ABSTRACT

WHY DOES EVERYONE THINK I HATE MEN? THE STIGMA OF FEMINISM
AND DEVELOPING A FEMINIST IDENTITY

by April Koren Dye

Previous research has found that third wave feminists described initial resistance to feminism due to negative media images (Bargad & Hyde, 1991). This study is interested in how women identify as feminist despite the stigma associated with it in today's society. Feminist undergraduate women were interviewed about their experiences. The interviews were then analyzed for themes such as definitions of feminism, awareness of stigma, women's studies courses, feminist communities, feminist moms and role models, and the intersection of identities. All of these women have discovered how to get past the stigma associated with feminism and successfully integrated this identity with other identities in their lives. These women prove that feminism is not dead in our current society, and nor is it one monolithic identity but a multifaceted one.

WHY DOES EVERYONE THINK I HATE MEN? THE STIGMA OF FEMINISM
AND DEVELOPING A FEMINIST IDENTITY

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When students first enter a university, they are often exposed to a barrage of ideas that they may or may not have ever had an opportunity to explore. As a result, young adults often find themselves in a period of uncertainty where they are trying to incorporate these new ideas into the social identities that they had previously developed. According to Deaux (1996), social identities are aspects of self-concepts based on our group memberships. By having social identities, we feel situated within a defined group. These social identities, along with our gender identity, self-schema, and spontaneous self-concept, help develop our self-concept.

Continuity and differentiation are two defining characteristics of one's identity (Baumeister, 1986). Continuity means retaining some characteristics over time, whereas differentiation refers to having traits that distinguish you from others. According to Baumeister, as a result of modern western culture and its changing demands, people often have an "identity crisis" due to discontinuity in their identities. Erik Erikson first coined the term "identity crisis" to describe the crisis adolescents have when they want to separate themselves from their parents. Psychologists, however, quickly abandoned the idea that everyone has this crisis and that it only occurs in adolescents. Research shows that not only does identity crisis not occur in all people, but challenges also differ among people.

Baumeister (1986) found that there are two types of identity crisis. These types are called identity deficit and identity conflict. Identity deficit occurs when a person has not developed enough identity to deal with life and to make major decisions. According to Baumeister, "this type of identity crisis may be caused by reaching a point in life where major decisions need to be made, but the person does not have satisfactory inner basis for making them." Identity deficits often occur most frequently in adolescents who attend college right after high school due to the opportunities college presents to learn new ideas and opinions and to challenge what their parents have taught them. For example, a female may have been taught by her family that females are supposed to

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participate in particular careers such as teaching or nursing, however, she might not have internalized this as a possible social identity for herself. When she goes to college, she may realize that there is more out there, but she will have to reevaluate what she has been taught by her parents and/or community. In order for a person to overcome this identity crisis, they must decide for themselves what is important in their life and then work toward these goals.

An identity conflict is the other type of identity crisis described by Baumeister. This crisis occurs when people encounter an inconsistency or incompatibility between two parts of their identity. People who experience identity conflict often feel like traitors to their set of beliefs. In order to resolve these conflicts, the person must decide which parts of the identity are compatible and therefore which parts they should retain. Some people choose to compartmentalize their life so that the two opposing parts of their identity do not have to come in contact with each other. Other people integrate the two identities into a new identity for themselves.

One example of integrating a new and perhaps problematic identity could be a Jewish female who is trying to integrate a feminist identity. Judaism can be seen as a patriarchal religion steeped in tradition, whereas feminism challenges the status quo of oppression of women, as well as stereotypes of women. Dufour (2000) conducted a study examining identity formation in Jewish feminists. According to her study of 16 women between the ages of 30-56 who identified as Jewish feminists, the women worked through the different facets of each of the identities and created an identity that integrates the two. They chose to identify with the aspects of feminism and Judaism that satisfied their feminist, religious and spiritual needs. As a result, what it means to be a Jewish feminist differed from person to person, but they all agreed that it is possible to integrate an identity that may not agree with all of their practices and teachings but did agree with their sense of self as woman.

As shown in the previous example, adopting a feminist viewpoint can be, for some, the cause of an identity crisis. One possible way that adopting feminism can cause an identity crisis is because feminist beliefs challenge many of the thoughts and practices of the general society and as a result is seen as a stigmatized identity. According to Crocker, Major, and Steele (1998), based on a definition of stigma developed by

Goffman (1964), a stigmatized identity is one in which one's "social identity, or membership in some social category, calls into question his or her full humanity—the person is devalued, spoiled, or flawed in the eyes of others. (p. 1)"

Crocker et al. (1998) stated that two important dimensions of stigmatization are "visibility" and "controllability." Stigmas that are either easily visible or seen as controllable are those which are judged the most harshly by others. Feminism falls into the second of these categories as it is something that is not necessarily visible, but it can be viewed as a choice and therefore controllable.

One result of this stigmatization is the depersonalization of people into a group with stereotypic qualities. This depersonalization can serve several functions for the stigmatizer such as enhancing one's self esteem or lowering anxiety or feelings of threat. Another result can be seen in prejudice towards a group based on these stereotypes.

For example, feminism is often also stigmatized as a movement of radical men-haters and lesbians. Lesbians are also stigmatized in society for their practicing of sexuality that is not compliant with the idea that one should be solely attracted to members of the opposite sex, and as a result of lesbians' association with feminism, feminism is often not looked upon favorably.

According to a study by Bargad and Hyde (1991), women in their mid-twenties to mid-forties, also known as third wave feminists, described initial resistance to feminism due to negative media images. Women in their mid-forties to mid-sixties who became feminists during the second wave described encountering feminism as a liberating and empowering experience. These second wave feminists were in the midst of developing and defining the feminist movement and as a result were not exposed to the same negative media images. The second wavers also felt an immediate need to react to their position in society. Feminists today are sometimes portrayed in the media as having outlived their usefulness. One famous *Time* article once proclaimed "Is Feminism Dead?" Often, the term "postfeminist" is used to describe women who believe that feminism is no longer useful because women have reached many of their second wave goals. As a result, it is hard for young women to become a part of and identify with a movement that is described in popular culture as being dead.

In *Manifesta: Young women, feminism and the future*, Baumgardner and Richards (2000) discussed some of the reasons feminism is feared in society. According to the authors, feminism is more often described as what it isn't than what it is. Pat Robertson stated that: "Feminists encourage women to leave their husbands, kill their children, practice witchcraft, become lesbians, and destroy capitalism." This statement is stated in a hyperbolic manner meant to scare people from becoming feminists or even treating feminists with respect. Even if one does not consider Pat Robertson to be indicative of mainstream thoughts, Baumgardner and Richards write about what people to the left of Robertson might say: "You know this rap: some feminists think all sex is rape, all men are evil, you have to be a lesbian to be a feminist, you can't wear Girlie clothes or makeup, married women are lame, et cetera." It is no wonder that young women might be having a hard time adopting a feminist identity. It is hard enough to be a young woman in our society with all of the pressures to be skinny, blonde, beautiful and affluent and just in general to fit in with mainstream society. Who would willingly take on an identity with these stereotypes attached to it?

Feminism is also seen by many as classist and racist, among other things. Black women and lower class women often feel stigmatized in the women's movement because it is too often dominated by white, middle- and upper-class women. Many of the early goals of the feminist movement were for women to get into the workforce. Many Black women, as well as women of lower socioeconomic status, were already in the work force and could not find a place in the feminist movement. As a result, these women probably view the feminist movement with some contempt and would encounter problematic experiences in integrating it into their identity. Another barrier for women who do not fit in the upper white middle-class mold of feminists is the fact that they also face discrimination due to their race, class or sexuality. These women often have ties to other movements and feel as if it is more pressing to gain equality with issues of their race before tackling the issue of gender.

Often women are not introduced to the idea of feminism until they arrive at college. In college, women's studies courses are generally the arena in which feminism is first introduced. According to Macalister (1999), women's studies courses have many profound positive effects on the students. Students report changes in self-expression,

sense of commitment and responsibility, critical thinking, empowerment, and acknowledgment of diversity. An increase in feminist identity development, as a result of taking a women's studies course, was reported not only by Macalister but also by Bargad and Hyde (1991).

In the study by Baragad and Hyde (1991), the Feminist Identity Development Scale was administered to women's studies students and those not enrolled in women's studies courses both at the beginning of the semester and the end of the semester. The women's studies students experienced an increase in feminist identity, whereas the controls did not.

Baragad and Hyde's study is one of many investigating the process of a feminist identity development. Downing and Roush (1985) developed a model of feminist identity development based on W.E. Cross's (1971) theory of Black identity development. This theory is based on the idea that women in contemporary society must acknowledge and work through their feelings about the prejudice and discrimination they experience as women in society in order to develop a feminist identity.

A study by Liss, O'Connor, Morosky, and Crawford (2001) examined the factors and correlates of developing a feminist identity. The women in this study were given measures of feminist ideology, feminist identity development, evaluation of feminists, and collectivism/individualism. The women who had feminist identities were more likely to have positive evaluations of feminists, to believe in collectivist action, and to hold liberal and radical ideologies. They were also less likely to believe that all feminists were lesbians, and less likely to believe in meritocracy.

Myaskovsky and Wittig (1997) similarly found findings that feminists were more likely to have a positive evaluation of the feminist movement and other feminists, as well as to recognize discrimination against women. They also found that a belief in collectivist action is a good predictor of feminist identity. The researchers also looked into the part that race plays in feminist identity development and found that women of color were less likely to socially identify as feminists than were white women.

Women who identify as feminists experience many positive effects according to Witte and Sherman (2002). Their study shows that women who develop a feminist

identity are more likely to acknowledge women's oppression and question traditional gender roles. As a result, they are less likely to experience self-silencing.

Other studies have examined the validity and reliability of a feminist identity development model and scale. The Feminist Identity Scale developed by Rickard (1987) measures stages of feminist identity development. According to Rickard the stages are passive acceptance, revelation, embeddedness/emanation and synthesis. The cluster revised version of this scale contains subscales for each of these stages. The passive acceptance stage scale has 5 items and a sample statement is "I like being a traditional female." There are 14 items in the revelation scale and a sample statement is "Gradually I am beginning to see how sexist society really is." The embeddedness/emanation scale includes six items such as "Relationships with most men stunt my personal growth." Finally, the synthesis scale has 12 items which include "I feel like I have blended my female attributes with my unique personal qualities."

Moradi, Subich, and Phillips (2002) examined the reliability of this scale and came out with research in support of it. Gerstmann and Kramer (2002) also tested the Feminist Identity Scale and found support for the psychometric properties of the scale, internal consistency and reliability, discrimination from social desirability and construct validity. Finally, Hyde (2002) tested this scale and found that it was statistically reliable. She also cautioned though that no research has properly identified whether there are truly stages of feminist identity development.

As a result of the culmination of all of the research conducted on social identity, feminist identity, and identity crisis, it seems reasonable to ask why a young woman would decide to identify as a feminist. Many stigmatized identities, such as the identity of African-American or physically disabled, are identities ascribed or given to people, usually based on some sort of physical characteristic. Feminism, however, is a stigmatized identity which people choose to adopt. Studies show many benefits to a person after they begin to identify as a feminist, but how does a person move from the stigma and negative stereotypes of being a feminist to integrating this identity into their own self-identity? Also, do individuals, as they are beginning to acquire a feminist identity, perceive the extent to which it is stigmatized by many in our society?

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Studies have neglected to look at the process of adopting this identity as a stigmatized identity. By looking at this process through the lens of stigmatization, one can see not only how pervasive these stereotypes and stigmas are in our society, but one can also see how being associated with a movement that many view as one of bra-burners and man-haters affects the development of one's feminist identity. Hopefully, it can be determined how others integrate this identity by weighing the positive and negative associations with feminism. I believe that there may be many women who may hold feminist ideals but are not identifying as such due to the way popular culture has often portrayed feminists. I have often heard people say, "I'm not a feminist because I like men and wear makeup, but…" If this study can find out how others have successfully adopted a feminist identity, then perhaps many others will be assisted in finding a movement of people with beliefs similar to theirs.

Method

Participants

Six female undergraduate students ranging in age from 20-24 currently enrolled at Miami University were recruited for participation in the study. All participants self-identified as feminist, and ranged in political orientation from somewhat conservative to very liberal.

Materials

First, the participants were asked to fill out an informed consent (Appendix I). The participants were then given the Feminist Identity Scale (Rickard, 1989) (Appendix II) to act as a catalyst for conversation about feminism. Attached to the Feminist Identity Scale was a demographics sheet (Appendix III) in order to collect information about the participants' backgrounds.

A tape recorded interview with the participants was also conducted. A predetermined set of themes (Appendix IV), developed by the researcher, was used to guide the conversations. The interview explored in depth the idea of what the participants experienced prior to identifying as a feminist, while developing the identity, and what they are experiencing now that they claim a feminist identity.

Design and Procedure

I recruited the participants in two separate manners. I first, with the permission of the professor, approached several women's studies courses and presented my research proposal. I then asked for volunteers for my project. Students were at this time given the Feminist Identity Scale (Rickard, 1989) to complete in class; by returning the scale to me they gave consent for me to use their information in this project. I then collected contact information from volunteers who self-identified as feminist to participate in an out of class interview.

Since this method did not recruit as many volunteers as needed, I also asked for volunteers through the Women's Center Listserv. I asked the moderator to send a post on the weekly mailing list asking for those who identify as feminist to participate in a study regarding feminism. The volunteers recruited through this method were then given the Feminist Identity Scale (Rickard, 1989) prior to their one-on-one interviews.

The next step of the study involved conducting one-on-one interviews with the participants after they completed the identity scale. These interviews were then tape recorded (with the permission of the participant) and lasted between one and two hours. In these interviews, the participants were asked about their identity as a feminist and how that is incorporated with their other identities (e.g. religious, athlete, mother, etc.). Each participant was introduced to the project through a standard introduction. I had generated possible questions and themes in which I was particularly interested beforehand. Although I was interested in a number of themes, the participants were encouraged to speak about whatever they felt was relevant to their experience of identifying as a feminist.

Confidentiality of the participants was maintained throughout the study by assigning each participant a number and pseudonym. The tapes will be kept in a locked office for five years before being destroyed.

Evaluation

After the interviews, the audio tapes were transcribed and then analyzed for themes that describe the process of developing their identity as feminists, as well as any other common themes among the interviewees. These additional themes were generated

using an emergent theory technique by looking for any common experiences/reactions from the interviewees.

Participant Demographics

Interviews were conducted at a conservative Midwestern university with a largely upper middle to upper class population.

Interviewee 1, "Sarah", indicated that she was a 23 year old, European-American heterosexual. She also identified as a "very liberal" Democrat. Finally, she indicated that her socioeconomic status was lower middle class.

The second participant, "Rebecca", was a 24 year old, heterosexual European American. She identified as a "very liberal" Democrat from the upper middle class.

"Liz", interviewee 3, was a 21 year old, heterosexual European American. She also identified as a "very liberal" Democrat. She indicated that her economic status was lower middle class. She also stated that she identified as Catholic.

Interviewee 4, "Haylie", was a 20 year old, heterosexual European American. She indicated that she was upper middle class and a "very liberal" Democrat. Haylie stated that her religious affiliation was Catholic.

Interviewee 5, "Alisha", was 21 year old, heterosexual, and European American. She indicated that she was "very liberal" but did not specifically identify with a political party. She also indicated that her socioeconomic status was middle class. Alisha stated that she identified as "religious".

The sixth participant, "Jamie", was a 21 year old, heterosexual Asian American. She indicated that she was both "somewhat conservative" and "somewhat liberal". She did not indicate affiliation with any political party. She indicated that her socioeconomic status was upper middle class, but that was because she was dependent on her parents. Jamie indicated that her religious orientation was Christian.

Themes

Interviews were conducted with the participants with the goal in mind of finding out how they overcame the stigma associated with feminism in order to identify as feminist. As a result, the interviews were coded for themes pertaining to this idea, as well as any other themes that emerged from the conversations.   Themes included definitions of feminism, awareness of stigma, presence/absence of feminist role models,

mom's identification with feminism, participation in women's studies courses, integration of other identities, feminist circle of friends, and perceptions of feminism at a conservative, Midwestern university.

Results

Definitions of Feminism

All of the participants had defined feminism for themselves. Several of the participants, however, were a bit hesitant to state their definition of feminism at first. This hesitancy was related to an inability to want to pin down a definition. These women were aware that there are many types of feminism and stated that they had appreciation for others' definitions of feminism. Four of the participants included equality in their definition of feminism. For Rebecca, feminism meant "equality of men and women, equality of all women, [the idea] that women of color are not equal to white women, poor women are not equal to rich women, those ideas have played a big part in my definition of feminism." Haylie stated that feminism was also about trying to achieve equality. She stated "it's just about equality and not about promoting special interest rights or anything, it's just about achieving equality with men in all areas of your life." For Jamie, feminism is "supporting equality for everyone, men and women, and equal opportunity." Alisha also thought that equality was an important component of feminism for her, but more than that she saw feminism as "questioning the norm, and a lot of where I developed it is looking at gender issues and questioning things that are naturally ingrained. Looking at the ways that women are oppressed by patriarchy and in general equality for women and being able to be comfortable enough to question that." For her, equality can only come after one questions why men and women are treated differently in society. Liz, however, saw social equality as "limiting". She stated that feminism was the "project of ending sexist oppression, which I think is different than social equality because I thinking it is more encompassing and equality can be sort of limiting." According to Liz, by looking for social equality, we are asking for women to be like men which is not what she wants, instead she looks for women to not be oppressed due to their gender traits. Sarah, like Liz, saw women being respected for their differences as part of her definition of feminism. Sarah stated that "it's about valuing women, about giving women the same

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opportunities that everyone else has, um, not just that, it's one step further, it's giving women opportunities, more opportunities because we're different, obviously men don't need a center where they can get free, you know, gynecological services and free birth control because they can't afford it. Those things need to be available to women, because we are different." Sarah also believes that feminism is "about recognizing, being aware of privilege in yourself and others, in institutions, everywhere, just constant awareness."

According to Sarah, "I think every feminist will agree, radical, liberal, whatever, all together we all value women. I don't think you'll find a self-identified feminist who wouldn't say that. I think it's a common link for all of us." This statement appears to be true for all of the women I interviewed. Regardless of what they believed the agenda of feminism should be, they all believe that feminism is in the business of helping women, whether is be through equality, ending oppression or giving women more opportunities.

Awareness of Stigma and Others' Perceptions of Feminism

All of the participants were aware of the negative stigma associated with feminism in our society today, and most noted encountering negative reactions to their feminist identity by family members, friends, or just society in general. Many of the women interviewed stated that they believe that feminism is misunderstood by general society due to a reliance on stereotypes and media misconstruals of feminism. For example, Rebecca stated that "popular media portrays feminism as man hating or lesbianism. It's seen as unnecessary in modern ages as though everything is fine for women because we've broken some glass ceilings. It's largely seen as against men, um, and not against bigger forces of patriarchy, but it's more against individual men." For her, the stigma associated with feminism is not only due to stereotypes but also due to a belief that feminism is unnecessary.

Rebecca also doesn't see society's perceptions of feminism getting better due to the fact that people don't have conversations about feminism. She stated a disappointment that being in an all-women's dormitory, there is little apparent discussion of feminism. "I don't feel that feminism is any of their [other women in the building] conscience at all." Rebecca sees this largely as a function of the society in which many of the women at Miami have grown up. She believes that women at Miami "don't think it's useful for them, I think part of it is that they are largely upper middle class and white

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and haven't had to deal with very much discrimination. I also think that they see the women around them getting the same things they want if they were boys."

Likewise, Liz also believes that feminism is misunderstood. She believes that society thinks "it's social equality. I think it's like straight 1960s women's lib, burn my bra, screw marriage, I think it's really incomplete, like I wanna work, it's all about employment, I don't think they see other sides of it. Even a lot of liberal people have wrong ideas about feminism and think that it's all about abortion." Liz believes that misconceptions of feminism permeate society which leads to the stigma associated with it in our society today.

Haylie also discussed the stigma of feminism in terms of misconceptions. She stated that "I think most people, like, don't identify with feminism because they think it's more about pushing an image onto someone, pushing, um, special rights. They look at it like it's oppressing them somehow, which is sort of ironic." "I think the media has a lot to do with it. Our country is getting more conservative politically, and you have, like, Rush Limbaugh calling them feminazis. So, it's just a joke and a stigma that you have. It's hard to rally behind women's rights, and people might agree with you but not want to voice that and be called feminist."

For Jamie, the stigma was also associated with not only misconceptions but also ignorance. She stated that most people see feminism as "radical, and kind of alternative and rebellious, it has to do with lesbianism and being manly, not feminine, but also being man haters." When asked about what her friends think about feminism, she relates that "a lot of my friends don't know what feminism is but they are aware of the stigma. They associate feminism with liberal which they see as negative. They see abortion as a big issue and if they're pro-life they don't think they could be feminist and even a lot of feminists wouldn't consider them feminist." For Jamie's friends, stigmas can come from not only stereotypes spread through popular media, but also just a misunderstanding or ignorance of what a feminist can be. The stereotype, for them, includes not only radical women and lesbianism, but also a focus on abortion and liberalism. In their definition, a feminist cannot be pro-life or a conservative.

Alisha also believes that many of the students at Miami do not understand feminism and do not find it useful for themselves due to growing up in privilege and a

conservative environment. She thinks that "they have money so they don't really have to worry about stuff when everything has been taken care of." Not only conservatives can feel put off by feminism, Alisha is aware of people who "think independently" but do not identify as feminist due to the stigma and fear of being labeled negatively or don't see themselves as hard core, radical lesbian women with short hair on picket lines. Alisha believes that the media has created stigma and stereotypes because they "don't want a lot of disgruntled women questioning the power structure and thinking feminism is a good thing."

Sarah also feels that her friends don't understand feminism and believes that more people would identify with feminism if they understood it. She believes that a lot of men don't think that they can be feminist and would be if they realized that feminism is open to everyone. She believes that stigma also comes from the belief that feminists are "crazy, angry, lesbians out for their own agenda." She finds it frustrating because people won't give her the time to explain feminism. She related a frustrating time where she was discounted because of her feminist orientation, "I went to ECA (Eastern Communications Association) and presented a paper there about women and PR, basically about the glass ceiling and why are we still making 70 cents on the dollar. No one looked at my poster, not even the judges, one person came up and said 'how nice'. So, for me, that was pretty frustrating, they are supposed to be my peers and obviously they're older than I am, but they should give me the time they give others." She also says she sometimes hides her feminist identity, because too frequently people won't listen to her and instead regard her as "that crazy feminist" and discount anything she has to say.

First Perceptions of Feminism

The women interviewed discussed their awareness of the stigma associated with feminism after identifying as a feminist, but were they aware of the stigma prior to identification? According to Sara, in high school she thought that feminism was negative. She stated that she thought "it's just an angry thing and they don't have anything to be angry about." Likewise, Liz recalled that the first time she heard of feminism was associated with Hillary Clinton. Her family was fairly conservative and Republican, and as a result her father called feminists, including Hillary Clinton, "crazy and bitches." Rebecca remembered being in high school and expressing beliefs about

women which she now identifies as feminist beliefs. These beliefs were questioned by her classmates, which in turn made her feel alienated. These women clearly were aware of the stigma associated with feminism, so how did they overcome this awareness in order to identify as feminist?

Mom as Feminist?

Many developmental theorists (e.g. Erikson, 1994) discuss how important parents are in children's development of identity. So, do these women have mothers who are also feminist? For Rebecca, her mother's feminist identify was always present in their household. She stated that "our family was different because I never felt my mom and dad were unequal. My mom made more money so there was never that 'dad brings home the bacon and mom's job is just for support.'" At an early age, she realized that her family divided labor based on skills instead of gender roles. For example, her mother hates folding laundry so her father folds the laundry. According to Rebecca, feminism was "part of my upbringing but it was never overt, I can't remember not having this sensibility."

Haylie and Alisha also both identify their mothers as feminist. According to Haylie, her mother "always identified with feminism, she kept her last name, which is really rare in our neighborhood, she was one of the few moms with a full time job." For Haylie, her mother was a "really big influence on me saying that I'm a feminist." Likewise, Alisha always had a feminist presence in her upbringing through her mother. Alisha stated that "my mom is very much a feminist, so those ideals of questioning the norm have always been there."

Not everyone, however, had moms who identify as feminist. Jamie would identify her mother as having feminist leanings, even if she herself doesn't identify as feminist. Jamie related that her mom "always wanted to be a mom and a wife, and as a result felt discriminated against because stay at home mothers weren't respected and that the feminist movement put her down. According to Jamie, "she doesn't necessarily think that a lot of things affect her, she knows women are oppressed but she likes the way things are for her."

Liz stated that she doesn't think her mother "disdains feminism, she goes along with a lot of feminist projects, but she wouldn't identify as feminist." According to Liz,

her parents are Republican and Catholic. She believes the most radical thing her mother believes in is birth control.

So, for these women, their mothers all had varying degrees of identification with feminism. From not at all, to the daughters identifying their mothers as feminist even if they themselves do not identify, to feminist, these women had mothers who impacted their identification with feminism.

An interesting impact that the mothers had on their daughters' identification with feminism was the daughters' need for a feminist community. For women who have feminist mothers, they found the need to find a feminist community of friends, whereas those who do not have mothers who identify as feminist did not feel the same desire to find a feminist community. This issue will be discussed in more detail in a later section.

Feminist Role Models

All of the women spoke of their mothers as having an influence on their identification with feminism, but several of the women also discussed other role models in their lives. Sarah, for example, stated that Gloria Steinem has had an influence on her feminist identity. She stated that she saw Steinem's lecture on campus and that Steinem said that "feminism is sweetly reasonable." Sarah recalls that at this moment feminism "clicked for her, I was like, yeah, it is. She brought it to me and I needed it."

Liz also related a story about a feminist role model in her life other than her mother. For Liz, her feminist role model was a nun at an intercommunity justice and peace center where she volunteered. According to Liz, the nun is "feminist, super egalitarian, borderline communist, awesome." Liz's role model helped her realize that she too can negotiate feminism with Catholicism.

For Alisha, a feminist role model was a high school teacher. Her teacher helped her put the term feminism to her ideals. She described the experience as "the lightbulb effect." She had always been questioning the norm, but the high school teacher helped her transition into identification with feminism.

For all of these women, role models appear to be a very important part of identifying with feminism and overcoming the stigma associated with feminism.

Women's Studies Courses

Previous research has discussed the importance of women's studies courses in feminist identity development. This pool of women is no different. All of the women interviewed discussed the importance of women's studies courses in overcoming the stigma of feminism.

For Sarah and Rebecca, women's studies courses helped develop an identity that they had already accepted prior to taking the courses. Sarah stated that "[women's studies courses] give you a chance to talk about feminism in a place where you don't feel like you're going to be attacked. It's kinda like a safe environment to explore feminism and what your view of feminism is." Likewise, Rebecca related that she "actively identified as a feminist in high school and then came to college and started in women's studies which shaped a lot of how I think how."

Liz believes that women's studies courses help because for a lot of women it gives them a term to pair with their beliefs, but she also believes that it gives women a new way to think about the world. Liz remembered that "when I was in my women's studies class, I constantly was thinking, wow, I've only been given this one take my whole life. It was just a new way of looking at stuff." Alisha also related a similar story. For her, a women's studies course gave her a term for her identity. Jamie and Haylie, like Liz, also discussed their experiences in women's studies courses as important in giving them new ways to think about the world. Jamie said "once you learn about the issues in an intro women's studies course you notice them everywhere. For me, though, I noticed the issues and then learned about the literature and what it said about the issues." Haylie said that "I feel like WMS 201 should be a required class. A lot of people don't know much about the feminist movement except the little bits that they've heard and people calling them feminazis. I don't think people understand why we feel there's a need to have women's studies courses and feminism. The class is good because we're hearing about things you don't hear about in other classes, a lot of people don't realize that we still have laws that discriminate against women. The class helps out with raising consciousness."

Other Identities

These women not only are navigating their identification as feminist, but they are also navigating how feminism fits into their life along with other identities. Many of the

women interviewed discussed their religious identity and how it fits with feminism. Other women discussed integrating feminism with their socioeconomic and racial identities. Finally, other women discussed their identity as a partner or girlfriend, and how they were able to reconcile societal expectations with their feminist beliefs.

Sarah discussed facing some difficulty in identifying as feminist in terms of her status in society. Sarah stated, "It's hard for me to be white and privileged and studying feminism. So, you have a privileged person studying a subject that tells you privilege is not a good thing. It's hard to realize that I'm part of the problem, but I'm trying to be part of the solution." For Sarah, feminist identity brings to light other identities that were not as obvious to her before. These identities make Sarah uncomfortable to study feminism or identify as feminist due to the fact that she now feels that she is part of a larger global problem. She, however, has managed to integrate these conflicting identities into a larger identity that includes feminism.

Several of the women discussed the difficulties they have had integrating feminism with romantic relationships. Rebecca related her experiences of being engaged in a society that according to her "elevates brides to an idolized status." She stated that she never "expected to have the white dress and the twenty-five bridesmaids, but people expect that and it's hard to get away from those expectations." She also related that she feels that marriage can be a form of oppression and looked for a partner who respects her feminist beliefs. She also feels uncomfortable that she is able to get married when others do not have that luxury. Rebecca stated that "we have a lot of discussions around marriage and about how can we get married when lots of other people can't and he thinks we can fight it in other ways besides not getting married. He was afraid that he would ask me to marry him and I would say no." Rebecca's partner was unsure of whether or not Rebecca would agree to marry him, but Rebecca was also unsure due to her feminist beliefs. She didn't want to fall into the trap of oppression or taking advantage of a privilege not everyone has, but she also wanted the positive aspects of marriage, companionship and love. Rebecca had to define how marriage fit into her definition of feminism for herself, and then integrate those two identities together.

Likewise, Jamie was also interested in integrating her feminist identity with romantic relationships. Jamie, unlike Rebecca, did not voice the same uncertainty of

being feminist and having a relationship or getting married. Jamie has defined what she feels is important to her about having a relationship that is in line with her feminist beliefs. Jamie stated "some people have told me I'm intimidating by voicing my opinion. I'm not willing to play certain roles in relationships unlike some of my friends. I wouldn't want anyone to ask my parents' permission to marry me, because I don't understand why that would be necessary. I think it's important for me to be with someone who identifies as feminist." Jamie has been able to make a list of what she is looking for in a partner, as well as what expectations she has for behavior in a relationship. All of the points are in line with her identity as feminist. Jamie, however, is not currently in a relationship, and realizes that she may face more uncertainty if she was involved in a relationship.

Jamie, and several of the other interviewees, also discussed their identity as feminist with their religious identities. Jamie identified as Christian and stated that "Christ is the most important person in my life." Jamie found a way to integrate Christianity with feminism by modifying how she understood her faith and religious teachings. According to Jamie, "Christianity has been associated with and also has a responsibility for being associated with oppression and things that aren't for women's rights. It's hard because I feel like the basis of our faith is not about that at all." She then went on to discuss how she sees Christianity by saying "If you really study, God in the Hebrew Bible wasn't gendered, and this was a first, men and women were both created in God's image whereas other religions identified separate genders. It helps me if I try to picture God in different ways with different ages, races, gender, etc." Jamie related that as a result she thinks about what the Bible says and what her feminist beliefs say and attempts to reconcile the two. For Jamie, it is important to critically think about what she is being taught both about feminism and religion and not just take everything that she has been taught at face value.

Liz also discussed how she has integrated feminism and religion in her life. Liz, as discussed previously, discovered feminism through a nun at the Intercommunity Justice and Peace Center at which she interned. According to Liz, "it's sort of ironic that I arrived at feminism through a sort of patriarchal, traditional and sort of oppressive religion." Liz found that if the nun could negotiate religion and feminism so could she;

although she does feel that it's tricky and something that she still needs to negotiate everyday. She related that "As I become more liberal and more feminist, I don't go to church as much. I feel more marginalized from it. I think I'm pushing myself away, but I feel like the way, like the way the church is against gays, I feel so distant from that." Liz feels that her feminist beliefs and religious beliefs don't necessarily coincide with the church's teachings and has had to define what she believes for herself much like Jamie. Liz stated "I always feel like it [religion] will always be a part of who I am. I try to pay attention to the spirituality aspect than the religious rules of it. You have to build your own path, it's hard than just doing what everyone else does. I go to certain churches with certain pastors, ones who are more liberal and social justice oriented." Liz has found that religion and feminism are sometimes hard to integrate. She has had to find how those two identities work together in her life and has found that as her feminist identity increased, her church going behavior decreased.

Likewise, Alisha stated that her mother stopped going to church the more feminist she became. Alisha, however, said that she "take(s) out of religion what I want to" and "probably doesn't take out half the stuff that other people do." For Alisha, like Liz and Jamie, it's important to develop her own definition of religion and relate it to the definition of feminism she has developed.

Haylie also discussed the difficulties of identifying as religious and feminist. She stated that she was raised Catholic and attends church every week. She also related "it's been really hard for me, not until I went to college though, to think about this. After 20 years you're pretty strong in your faith but at the same time I was just as strong in my feminist beliefs." Part of the problem in integrating these two identities for Haylie was similar to the other women in that she felt that a lot of religious teachings did not hold women in high regard. According to Haylie, "Especially just the Catholic church is different from others because there is so much emphasis placed on traditions and rituals. Women still aren't able to lead in the church. There's a ban on birth control. So, if you want to believe in feminism, you kinda have to take a part away from your Catholicism." She also related her uncertainty about her future as a Catholic, "I'm sort of bothered by it and unsure about what to do about it. I'm thinking about the future and do I want a Catholic wedding? Would I want to raise my kids Catholic? That's really bothered me.

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Am I a bad person because I don't believe some things? It's really hard." Haylie's uncertainty about her future as a feminist Catholic has brought her to question her place in the Catholic Church. She stated, "I still want to be religious, but I feel like I should find another church with different beliefs, but that's like turning your whole life around." Haylie like the other women has found many difficulties in combining her preexisting identities with her feminist one.

Feminist Communities

These women discussed their experiences integrating their feminist identity into their other identities. So, do these women find having a feminist circle of friends to be important or do they place importance on having other groups of friends who mesh with their other identities? All of the women interviewed discussed whether or not they felt that they had a feminist community, as well as whether or not they were interested in having one. An interesting pattern emerged from the women's experiences in that the women who had mothers who identified as feminist were interested in having or had a feminist community of friends, whereas women whose mothers did not identify as feminist felt it necessary to have communities that fit in other aspects of their identities.

Sarah, for example, would not describe her mother as identifying as a feminist, and also stated that she does not have a feminist circle of friends. She also did not express a desire to locate a feminist circle of friends. She instead stated that the majority of her friends came from her major (Communications).

Like Sarah, Liz also would not describe her mother as identifying as feminist. Liz related that some of her friends were feminist, but that she "think(s) it's more important for me to hang out with liberal people, so maybe since I'm a feminist that will rub off on them a little since they're more likely to be egalitarian." She also stated that she doesn't want to close herself off to other people just because they're not feminist.

Jamie also does not have a mother who would identify as a feminist. Like Sarah and Liz, she also would not describe her community as explicitly feminist. She stated "I think it's important to have some feminist friends, but I don't feel like I have to be surrounded by feminists in order to be empowered." She related that a lot of her close friends come from her religious organization and that some of them happen to be feminist.

These women were not surrounded by feminism growing up, and instead developed communities that fit other aspects of their identities such as religion or political orientation. Other women, however, have mothers who do identify as feminist and feel it necessary to find a community of feminists on campus.

Rebecca, for example, stated that she has a circle of feminist friends, as well as a mother who identified as feminist. She also related that they are important to her due to the fact that they give her an outlet for discussions about women's rights. She, however, did note that not all of her friends would identify as feminist, but that they all agree with the principles of feminism. Endorsement of feminist ideas was very important for Rebecca in developing a circle of feminist friends.

Haylie also stated that her mother identifies as feminist. She, however, stated that she did not have a feminist community on campus, but related that she felt the need for a feminist circle of friends. When asked if she had a feminist community she stated "not of my own age at all. Um, maybe, well I work at the women's center, so I'm trying to be active, but I've really had to go out of my way. It's hard if you don't really push yourself to find people who identify as feminist."

Alisha also has a feminist mother and expressed the desire to have a feminist community. She related "the majority of my friends are feminist, but it's been very difficult to find. I don't really fit in here. Definitely the people I hang around with consider themselves feminist, but my group isn't very large. I joined AWS (Association for Women Students) because I knew I would find feminists there."

Even though all of these women identify as feminist, they express differing degrees of needs for a feminist community. Interestingly, as demonstrated by the women interviewed, this need seems to be influenced by the presence or absence of a feminist mother.

Discussion

This study's goal was to find out how some women overcome the stigma associated with feminism and identify with feminism. The women interviewed all discussed awareness of the stigma of feminism, as well as certain key factors that helped them identify as feminists despite this stigma.

First, the women described their own personal definitions. Interestingly, most of the women hesitated in giving me a definition of feminism. This hesitation seemed to stem from their awareness that there are many definitions of feminism and not wanting to offend me by their definition. Most of the women began their discussion of their definition with the caveat "there are many different types of feminism, but I think that…" This hesitancy is interesting. Why would these women not want to define feminism? It is not because they haven't thought about their own definition, because they were all able to come up with a definition for themselves after I assured them I was interested in a range of definitions of feminism and was aware that there were many different ways to be feminist. Is there a stigma associated with certain types of feminism within third wave feminism that would cause these women to be hesitant about providing their definition? Or is it that third wave feminists are acutely aware of feminism's past failings to be inclusive, and as a result, these women are hesitant that their definitions are not inclusive enough?

One explanation of this hesitancy could be seen through the lens of identity conflict. Baumeister (1986) stated that this occurs when people encounter an inconsistency or incompatibility between two parts of their identity. Feminism is an ideology which espouses the belief that all people should be seen as equal and no one is better than anyone else. By asking these women to define feminism, they may have encountered the experience of identity conflict. They were asked to provide a definition of feminism but were afraid of offending me with their definition or providing a definition that I may not consider to be feminist. So, their feminist identity may have conflicted with their identity as a research participant and the expectations that go along with that identity.

Next, the women discussed their awareness of the stigma associated with feminism, as well as how they believe that other people perceive feminism. Most of the women were able to relate stories of being acutely aware of being judged based on their identification as feminist by family members and friends, as well as by professional colleagues. They were also aware that many people misunderstand feminism and as a result base their judgments and hence stigma based on faulty ideas of feminists. Whereas the women were very aware of making their definitions of feminism as broad as possible,

they feel that society has a very narrow idea of what it means to be a feminist and that these narrow ideas are perpetuated through the media and popular culture.

This awareness of the stigma and their coping with the stigma is related to research by Miller and Major (2000), who stated that people can cope with stigma through "problem-focused" and "emotion-focused" coping. According to Miller and Major, people who have stigmas that are perceived as controllable are more likely to engage in problem focused coping. "Trying to lose weight and filing a grievance about a prejudicial boss (p. 251)" are examples of problem-focused coping. This is different from emotion-focused coping that deals with stigma through the regulation of emotions; problem-focused coping is about, for example, "attributing a failure to external factors rather than to one's own limitations (p.251)."

The women in this study all dealt with the stigma through problem-focused coping, or changing the relationship between the environment and the person. These women wanted to change the way that feminism was viewed in society, instead of solely blaming society for the way they view feminism in society. All of the women interviewed stated that they discussed feminism with their friends and family in order to dispel some of the myths about feminists in our society. These women did not validate the stigma of feminism in society, and instead set out to change it. It is apparent that these women are aware that they are not looked upon favorably by general society based on their feminist identification, then why do they choose to identify as feminist? The women discussed several different themes that contributed to developing their feminist identity. These themes included family influence, role models and women's studies courses.

Most of the women discussed the importance of their mother in their identification as feminist. Interestingly, not all of the women said that their mothers identified as feminist, but their mothers all had an impact on their identification. Many of the women whose mothers identified as feminist discussed how their mothers shaped how they saw the world through a lens of inequality, or that their mothers kept their last names and jobs and how that was different than most of the other mothers in their neighborhood which shaped how they viewed the world. The women who have mothers who do not

identify as feminist discussed how their mothers did not discourage them from feminism and often supported feminist ideas even if they themselves did not identify as such.

Most interestingly, however, is the relation between having a feminist mother on the daughter's need for a feminist community. The women who had feminist mothers discussed their need for a feminist community, whereas the women whose mothers did not identify as feminist did not discuss the need for a feminist community and instead searched for friends based on other criteria such as religion or political affiliation. This finding is interesting in light of recent literature discussing the role of mothers in third wave feminism. Astrid Henry discussed this issue in her chapter "Feminism's Family Problem: Feminist Generations and the Mother-Daughter Trope." According to Henry (2003), third wave feminists see second wave feminists as mothers, and as a result many try to rebel from their "mother's feminism" but still find it difficult to "leave feminism's 'family'." In other words, even though many women rebel from previous waves of feminism, they are unable to escape the impact of having feminist mothers. Henry, however, does note that "when young women's identification with feminism becomes naturalized in this way, we lose sight of what is, in fact, a deliberate political act: choosing to identify as feminist" (p. 215). This is important to keep in mind, because these women are not just identifying as feminist because their mothers are feminist. They are, in fact, choosing to identify as feminist. This identification may be eased by the fact that their mothers are feminist, and as a result, they may find it easier to get past the stigma associated with feminism.

As noted earlier, the women whose mothers are feminist related the importance of searching for a feminist community once they arrived at college. Why is this? Henry (2003) discussed Rebecca Walker, daughter of Alice Walker, and her representation of feminism as part of a "familial relationship." Henry stated "Feminism is central to what she [Walker] means by 'family.' This is so not only because her mother and other relatives are feminists, but also because her description of her 'deep desire to be accepted' by her family is intertwined with her desire to be accepted as 'a good feminist.' In other words, her relationship to feminism is always bound up with her relationship to her family" (p. 223). A similar experience may explain why the women whose mothers identify as feminist are in search of a feminist community when they leave their family to

come to college. These women have left their feminist family at home and are now in need of finding a replacement. Part of this can be not only attributed to the need for a family, but also to the need to be accepted as "a good feminist" like Rebecca Walker. If they have always defined being a good feminist with a familial relationship, then it makes sense for them to search out a new family in order to continue to be a good feminist.

Mothers were not the only role models that the women interviewed discussed as important to their feminist identity. Some of the women discussed other women who had impacted their identification with feminism. One woman mentioned the importance of a talk by Gloria Steinem in helping her realize that she could be included in the definition of feminist. Another woman discussed the importance of a nun in showing her what feminism is about and how it relates to her. Teachers also came up in the interviews as acting as role models in developing their feminist identities. In all of these cases, role models seem to act in much the same way as mothers do for daughters of feminists. All of these women look to older women to give them information about feminism.

The women interviewed not only discussed the importance of teachers, but also women's studies courses in developing their feminist identity despite the stigma associated with feminism. Previous research (e.g. Macalister, 1999) has reported on the importance of women's studies courses in feminist identity development. In line with these findings, all of the women interviewed discussed taking women's studies courses and the importance of those courses. Many women discussed how women's studies courses helped them put a word to the worldview that they held prior to the course. Other women discussed how the class helped demystify feminism and helped them realize that feminism was different than the view they had been handed by popular culture and the media.

The importance of women's studies courses in developing a feminist identity can also be seen through the concept of identity deficit. According to Baumeister (1986), identity deficit is a type of identity crisis that is encountered when major identity decisions need to be made but one does not feel like they have sufficient ability to make those decisions. Women's studies courses help women by giving them information that they may not have had previously which aids them in making identity decisions. For

example, many of the women discussed seeing inequality in society previously, but feminism helped give them a name to the way that they felt.

Since these women look to classes, mothers and other role models to help destigmatize feminism for themselves, the next interesting theme that emerged was the need to integrate this new identity with their previous identities. These identities ranged from religious identities to identities as partners or daughters. As stated earlier, Baumeister (1986) discussed the identity conflict that can arise when people encounter an inconsistency or incompatibility between two parts of their identity. The women interviewed discussed this incompatibility of their other identities with feminism. According to Baumeister, people must decide which parts of their identity are compatible, and then retain the compatible parts of each identity. They are then able to resolve this identity conflict. The women interviewed supported this research by stating how they were able to take parts of each of their identities and integrate them to form new identities.

Previous research (Dufour, 2000) looked at the ability of feminists to integrate their feminist identity with their religious identity as Jewish. Similarly, many of the participants discussed their difficulty in integrating their religious identity with feminism. Like Dufour's participants, the participants described the process of redefining their religious identification in terms of their feminist identification, so that both of these identities can be integrated into one. The women in my study, however, did not identify as Jewish like Dufour's participants, instead they identified as Catholic or Christian. This identification is significant because people such at Pat Robertson and debates about abortion often pit Christianity and feminism against each other in popular culture. These women had to find a way to work past the message that society presents that feminism and Christianity are incompatible. Some of these women found themselves going to church less frequently due to a feeling of discomfort about the message being taught in church about women. One woman discussed the importance of a nun showing her that feminism and religion can be compatible. Finally, one woman discussed explaining to her friends that not all feminists are pro-choice, and explained how she was able to integrate her pro-life attitude with feminism.

All of these women have discovered how to get past the stigma associated with feminism and successfully integrate this identity with other identities in their lives. Since feminism has the goal of working to alleviate the denigration of women, it makes sense that these women have dealt with the stigma through problem-focused coping. Perhaps this knowledge can be applied to helping other women who may not identify as feminist but have beliefs compatible with feminism also get past the stigma and also identify as feminist. The women interviewed believed that discussions with people about what feminism actually is would be helpful to reach this goal. These women prove that feminism is not dead in our current society, nor is it one monolithic identity but a multifaceted one.

This work is significant not only because it shows that some women are able to get past the stigma of feminism which has not been investigated in previous research, but more importantly it shows that some women actively valorize a stigmatized identity. It also demonstrates the importance of mothers in not only the development of feminist identity, but also in the selection of friendship circles to support their identities.

Future Directions and Limitations

This study can be seen as limited by the number of feminists interviewed, as well as the type of feminists interviewed. The experiences of these women at a Midwestern, conservative college could be different than that of women at a more liberal college in a different part of the country. This particular subset of women could be different than other feminists. Since these women volunteered to participate in the study, they could have more well-formed feminist identities and may have experienced the stigma associated with feminism in a different way. Perhaps, they were not as affected by the stigma as feminists who may not have volunteered for this study. Also, women as a more liberal college, or not in college at all, may receive different information about feminism and women's roles in society. As a result, they may have different experiences of identifying as feminist.

The feminists interviewed were all students in higher education and from privileged backgrounds. It would be interesting to see how women of different socio-economic statuses and backgrounds deal with the stigma of feminism. Do they find similar ways of combating the stigma or do they have different methods? Perhaps

women who have not experienced a privileged background would view women in society differently, and see a greater stigma of feminism or even a lesser need for feminism in society.

Additionally, it would be beneficial to compare the experiences of these women to women who do not identify as feminist but have feminist compatible beliefs to see the differences and similarities in awareness of the stigma, as well as why some women find it necessary to overcome the stigma whereas some women do not.

Finally, I would like to have third wave feminists and their feminist mothers have a conversation together to see how feminism has changed and awareness of feminism is different between the two groups. I think it would be important to compare the stigma second wave feminists experienced with that of the third wave feminists and see how the identity development process has changed.

Conclusion

This study can offer many contributions to the body of literature about stigmatized identities. First, previous research has not looked at feminism as a stigmatized identity in our society. Most research on stigmatized identities has focused on the experience of identities that are not concealable, such as ethnic identity, or that are not chosen such as disabilities. Feminist identity is different in that it is an identity that is freely chosen and concealable. As a result, the experience of choosing a feminist identity can be seen as different than other stigmatized identities for this reason. For example, feminists often do not share their identity with other members of their family unlike most ethnic identities. As a result, feminists may not have a natural support system to look to for information about their identities. It is also interesting to think about how feminist identity is different than other stigmatized identities in light of the fact that it is an identity that no one has to necessarily know that you hold. This study is interesting because it investigates an identity that is stigmatized; yet, women still adopt and proclaim this identity in society.

Previous studies have investigated the relationship between Jewish identity and feminist identity. Many of the women in this study, however, identified as Catholic or more generally Christian. All of these women discussed the difficulties in integrating a

feminist identity with their already existing Christian identities. Christianity is seen as a Patriarchal religion, one in which the women related not having the opportunity to see women in leadership positions in the church. Unlike reformed Judaism, which allows female rabbis, Catholicism does not allow female priests. For the women in this study, integrating an identity which believes that women should be seen as equal to men with an identity that does not treat men and women equally proved to be difficult. As a result, the women in this study had different experiences than the women in previous studies about religious identity and feminism.

Feminist identity also facilitates other identities. As stated previously, feminism changes the way in which the women viewed religion. The women in the study also discussed how feminism helps them choose both friendships and romantic relationships. Mother/daughter relationships can also be viewed through the lens of feminism. This facilitation is important because it shows us why one may choose a feminist identity. A feminist identity can provide a lens through which women can view the rest of their lives. For example, if they were uncomfortable with religion previously but couldn't figure out why, they may be able to view religion through a feminist viewpoint and see that the patriarchal nature of their religion is what makes them uncomfortable. As a result, they can reconcile their identities and understand their identities more fully.

Finally, much of what has been written about feminism as a being viewed negatively in society has been seen in women's studies literature. This literature about feminism thus far has been in the form of personal experiences or observations of portrayals through the media. This study adds to the body of knowledge through its use of a scientific methodology which looks at feminism through the social psychological study of stigma.

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Appendix I

Research Consent Form:

Feminist Identity Development

You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by April Dye in the Department of Psychology. Questions about your rights as a research participant may be directed to OARS (529-3734), and questions about the study itself may be directed to April Dye (60D Benton Hall, 529-2456, dyeak@muohio.edu).

This project explores how women develop feminist identities, as well as their awareness of popular conceptions about feminism. You may be asked some questions about your own experiences with feminism. Your responses may be audiotaped (with your permission). You may also be asked to complete other standard measures that assess your beliefs and opinions about feminism. Your responses will be kept anonymous, and it will be impossible to identify you in any report of this research.

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. You are free to discontinue participation or audiotaping at any time during the study. You may also feel free to not answer any question asked of you.

After the study you will be completely debriefed as to the purpose and nature of the study, as well as given references that further explore the topic.

I voluntarily agree to participate in this study:

Signature _____   Date _____

Print name _____

I agree to have my interview with April Dye audiotaped. I understand that my name will not be associated with the audiotape or the transcript. The tapes will be kept for five years and then will be destroyed. You may discontinue taping or ask that the tape be erased at any time.

 Signature _____   Date _____

Feminist Identity Scale

For the following items, please use the following rating scale:

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree

_____ 1. I don't think there is any need for an Equal Rights Amendment; women are doing well.

_____ 2. I used to think that there isn't a lot of sex discrimination, but now I know how much there really is.

_____ 3. I just feel like I need to be around women who share my point of view right now.

_____ 4. Some of the men I know are more feminist than some of the women I know.

_____ 5. I want to work to improve women's status.

_____ 6. I do not want to have equal status with men.

_____ 7. I feel that I am a very powerful and effective spokesperson for the women's issues I am concerned with right now.

_____ 8. If I were to paint a picture or write a poem, it would probably be about women or women's issues.

_____ 9. When I see the way most men treat women, it makes me so angry.

_____ 10. I think that most women will feel most fulfilled by being a wife and a mother.

_____ 11. One thing I especially like about being a woman is that men will offer me their seat on a crowded bus or open doors for me because I am a woman.

_____ 12. While I am concerned that women be treated fairly in life, I do not see men as the enemy.

_____ 13. I am willing to make certain sacrifices to effect change in this society in order to create a nonsexist, peaceful place where all people have equal opportunities.

_____ 14. Particularly now, I feel most comfortable with women who share my feminist point of view.

_____ 15. I think that rape is sometimes the woman's fault.

_____ 16. I am angry that I've let men take advantage of me.

_____ 17. I've never really worried or thought about what it means to be a woman in this society.

_____ 18. If I were married to a man and my husband was offered a job in another state, it would be my obligation to move in support of his career.

_____ 19. On some level, my motivation for almost every activity I engage in is my desire for an egalitarian world.

_____ 20. Recently, I read something or had an experience that sparked a greater understanding of sexism.

_____ 21. I evaluate men as individuals, not as members of a group of oppressors.

_____ 22. I am very committed to a cause that I believe contributes to a more fair and just world for all people.

_____ 23. Being a part of a women's community is important to me.

_____ 24. I think that men and women had it better in the 1950s when married women were housewives and their husbands supported them.

_____ 25. My social life is mainly with women these days, but there are a few men I wouldn't mind having a nonsexual friendship with.

_____ 26. It makes me really upset to think about how women have been treated so unfairly in the society for so long.

_____ 27. I don't see much point in questioning the general expectation that men should be masculine and women should be feminine.

_____ 28. Especially now, I feel that the other women around me give me strength.

_____ 29. I feel that some men are sensitive to women's issues.

_____ 30. I am not sure what is meant by the phrase "women are oppressed under patriarchy."

_____ 31. It only recently occurred to me that I think it's unfair that men have the privileges they have in this society because they are men.

_____ 32. I care very deeply about men and women having equal opportunities in all respects.

_____ 33. I share most of my social time with a few close women friends who share my feminist values.

_____ 34. Generally, I think that men are more interesting than women.

_____ 35. When you think about most of the problems in the world—the threat of nuclear war, pollution, discrimination—it seems that most of them are caused by men.

_____ 36. It is very satisfying to me to be able to use my talents and skills in my work in the women's movement.

_____ 37. Although many men are sexist, I found that some men are supportive of women and \ feminism.

_____ 38. I think it's lucky that women aren't expected to do some of the more dangerous jobs than men are expected to do, like construction work or race car driving.

_____ 39. I have a lifelong commitment to working for social, economic, and political equality for women.

Demographics

Please provide the following information about yourself. You can skip any item that you do not feel comfortable answering.

Gender: _____ Male _____ Female

Age: _____

Race/Ethnicity: _____ European American
_____ African American
_____ Asian American
_____ Hispanic American
_____ Other: _____

Political party identification:
_____ Republican
_____ Democrat
_____ Independent
_____ No affiliation
_____ Other: _____

Political orientation:
_____ Very conservative
_____ Somewhat conservative
_____ Moderate
_____ Somewhat liberal
_____ Very liberal

What is your socioeconomic status?
_____ Working class
_____ Lower middle class
_____ Middle class
_____ Upper middle class
_____ Upper class
_____ Other: _____

What is your sexual orientation?
_____ Heterosexual
_____ Gay or lesbian
_____ Bisexual
_____ Other: _____

Appendix IV

Interview Sheet

Thank you for agreeing to be a part of my thesis work on feminist identity development. I am interested in your personal experiences in your own words.

First, do you currently or have you ever identified as a feminist? Elaborate.

Other possible questions and themes:

What does feminism mean to you?

Talk about your background and identities that shaped you in the past and/or currently shape you (religious, political, etc.)

Is feminism something that can easily fit in with your values and identities? How or how not?

Talk about when you first heard about feminism and what you thought about it. Have your feelings about feminism changed since then? How?

How has a women's studies curriculum affected the way you think about feminism and your own identity?

Do you feel that feminism is stigmatized in today's society? If so, has this affected your decision to identify or not identify as a feminist?

Do you have a group of friends or family who share similar values and identities to you? How have they affected your own personal identity as a feminist or nonfeminist? Do you believe that you have affected other's identities or thoughts about feminism? How so?