.038)	-.018 (.029)
Race	.001 (.001)	.000 (.001)	.002 (.002)	.001 (.001)
Homemaker	-.006 (.019)	.012 (.022)	-.024 (.032)	-.003 (.024)
Income	.007 (.021)	-.023 (.024)	.063* (.034)	-.020 (.026)
Age	-.023 (.035)	-.001 (.036)	-.119** (.058)	.016 (.039)
Work	-.011 (.016)	.004 (.019)	.013 (.027)	-.039* (.021)
Religiosity	-.095*** (.024)	-.057** (.028)	-.129*** (.041)	-.097*** (.031)
Adjusted R Square	0.211	0.14	0.129	0.169
N	742	750	746	745

Unstandardized regression coefficients; standard errors in parentheses

*** Sig. $\leq .01$; ** Sig. $\leq .05$ * Sig. $\leq .10$

Source: 1992 National Election Study; Female respondents only

Table 7: Path analysis predicting feminist consciousness via party identification and ideology

Variable	Direct Effects	Indirect effects via party identification	Indirect effects via ideology	Total effects
Unmarried	.136**	.121(.188)		0.159
Single mom	-0.024	.014(.188)		-0.021
Homemaker	-0.014	-.084(.188)		-0.03
Sexual harassment	.179***	.097(.188)		0.197
No children at home	-0.006	-.015(.188)		-0.009
Education	.128***		.055(.154)	0.136
Religiosity	-.136***		-.209(.154)	-0.168
Race	0.02	.014(.188)	-.030(.154)	0.019
Age	-0.039		-.138(.154)	-0.06
Income	0.014		.113(.154)	0.031
Mom work	0.014			0.014
Work	-0.032		-.120(.154)	-0.05
Strength of partisanship	.188***			
Strength of ideology	.154***			
R Square	0.226			
N	742			

Standardized regression coefficients

Table 8: Comparison of feminist consciousness measures by mean number of acts of political engagement

Gender Consciousness			Feminist Consciousness		
Category	Mean	N	Score	Mean	N
Individual/Privatized	2.32	60	0-.20	3.25	24
Identified/Privatized	2.24	37	.21-.40	2.64	185
Individual/Ambivalent	2.86	69	.41-.60	2.42	423
Identified/Ambivalent	2.61	48	.61-.80	2.9	288
Individual/Egalitarian	2.41	240	.81-1.00	3.81	74
Identified/Egalitarian	2.96	404			

Table 9: Number of activities across 8-item participation index

Score	N	%
0	201	20
1	428	42.5
2	242	24
3	73	7.2
4	29	2.9
5	14	1.4
6	9	0.9
7	9	0.9
8	2	0.2

Table 10: Bivariate correlations between participation and feminist consciousness

	Participation index	Vote	Persuade	Display preferences	Attend meeting	Campaign work	Contribute money
Gender	.069*	.064*	0.037	0.046	0.046	0.024	0.033
Feminist	.083**	.058*	0.028	.065**	0.051	0.017	.082**

** Sig \leq .01; *Sig. \leq .05

Table 11: Ordinary least squares regression predicting 8-item participation index with gender and feminist consciousness

	Feminist	Gender
Consciousness	.069 (.247)	.094 (.144)
Mobilization	2.456** (.164)	2.484** (.171)
Education	.948** (.145)	.882** (.153)
Strength of partisanship	.651** (.124)	.638** (.129)
Age	.286* (.143)	.329* (.148)
White	.260* (.120)	.281* (.121)
Religiosity	.192 (.166)	.206 (.173)
Work	.119 (.103)	.163 (.107)
Ideological strength	.106 (.128)	.134 (.134)
Not married	.072 (.142)	.087 (.146)
Homemaker	.069 (.126)	.094 (.134)
No children at home	.057 (.094)	.047 (.098)
Single mom	-.155 (.152)	-.184 (.157)
Income	-.195 (.135)	-.187 (.144)
Adjusted R Square	0.364	0.365
N	748	689

Unstandardized regression coefficients; standard errors in parentheses

** Sig. \leq .01; * Sig. \leq .05

Source: 1992 National Election Study; Female respondents only

Table 12: Ordinary least squares regression predicting 8-item participation index with gender and feminist consciousness interactions

	Feminist	Gender
Feminist ID Dimension	-.533** (.256)	
Emotional Dimension	.695 *** (.278)	-.115 (.451)
Egalitarian/Cognitive Dimension	-.058 (.181)	-.248 (.201)
Interactions between...		
Emotional & Egalitarian	.078 (.810)	
Feminist ID & Egalitarian	-.057 (.741)	
Emotional & Feminist ID	3.014*** (.998)	
Total interactions	-1.039 (2.742)	.454 (.511)
Mobilization	2.421*** (.164)	2.483*** (.171)
Strength of partisanship	.628*** (.124)	.614*** (.130)
Strength of ideology	.079 (.128)	.115 (.134)
Education	.867*** (.146)	.840*** (.155)
Income	-.214 (.135)	-.188 (.143)
Age	.320** (.143)	.347** (.148)
White	.228* (.121)	.294** (.121)
Religiosity	.146 (.167)	.186 (.174)
Work	.099 (.103)	.168 (.107)
Homemaker	.046 (.126)	.086 (.134)
No children at home	.062 (.094)	.046 (.097)
Single mom	-.187 (.153)	-.224 (.158)
Not married	.083 (.143)	.121 (.147)
Adjusted R Square	0.37	0.368
N	749	689

Unstandardized regression coefficients; standard errors in parentheses

*** Sig. $\leq .01$; ** Sig. $\leq .05$ *Sig. $\leq .10$

Source: 1992 National Election Study; Female respondents only

Table 13: Proportion of female respondents engaged in informal versus electoral activism

Informal activism	N (%)
Voluntarism	349 (34.7)
Community work	223 (21.0)
Electoral activism	N (%)
Vote	726 (68.4)
Campaign work	37 (3.7)
Display preferences	113 (11.1)
Persuade	342 (33.8)
Monetary contributions	86 (8.5)

Table 14: Logistic regression predicting voluntarism with feminist and gender consciousness

	Feminist	Gender
Feminist ID Dimension	-1.359** (4.649)	
Emotional Dimension	1.344* (3.525)	-1.004 (1.010)
Egalitarian/Cognitive Dimension	1.155*** (6.492)	-1.080** (5.827)
Interactions between...		
Emotional & Egalitarian	-5.126*** (6.055)	
Feminist ID & Egalitarian	6.424*** (12.479)	
Emotional & Feminist ID	.490 (.042)	
Total interactions	-14.904** (4.865)	1.798 (2.514)
Mobilization		
Mobilization	1.325*** (13.346)	1.365*** (13.713)
Strength of partisanship	-.025 (.008)	-.064 (.047)
Strength of ideology	.072 (.060)	-.045 (.023)
Education	2.139*** (41.102)	2.302*** (42.997)
Income	-.347 (1.292)	-.578* (3.179)
Age	.602* (3.319)	.601* (3.081)
White	.661** (5.211)	.612** (4.853)
Religiosity	2.220*** (32.200)	2.289*** (31.500)
Work	-.142 (.357)	-.114 (.217)
Homemaker	.278 (.924)	.142 (.224)
No children at home	-.418** (3.881)	-.305 (1.954)
Single mom	-.670* (3.574)	-.715** (3.864)
Not married	.346 (1.136)	.293 (.780)
Model Chi Square (d.f.)	164.413 (20)	164.217 (16)
% correct	73.5	71.8
Naglekerke R Square	0.269	0.261
N	749	688

Logistic regression coefficients; wald statistics in parentheses

*** Sig. $\leq .01$; ** Sig. $\leq .05$ * Sig. $\leq .10$

Source: 1992 National Election Study; Female respondents only

Table 15: Logistic regression predicting informal community work with feminist and gender consciousness

	Feminist	Gender
Feminist ID Dimension	-1.195* (2.916)	
Emotional Dimension	3.257*** (15.110)	.246 (.047)
Egalitarian/Cognitive Dimension	.302 (.306)	.182 (.124)
Interactions between...		
Emotional and Egalitarian	-3.755 (2.417)	
Feminist ID and Egalitarian	.764 (.148)	
Emotional and Feminist ID	6.269** (5.932)	
Total interactions	-10.023 (1.983)	.263 (1.267)
Mobilization	1.965*** (29.283)	1.848*** (25.015)
Strength of partisanship	-.407 (1.699)	-.419 (1.705)
Strength of ideology	-.375 (1.300)	-.175 (.272)
Education	1.181*** (11.320)	1.463*** (15.889)
Income	.278 (.663)	.116 (.107)
Age	1.006*** (6.647)	1.027*** (6.398)
White	.111 (.128)	.110 (.131)
Religiosity	1.665*** (14.828)	1.794*** (15.890)
Work	.225 (.677)	.275 (.938)
Homemaker	.320 (.907)	.478 (1.922)
No children at home	-.481** (4.160)	-.352 (2.117)
Single mom	-.173 (.172)	-.114 (.072)
Not married	-.155 (.163)	-.151 (.149)
Model Chi square (d.f.)	128.743 (20)	101.206 (16)
% correct	78.9	78.7
Naglekerke R Square	0.238	0.207
N	752	691

Logistic regression coefficients; wald statistics in parentheses

*** Sig. $\leq .01$; ** Sig. $\leq .05$ * Sig. $\leq .10$

Source: 1992 National Election Study; Female respondents only

Table 16: Ordinary least squares regression predicting 8-item participation index with internal political efficacy

Feminist ID Dimension	-.527** (.245)
Emotional Dimension	.251 (.274)
Egalitarian Dimension	-.036 (.174)
Interactions between...	
Emotional & Egalitarian	.312 (.782)
Feminist ID & Egalitarian	-.118 (.714)
Emotional & Feminist ID	2.035** (.969)
Total Interactions	.298 (2.636)
Efficacy	.177*** (.025)
Mobilization	2.277*** (.160)
Strength of partisanship	.545*** (.120)
Strength of ideology	.147 (.123)
Education	.746*** (.140)
Income	-.219* (.115)
Age	.297*** (.119)
White	.310*** (.114)
Religiosity	.167 (.161)
Adjusted R Square	0.408
N	750

Unstandardized regression coefficients; standard errors in parentheses

*** Sig. $\leq .01$; ** Sig. $\leq .05$ * Sig. $\leq .10$

Source: 1992 National Election Study; Female respondents only

Table 17: Path analysis predicting 8-item participation index via efficacy

Variable	Direct Effects	Indirect effects via internal efficacy	Total effects
Feminist ID Dimension	-.091**	-.032(.216)	-0.098
Emotional Dimension	0.045	.253(.216)	0.1
Feminist ID & Emotional Interaction	.082***	.135(.216)	0.111
Mobilization	.424***	.142(.216)	0.566
Strength of partisanship	.134***	.099(.216)	0.155
Strength of ideology	0.034	-.060(.216)	0.021
Education	.174***	.180(.216)	0.213
Income	-.059*	.023(.216)	-0.054
Age	.076***	-.022(.216)	0.071
White	.083***	-.057(.216)	0.071
Religiosity	0.032	-.018(.216)	0.028
Internal efficacy	.216***		
Adjusted R Square	0.412		
N	750		

Standardized regression coefficients

Table 18: Logistic regression predicting turnout in 1992 House and Senate races

	Vote in House Election	Vote in Senate election
Feminist ID	.950 (.819)	-2.896 (1.957)
Emotional	1.111 (1.110)	.904 (.167)
Egalitarianism	-.347 (.255)	-1.181 (.864)
Interactions between...		
Emotional & Egalitarianism	-1.431 (.240)	4.775 (.628)
Feminist ID & Egalitarianism	1.455 (.243)	.384 (.005)
Emotional and Feminist ID	5.637 (1.439)	7.833 (.701)
Total Interactions	-18.548 (2.421)	-10.273 (.149)
Mobilization	.682 (1.083)	1.579 (1.810)
Strength of partisanship	.390 (.742)	.749 (.834)
Strength of ideology	.255 (.311)	-2.412*** (7.106)
Education	.718 (.644)	-.325 (.147)
Income	-.415 (.870)	-2.382*** (6.320)
Age	.849* (3.615)	1.738** (4.630)
White	1.274*** (1.858)	-.102 (.023)
Religiosity	.668 (1.130)	-.561 (.315)
Female House/Senate candidate	.592* (2.620)	1.063** (3.949)
Naglekerke R Sq	0.106	0.233
% Correct. Class.	88.7	92.3
Chi Sq (d.f.)	31.60 (16)	32.65 (16)
N	565	330

Logistic regression coefficients; wald statistics in parentheses

***Sig. $\leq .01$; ** Sig. $\leq .05$; * Sig. $\leq .10$

Source: 1992 National Election Study; Female respondents only

Table 19: Logistic regression predicting turnout in 1992 House and Senate elections with interactive influence of female House or Senate candidates
2-way interactions

	Vote in House Election	Vote in Senate election
Feminist ID	.775 (.693)	-2.847* (2.936)
Emotional	.468 (.250)	2.582 (2.373)
Egalitarianism	-.355 (.336)	-1.996 (2.360)
Interactions between female House/Senate candidate and...		
Feminist ID	1.622 (.665)	1.180 (.187)
Emotional	.556 (.072)	-1.256 (.185)
Egalitarianism	-2.209 (1.970)	2.178 (1.033)
Mobilization	.589 (.829)	1.659 (1.866)
Strength of partisanship	.427 (.899)	.715 (.773)
Strength of ideology	.335 (.535)	-2.506*** (7.806)
Education	.819 (2.219)	-.120 (.020)
Income	-.396 (.799)	-2.639*** (7.657)
Age	.786* (3.151)	1.908** (5.161)
White	1.327*** (11.979)	-.028 (.002)
Religiosity	.684 (1.204)	-.440 (.196)
Female House/Senate candidate	1.287 (.787)	-.373 (.037)
Naglekerke R Sq	0.106	0.227
% Correct. Class.	88.9	92.7
Chi Sq (d.f.)	31.55 (15)	31.76 (15)
N	565	330

Logistic regression coefficients; wald statistics in parentheses

***Sig. $\leq .01$; ** Sig. $\leq .05$; * Sig. $\leq .10$

Source: 1992 National Election Study; Female respondents only

Table 20: Logistic regression predicting turnout in 1992 House and Senate elections with interactive influence of female House or Senate candidates
2- and 3-way interactions

	Vote in House election	Vote in Senate election
Feminist ID	.334 (.084)	-2.081 (.600)
Emotional	1.345 (1.301)	.007 (.000)
Egalitarianism	-.248 (.117)	-2.611 (2.535)
Interactions between female House/Senate candidate and...		
Feminist ID	.998 (.072)	-2.098 (.218)
Emotional	-7.480 (2.045)	2.091 (.225)
Egalitarianism	-4.019 (2.061)	2.854 (1.319)
Interactions between...		
Emotional & Egalitarianism	-3.420 (1.109)	8.597 (.990)
Feminist ID & Egalitarianism	-.116 (.001)	-1.369 (.036)
Emotional & Feminist ID	4.134 (.882)	-.922 (.020)
Interactions between female House/Senate candidate and...		
Emotional & Egalitarianism	25.536** (4.398)	-9.882 (.632)
Feminist ID & Egalitarianism	2.079 (.056)	-1.403 (.016)
Emotional & Feminist ID	1.863 (.030)	28.084 (2.407)
Mobilization	.529 (.661)	1.770 (2.048)
Strength of partisanship	.513 (1.251)	.766 (.803)
Strength of ideology	.263 (.314)	-2.560*** (7.364)
Education	.869 (2.447)	-.341 (.142)
Income	-.410 (.841)	-2.346** (5.579)
Age	.853* (3.540)	1.911** (4.745)
White	1.205*** (9.382)	-.085 (.014)
Religiosity	.565 (.794)	-.546 (.277)
Female House/Senate	7.159* (2.663)	-1.360 (.162)
Naglekerke R Sq	0.133	0.263
% Correct. Class.	88.9	93.4
Chi Sq (d.f.)	39.76 (21)	37.15 (21)
N	565	330

Logistic regression coefficients; wald statistics in parentheses

***Sig. $\leq .01$; ** Sig. $\leq .05$; * Sig. $\leq .10$

Source: 1992 National Election Study; Female respondents only

Table 21: Most common identities shaping political orientations

	<i>% who included trait in first pile ...</i>		
	Aggregate	Mothers	Current Undergraduates
Woman	68	57	76
Ideology	61	57	64
Age	46	44	49
Career/major	36	39	33
Social class	32	35	39
Citizenship	27	39	18
Religious affiliation	23	22	15
Race	20	17	21
Ethnicity	16	17	15
Sexual orientation	7	13	3
Party identification	5	9	3
Mother	*	70	*

Table 22: Traits most commonly paired with gender identity

<i>% of gender identified respondents who also included...</i>	Aggregate	Mothers	Current Undergraduates
Ideology	58	62	56
Age	55	54	56
Career/major	32	39	28
Social class	32	23	36
Citizenship	24	39	16
Religious affiliation	21	31	16
Race	21	23	20
Ethnicity	16	15	16
Sexual orientation	8	15	4
Party identification	8	15	4
Mother	*	92	*

Appendix

Table A: Independent variables in models predicting participation

Not married: Are you married now and living with your husband/wife – or are you divorced, separated, or have you never married?	
	N (%)
Divorced, separated, never married, widowed	538 (40.8)
Other	545 (59.2)
Total N	1083
Work: Summary of R's working status	
	N (%)
Working now or is retired/permanently disabled/homemaker/student	564 (54.2)
Other	521 (45.8)
Total N	1085
Housewife: Summary of R's working status	
	N (%)
R homemaker not working 20 hours or more per week	206 (19.5)
Other	879 (80.5)
Total N	1085
No children at home Combination of following variables: Do you have any children [adopted and stepchildren included]?; How many children do you have who are less than 6; How many of these live with you at least half of the time?; How many children do you have who are between 6 and 18 years old; How many of these live with you at least half of the time?; Are you responsible for raising any children other than those we just talked about?; How many of these live with at least half of the time?	
	N (%)
No children 18 and under at home at least half time	611 (59.9)
Other	385 (40.1)
Total N	996
Single Mom: Combination of Married and Child at Home	
	N (%)
Single mom (unmarried and with children under 18 at home)	373 (28.7)
Other	623 (71.3)
Total N	996

Mom Work: Other than being a homemaker, did your mother (or mother substitute) have a job while you were growing up?	
	N (%)
Mother worked outside home while growing up	468 (49.5)
Other	516 (50.5)
Total N	984
Education: Summary R's education	
	N (%)
Less than high school	230 (19.9)
High school or equivalent	372 (35.7)
High school but less than CC/JC degree	171 (16.9)
Community/Junior college degree	181 (7.8)
BA; Less than advanced degree	135 (12.7)
Advanced degree	73 (6.9)
Total N	1062
Party Identification	
	N (%)
Strong Republican	96 (8.6)
	149 (14.6)
	114 (10.9)
Independent	118 (11.1)
	170 (15.2)
	205 (20.6)
Strong Democrat	212 (19.0)
Total N	1064
Ideology	
	N (%)
Extremely conservative	23 (2.7)
	240 (24.3)
	138 (14.8)
Middle of the road/Moderate	271 (27.5)
	118 (11.9)
	154 (16.9)
Extremely liberal	20 (2.1)
Total N	964

Race: R's Race	
	N (%)
Not white	179 (16.2)
White	893 (83.8)
Total N	1072
Religiosity: Summary measure of frequency of prayer, Bible reading, and religious attendance	
	N (%)
Not religious	52 (5.9)
	56 (5.6)
	96 (10.0)
	105 (11.2)
	150 (15.7)
	170 (16.9)
	130 (12.7)
	99 (10.0)
	96 (9.1)
Religious	35 (2.9)
Total N	989
Personal Income	
	N (%)
0-20th percentile	178 (20.4)
21-40th percentile	243 (23.2)
41-60th percentile	196 (19.5)
61-80th percentile	164 (16.4)
81-100th percentile	216 (20.4)
Total N	997
Age: Summary R's age	
	N (%)
17-24	99 (10.8)
25-34	259 (24.4)
35-49	310 (30.3)
50+	418 (34.5)
Total N	1086

Table B: Ordinary least squares regression predicting 8-item participation index with gender and feminist consciousness individual dimensions

	Feminist	Gender
Feminist ID Dimension	-.250 (.216)	
Emotional Dimension	.452 * (.236)	.267 (.135)
Egalitarian/Cognitive Dimension	-.100 (.151)	-.142 (.162)
Mobilization	2.440** (.160)	2.492*** (.170)
Strength of partisanship	.629*** (.124)	.619*** (.130)
Strength of ideology	.111 (.128)	.118 (.134)
Education	.927*** (.145)	.847*** (.155)
Income	-.199 (.135)	-.193 (.143)
Age	.290** (.143)	.348** (.148)
White	.265* (.121)	.301** (.121)
Religiosity	.174 (.167)	.189 (.174)
Work	.100 (.103)	.173 (.107)
Homemaker	.056 (.127)	.084 (.134)
No children at home	.054 (.094)	.049 (.097)
Single mom	-.186 (.154)	-.225 (.158)
Not married	.089 (.143)	.119 (.147)
Adjusted R Square	0.363	0.368
N	749	689

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Curriculum Vita

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 1990 - 1993 University of California, Los Angeles, Political Science, B.A.

PRINCIPLE OCCUPATIONS

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 2000 - 2001 Graduate Research Assistant, Institute for Women's Leadership,
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PUBLICATIONS

"Habits from Home, Lessons from School: Influences of Youth Civic Engagement," *PS: Political Science and Politics* 36(2): 275-280 (with Molly Andolina, Cliff Zukin, and Scott Keeter).

"Searching for the Meaning of Youth Civic Engagement: Notes from the Field," *Applied Developmental Science* 6(4): 189-195 (with Molly Andolina, Scott Keeter, and Cliff Zukin).

"Unrealized Opportunity? Term Limits and the Representation of Women in State Legislatures," *Women and Politics* 23(4): 1-30 (with Susan J. Carroll).

"Do Term Limits Help Women Get Elected?" *Social Science Quarterly* 82(March 2001): 373-376 (with Susan J. Carroll).

"Legislating By and For Women: A Comparison of the 103rd and 104th Congresses," Center for American Women and Politics, Eagleton Institute of Politics, Rutgers University, November 2001 (with Mary Hawkesworth, Kathleen J. Casey, Debra Dodson, and Katherine E. Kleeman).