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Group Consciousness: In Search of a Concept

by

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Introduction

Over the past decade, the concept of group consciousness has increasingly replaced the narrower term class consciousness as the means by which social scientists describe the diverse collectivities that make up modern society. The study of group consciousness has gained importance in the attempt to discover why political participation could not be adequately explained purely in reference to socio-economic status of various minorities. Differential participation has been thought to be determined by the group's resource availability, but studies done on black's in the early 1970's found that group identification also encouraged political participation over that expected by SES alone [Verba/Nie:1972]. However, the ability to provide a sound empirical basis of group consciousness has not been simple and certainly not without controversy.

This study will limit its scope to a discussion of the use of the concept `politicized group consciousness', as primarily developed by Miller et al.[1981], and its relationship to black American women, a group for whom the concept seems to have potentially great applicability as a determinant of political activity. In this paper, I am not interested in the actual correlations between group consciousness and political participation, but the extent to which a sense of black consciousness, feminism and black feminism exists for this group. This in turn raises the more fundamental issue of measurement.

A primary reason for looking at black women is because they are seen as having a unique group consciousness, stemming from

the dual problems of racism and sexism within American society.[Stone:1979;Fulenwider:1980;Welch:1981;Shingles:1985].

The first half of this paper will be a review of the literature on the topic of feminism, black consciousness and black feminism; and the particular situation of black women in America. The second half of the paper will be dealing with the different meanings of group consciousness, and how they have been measured in the literature. It seems that the research carried out by Miller et.al. has not been clear enough about the complex multidimensionality of the concept group consciousness, and little attention is focused on the comparability of existing measures. This paper illustrates some of the problems that arise when using SRC data, with regard to measurement. The central hypothesis of the paper is, that slight alterations in how the components of group consciousness are constructed can lead to distinctly different inter-relationships and consequences for the use of a concept such as group consciousness.

Part 1: Group Consciousness: Conceptual Development.

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A. The Concept: Group Consciousness

Before a study can be carried out on the subject of group consciousness, it is necessary to recognize what exactly is meant by such a concept. It seems that much of the recent work that has been carried out in this area has started out by assuming that

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group consciousness is unidimensional; that all those that show signs of having such consciousness look at the world from the same angle. Research has also primarily focused on ingroups that people identify with and/or outgroups that are evaluated negatively or seen to be in conflict with the ingroup [Conover:1984;2].

Miller and Gurin [1980] distinguish between simple group identification and a 'politicized group consciousness'; the second "involves identification with a group and a political awareness or ideology regarding the group's relative position in society along with a commitment to collective action aimed at realizing the group's interests."[1981;p495]. This politicization is seen as the crucial determinant of whether group consciousness affects participation, since simple group identification may have no political significance. Group identification has been shown to be a fairly stable characteristic for individuals over time, so what this measure has to do is to link this characteristic to the dynamic elements of political participation, through politicization. Beliefs which politicize group identification are, for example, perceived group relative deprivation and system blame.

Several issues will be discussed:

1. What roles do positive attitudes toward outgroups play in shaping group consciousness? This question was addressed, in part, by Schlozman and Verba [1979] when discussing how race and class consciousness interact in shaping the attitudes of blue-

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collar workers. They found that black workers were willing to work with whites in pursuit of commonly held economic goals, though this was often seen more in terms of maximizing the economic progress of blacks as a group, rather than the working class as a whole.

2. What is the link that is placed between group consciousness and a sense of group deprivation? The 'group consciousness' literature assumes group deprivation as an integral component. This is particularly true of the most recent work by Miller et al.[1981], where an important element of 'politicized group consciousness' is the belief that the respondent's group has too little power in relation to some other group.

Dominant groups, however, may also have a sense of group consciousness [such as Aryan supremacy] which need not involve notions of deprivation. Though this point may not be too relevant in terms of this study, it suggests the need for a broader definition of group consciousness.

Sigel and Whelchel (1986) use the term 'minority consciousness' to rule out dominant group ideologies in their study. Minority group status suggests the group has been discriminated against, and is economically and politically disadvantaged. Consciousness of one's group having minority status refers to an "awareness of being denied, by the dominant group, privileges and advantages to which they feel entitled."[p3] As defined, 'minority consciousness' is a

multidimensional concept constructed of two components. The first is a cognitive one, discrimination awareness; the second is an affective item, in reference to the importance and passion one attaches to the recognition of discrimination.

3. It is also necessary to note that objective group membership is a necessary, though not sufficient condition for an individual to have group consciousness. Conover [1986] divides subjective group identification into two related components: self-awareness of group membership and a psychological sense of attachment to the group. This distinction is particularly important in relation to our discussion of different forms of black consciousness, since an individual may be very conscious that he or she is part of a particular social group and thus may identify with it in a survey, while despising that very position and its members. This is an accusation that has been repeatedly laid at the feet of the black middle class.

Thus, what is meant when people use the term 'group consciousness' is open to dispute. The problem seems to become more complex, however, when we try to define specific forms of consciousness, such as feminism, black consciousness and black feminism.

B. Feminist Consciousness

The increasing amount of academic attention that has been paid to the topic of feminism over the last decade, has made the question of the need for a precise set of definitions and

terminology of primary importance. As will be the case in the majority of this paper, the primary question that needs to be asked is: what does it mean to be called a 'feminist', and how has it been measured in the existing research?

Figueira-McDonough (1985) sees the concept of 'feminism' as multidimensional, rather than the very unidimensional way that much research assumes. The presence of different dimensions enables respondents to hold often contradictory positions on a number of items relating to feminism which, if not taken into account, can and will lead to false claims being made by both supporters and opponents of the Women's Movement.

McDonough quotes from a number of previous studies which seem to bare out the multidimensionality of feminist orientation. Mason and Bumpass [1975] found that support for role differentiation within the family was quite independent of support for equal job opportunity. A study of High School Seniors by Herzog and Bachman [1982] concluded that there existed much higher support for principles of gender equality with respect to job opportunity, leadership, pay and input into family decision making, than with respect to the division of labor or task specialization in the family. In drawing together the results of much of this past research, McDonough distinguishes four different levels of reference within which feminist orientation can fall: (1) the public or societal sphere; (2) relationships within the family; (3) external interpersonal relationships and (4) a rather obscure category dealing with self-valuation. Each

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level can operate and vary independently of the others, enabling distinct attitudinal inconsistency across spheres. Such a conclusion receives support from other literature on the subject [Ransford and Miller:1983; Sigel and Whelchel:1986].

From a sociological perspective, _Ransford_ and _Miller_ see identities centered on gender, race and class as resulting in unique 'social spaces' (sets of experiences) within which persons construct explanations of reality. It is thus inevitable that the salience of feminist principles will vary accordingly. The situation is complicated further by the fact that competing group allegiances can exist, each with separate hierarchies that make joint effects especially difficult to predict. They call unique 'social spaces' caused by the interactions of race and gender, 'ethgenders'.

Ransford and _Miller_ also feel it is necessary to look at separate components of the feminist outlook. The first item that they use, asks whether the respondent thinks a woman's place was in the home, a question designed as a concentration on the area of marriage, the home and children as a primary focus for women. The second question asked if the respondent approves or disapproves of women working, despite the fact that the husband is capable of supporting her. This item measured the desirability of women working, controlling for economic necessity. Another question is, 'Would you vote for a woman as president, if she was qualified for the job?' This can be seen as a measure of attitudes to women holding top political leadership roles in

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society. The final politicizing question asked whether men were better suited emotionally for politics than women, being not only related to politics, but also sex-role stereotypes. Ransford and Miller found that all the items correlated positively (though only between a range of .19 to .54), but rather than combine them into an index they carried out an item by item analysis, viewing each as a "separate component of the feminist outlook." [Ransford:p50]

In relation to the case of black women, Ransford and Miller discovered further possible complications in distinguishing feminist outlooks. Initially they had hypothesized that black women, due to their historically significant economic contribution (as wage earners); the particular socialization required by ghetto life and the incidence of female headed households, would be less traditional in sex-role attitudes than white women (they recognized that this may not hold true for black middle class women;p47). They expected black women to be more likely to reject the traditional negative female stereotype; to reject the view that women are only suited to the role as homemaker, and believe that women are capable of holding positions of autonomy and leadership [p47]. In fact, the analysis found no significant difference between black and white women. Rather than reject the hypothesis outright, they posited:

"black females do have a stronger tradition of autonomy and independence, but that experience does not take them all the way to a feminist outlook as we have characterized it here.

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Black female autonomy and self-sufficiency may correlate with the particularistic concerns of reliability and trust of men as economic providers or, perhaps, with the need to be able to fend for oneself on the job market by having some occupational skill; but black female autonomy may not carry all the way to a general critique of womens' traditional roles." [Ransford/Miller:57]

Such a conclusion, if valid, will make the task of discovering and measuring black feminist group consciousness, among any black sample all the more problematic. Survey questions seem to assume feminism to be structured in a particular, unidimensional, way that may fail to pick up the `politicized' attitudes of black women; attitudes that are unique to this group under the `double jeopardy' of racism and sexism.

Other issues also suggest that feminist consciousness may be difficult to locate. Firstly, gender inequality in America is not as marked as racial inequality, which makes the perception of a problem more difficult. This is also true within a comparative context. The United States and Finland show the smallest gender gap in years of schooling and personal income compared to the other Western industrial nations.

Secondly, American ideology, with the dominant theme of individualism, seems to play a significant role in inhibiting the development of group consciousness, especially among deprived, subordinated social categories. Despite differences in socialization between boys and girls, both sexes (black and

white) are given many of the same messages, including a theory of justice whereby rewards are seen as arising purely from individual talents, not group advantage and disadvantage [Gurin:1985].

Thirdly,

"Solidarity and recognition of group deprivation are fostered when category members interact most frequently with each other and only moderately with the outgroup; when intimate interaction is confined to those within the ingroup; when relations with the outgroup are predominantly competitive or, at the very least, not intimate. Women's relations with each other and with men could not be more different from this pattern." [Gurin:1985;p145]

Heterosexual attraction and family ties obviously inhibits the development of a strong group consciousness based on sex, as well as the fact that the traditional women's roles within the family have not been without rewards. This is, however, not necessarily as true for black women, since a sizeable minority of black families lack a male who can fulfil the traditional role of head of household and major breadwinner. Gurin [1985] also notes that many associations for women, outside the family sphere, are either with men or, more importantly, women in positions of a more privileged status, which tends to mute the recognition of themselves (women) as members of a deprived group.

It seems therefore that a number of serious problems face any attempt to find and analyze feminist consciousness among

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blacks. Firstly, as a feeling of belonging to an oppressed group, feminism is not likely to be as widespread as concerns over race, and thus it is probable that the numbers involved in any sample will be small. Secondly, it is possible that black women may perceive the issues surrounding feminism in a different light from white anglo-saxon women, and thus the existing measures may simply be incapable of distinguishing such attitudes. Third, current definitions and measures of feminism and black feminism are biased towards the extremist, segregationist forms of group consciousness, a point which will be dealt with in more detail later.

C. Black Consciousness

Black consciousness can have, and, in fact, does have as many different nuances as feminism. This obviously serves to further confuse and complicate attempts at empirical analysis of such attitudes. Black political ideologies seem to range from those that hold race to be of utmost importance, to those that believe that race should be completely ignored. The presence of such differing dimensions, necessitates care when trying to analyze such a concept as potentially vague as group consciousness.

According to Walton, all black political ideologies have four separate components: (1) race, (2) humanism, (3) economics and (4) empowerment. [Walton:1985;p29] The various possible combinations that can be stressed, under different conditions,

climates and personalities, allow for a diverse range of consciousness to evolve. The black integrationist seeks black political mobilization around social acceptance and assimilation, creating a basis for political empowerment based on merit, while for the Black Panthers, the achievement of black economic equality was the key from which all else would follow [Walton:1985;p30].

Walton [1985] feels that black political consciousness and behavior can be placed into to three major categories (though not appearing mutually exclusive): 'supportive', 'reactive' and 'creative'. The supportive category looks towards improving the position of the entire black community by working through existing political, economic and social institutions. Reactive consciousness is that pursued by the conservative sections of the black middle class, who are intent on maintaining their own privileged position within the system. Operating within existing institutions, they do not so much "inhibit all black progress as enhance the benefits of the privileged few." [p30]. The creative category is concerned with the use of unconventional forms of participation, such as direct action; or participation on their own terms, as seen by the creation of independent black political parties and the putting up of independent candidates.

The preceding review shows that it is not a simple task to define black consciousness without including groups that hold radically different opinions about what it means to be black, what direction blacks as a societal sub-group should be moving

in, and what relations should be with the white majority. These, and the many other areas over which disagreements would occur, greatly limit the ability of researchers to locate and analyze the effect of 'the' black consciousness. Such difficulties are particularly highlighted in relation to the black middle class.

B.(1) The Special Case of the Black Middle Class

"Within the black community, we are observing a unique class phenomena - the evolution of at least two distinctly different communities, with different educational backgrounds, with conflicting cultural interests, with fundamentally conflicting economic interest."
[Marable:1980;p223]

Criticism of the black middle class, or black elite, has been a consistent theme in black literature for many decades [DuBois; Marable; Cruse;1967]. Primarily, such criticism has centered on the accusation that once black individuals successfully manage to overcome the conditions that the majority of blacks face, and enter the affluent middle class, they lose their identity and cultural ties within the black community. If such a criticism is valid, then it should have profound consequences for the study of black consciousness among these middle class members.

Alternative research has suggested that this accusation against the black middle class may be unreasonable. In the process of 'whitening', the adoption of certain white anglo-saxon attitudes may, in fact, lead the black middle class to be very

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concerned with the welfare of the black community. Such a theory is based on an attitude known as the 'Public-Regarding' attitude, and consists of an emphasis on seeing the individual as having an obligation to participate in public affairs, and to seek the good of the community as a whole.[1] This has to be distinguished from an alleged 'ethnic' style of politics which is self-interested and takes little account of the larger community's interests. If the 'public-regarding' attitude is manifest among the black middle class, then rather than ignore the black community, as they have been accused of, they are liable to be very concerned with furthering its welfare and interests.

An empirical study of class consciousness in America also suggests that the black middle class, rather than exhibiting a tendency to respond more in terms of their class position than in terms of race, show a particularly strong affiliation to the black community [Jackman and Jackman:1983].The study also found that middle class blacks tend to express an identification with the poor and working class over their own class [p48]. Comparing the strength of bonds between race and class among different class identifiers, they found that the black middle class exhibited a radically different pattern from the norm; showing that 60% of the black middle class feel closer to their racial group than their class, while only 5% had the opposite tendency [p50]. This evidence goes against much of the criticism put forward by black radicals and nationalists, such as Marable, finding that, despite a cognitive identification with the middle

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class, blacks do not have a strong middle class or white identity, but remain strongly aware of their racial and socio-economic background. Therefore, it also seems likely that they should exhibit some form of 'politicized group consciousness', that closely resembles that of the black underclass.

The situation of the black middle class is further understood in terms of the 'marginality' of their position in society. The concept of the 'marginal man' was first created by Robert E. Park to describe the problems that ghetto jews experienced in trying to assimilate to the gentile world. Marginality leads the individual to exhibit inconsistent modes of behavior:

> "The marginal man is a person who seeks to change his identification from one stratum to another, but who is unable to resolve the related choices between value systems and between organized group ties. The choices are necessary because the strata have incompatible value systems, and because it is difficult to maintain ties across stratum boundaries." [Ralph H. Turner: 'The Social Context of Ambition', quoted in Githens/Prestage:1977;6]

This concept has been applied in relation to womens' political behavior [Githens/Prestage:1977], and also helps explain the situation of the black middle class [Ippolito/Levin:1972]. The black middle class can be seen as operating under conflicting pressures. Firstly, the social mobility that they experience can lead to a loss of identification with the black underclass, and

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thus a sense of political cohesion with the black community may diminish. From the other side, the continuing experience of discrimination and rejection by the larger white society may tend to reinforce feelings of cohesion with and towards the community [Ippolito/Levin:1972;419].

In a study of black attitudes towards a referendum concerning a rapid transit scheme, Ippolito and Levin concluded that the political behavior of the black middle class is affected by generalized attitudes toward government successes, to a much greater extent than any other social group [p423]. They suggested, therefore, that there is a substantial portion of the black middle class that do not view governmental action as having been particularly successful in the past and thus are likely to be as critical of government as lower class blacks [p423].

It seems that, taken together, all the preceding studies suggest that in all probability there are those within the black middle class who conform to claims, that they have become 'whitened' by social mobility; and those who are just as 'black' orientated as those that remain within the poor and working class. In fact such conflicting traits may very well characterize the very same people!

D. Black Feminism: The special case of Black Women

The situation of Black women within the political process, in the United States has come under increasing academic scrutiny over the past couple of decades, both as a result of the general

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increase in black participation following the activity and
successes of the Civil Rights movement in the 1960's, as well as
the rise of the American Feminist movement in the 1970's. As
Prestage [1980] notes, black women played a pivotal, initiating
role in defining the issues of sex and race liberation for white
women. She quotes the comments of one white female activist,
recorded during the Civil Rights Movement, as saying that black
women "shattered cultural images of appropriate female behavior"
[p241]. The situation of Black women, under the strain of facing
both sexism and racism within society, has given rise to a new
terminology to describe their condition and help explain their
political activities: 'the double whammy'[Fulenwider:1981];
'Survival Hypotheses'[Brown and Lansing:1985] and/or the 'double
jeopardy' [Singles:1985].

D.1. Black feminism as a form of group consciousness

"During the late sixties and early seventies the black
female went out of her way to prove that she was black. Her
effort surpassed that of her male counterpart. Yet, she was
rejected by the black man for being 'unfeminine' and 'too
strong' or 'elusive'." [quoted in Ms. Magazine, May 1974:98]

It is important when looking at black women to see how the
problems of black liberation have tied in with the question of
womens' liberation. Black women are members of two distinctly
subordinate groups, and thus they share a potential common
interest with group comembers, either black men or white women.

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However, these comembers are also part of the oppressive dominant group, as men or as whites. This seems to place black women in the same form of marginality that was referred to earlier in relation to the black middle class: "the interests which bind black women together with, and pull them into opposition against, comembers crosscut one another in a manner which often obscures one set of interests over another." [Lewis:1977;343]

D.2. The unique situation of black women

Pauline T. Stone [1979] talks of the 'double dependency' that Black women face both from black males and from white employers, a situation much less marked among white women: "Double dependency has practically always been the onus of black women"[p559]. In addition, black women face unique problems. A significant proportion of black married women do not have the economic support of their husbands, as they are either absent or unemployed. In 1977, 39% of black families were headed by a single women compared to 12% of white families [Shingles:1985;1]. This seems to suggest a large minority of single 'dependency' black women, who do not experience the double dependency described by Stone, but who still confront the 'double jeopardy' of race and sexist discrimination.

The fact that many black women are the sole or major wage earners for the family, means they suffer most from male employers, who hire and fire, traditionally women, employees in line with the 'boom and bust' of the business cycle[p560]. Black

women also seem to differ from white women by tending to have higher expectations of working, value higher wages above job satisfaction, start jobs of lower status and suffer a higher unemployment rate.

D.3. Why black feminism may not be prominent

The incidence of black feminism is not clear. Pauline T. Stone notes five factors that she sees as having had an inhibiting effect on the development of a Black-Feminist consciousness:

1. Many black intellectuals and spokespersons have ignored the sexism issue as a potentially racially divisive issue - internal conflict could stop action to overcome more obvious/recognizable racial discrimination.

2. The ideology of racism splits women, as blacks often see whites as bad or against them. Some activity by white women, within the women's movement, has confirmed this.

3. The 1960's Civil Rights movement centered on black male liberation, and not female.

4. The myth of 'Black Matriarchy' has focused past attention on the idea that black women are found to be more dominant than black men within the domestic sphere. However, this does not mean that sexual oppression is absent, due to their greater role in the economic sphere.

5. The dominant role of the church among black communities may promote political involvement in some respects, but not a

Feminist perspective, due to the traditional sexism that exists
within religious structures historically. [p562]
Such factors need to be given precise empirical confirmation, but
do seem to offer an interesting theoretical background for the
study of the situation of black women.

The situation of many black men, lacking the traditional
avenues for masculine expression such as the economic support of
the family,[2] has lead to the suggestion that lower class black
males have developed a 'ghetto-specific masculinity' [Ransford
and Miller:48]. This allows them to gain respect and dignity
through different means, with stress on toughness, appearance and
verbal ability. Such attitudes do not, however, encourage the
development of a feminist outlook under these circumstances.

An alternative source of current black male attitudes to
women arose with the black nationalism of the 1960's and early
1970's with its stress on black masculinity [Ransford/Miller:46].
Black power and the black muslims put forward the message that
black men had to regain control of the family, protect their
women from the sexual advances of white men and take on positions
of power and leadership within the black community
[Ransford/Miller:49]. Indeed, the whole stress of the Civil
Rights movement for black rights seemed to be a call for black
male liberation (Stone:364).

Repeating the comments made by Stone [p11], many of the
black leaders saw the feminist issue as potential ruinous to the
successful achievement of civil rights: "the (feminist) movement

has been characterized as the exclusive property of the so-called white middle-class women and any black women been involved in this Movement have been seen as `selling out', dividing the race', and an assortment of nonsensical epithets. (Statement of Purpose by the National Black Feminist Organization; in Ms Magazine, May 1974). It is clear, however, that for a number of years black feminism did not follow the path of their white sisters, by agreeing to a degree with the black leadership that rights for blacks came first and women second [Lewis:347].

In some ways, black women are already `liberated', this claim primarily centers on their historical economic role; a large proportion working to support the family out of economic necessity, and in many cases acting as head of the family [Ransford/Miller:47; shingles:11. However, the Ransford and **Miller** research did not find that black women were already `liberated', finding little significant difference between white and black women. One suggested reason is that for lower class black women, the ghetto-specific masculinity that recreates a male dominance ideology among lower class black men (in response to the lack of traditional avenues by which male supremacy can be exhibited) [Ransford:48], does not encourage autonomy and independence for women.

With middle class black women, it was found that the higher the subjective class identification, the more traditional the outlook [Ransford:57]. This could be explained away in terms of a `whitening' process, adopting the values that white society

promotes. However, it contradicts previous research which found
college educated and middle class black women as more likely to
manifest women's consciousness than less well educated black
women [Baxter and Lansing:112; Shingles:1979; Miller:1981;503].

D.4 Is black feminism growing?

Black women have historically tended to see racism as a more
powerful cause of their subordinate position than sexism.
However, the Civil Rights movement of the sixties seems to have
lead to a number of different consequences in relation to black
women's attitudes. As a result of the Civil Rights movement
blacks began to participate more in the public sphere, but this
lead black women to encounter new patterns of sexual
discrimination.[3] The vast majority of these new higher status,
authoritative positions went to black men, and a number of black
women, particularly in the middle class, became much more
sensitive to the issue of sexism. [Lewis:340]

Fulenwider [1981], in her study of minority women's
political attitudes between 1972 and 1976, found that they had
changed differently from either black men or white women.
Firstly, although there has been a general increase in feelings
of efficacy and trust for all social sub-groups, black women had
increased significantly less than other groups[p22]. Secondly,
though protest approval, declined for all other groups, it showed
a sharp and marked increase for black women. The third major
difference discovered by Fulenwider was that though minority

women had had a higher belief in the attentiveness of government in 1972, such levels had fallen sharply by 1976, indicating a growing sense of political alienation and deprivation. Black women in 1976 seemed to much more clearly hold the Federal Government and President responsible for their conditions than did white women[p24]; a phenomena which correlates with the government's role in the major dismantling of the 'anti-poverty programs' between 1972 and 1976. This is likely to be reoccurring today, since the election of president Reagan in 1980, and his policies designed at cutting back the Federal budget.

Fulenwider claims that "Feminism had more of an effect on the system attitudes of minority women than of white women."[Fulenwider:p22] She finds that the relationship between Feminist ideology and political participation is consistently strong for minority women, but not for white women; and secondly that such an ideology implies a keen dissatisfaction with the government for minority women. This was not the case among white feminists. When looking at the statistical correlations of various factors as motivators and predictors of political behavior, Fulenwider finds that, after personal political attitudes, Feminism was the second strongest predictor of political behavior among minority women; and also that, though socio-economic factors significantly and strongly predicted the behavior of whites, the same is not true for minorities[p27]. The most likely explanation of this seems to lie in the fact that black women have the lowest levels of trust and external

political efficacy, among the four race-gender categories, at all levels of SES [Lansing:1985; Shingles:1986].

A final consideration is linked with the arrival of the Reagan administration. It has been suggested that both middle class and lower class women are liable to have a heightened political consciousness in the face of current government policy, which may be reflected in levels of black and feminist group consciousness. For lower class women, the severe cuts in poverty programs totaling more than 39 billion dollars during the first term of Reagan's administration is directly affecting their lives, and their ability to support their families [Shingles:1980;2]. While in the case of black middle class women, the cuts in the size of government will hit them most directly as a principal source of employment. "In cutting the size of government, the Reagan administration has cut deeply into the black middle class' principal source of employment.....'By 1980, 41% of black female managers,..69% of black female professionals...worked in government, most in welfare programs'" [Shingles:1985;5].

This review has outlined some of the complexities that research must face at the initial stage of defining a particular form of group consciousness. Such problems have to be satisfactorily answered before we are able to see how 'politicized group consciousness' can promote political

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participation among deprived groups. The rest of this paper is primarily concerned with the problem of measuring group consciousness.

Part 2: Group Consciousness: Measurement

1. Past research

There has been a considerable amount of agreement in the literature concerning measurement of group consciousness, as will be seen in this review. The major difference that has appeared, is between the use of NORC and SRC data. The former is used by Verba and Nie [1972] to measure 'race saliency', from which black consciousness is then inferred.

In their study of black political participation, Verba and Nie [1972] find that those who manifested group consciousness are as likely to participate as whites, and more likely to participate than one would expect based on their socio-economic characteristics. The authors conclude that if the socio-economic gap between the races was closed, black consciousness would lead black political participation to far exceed white political participation.

In order to measure the level of group consciousness, Verba and Nie considered the number of times that black respondents referred to race in answer to a series of open-ended questions. The questions concerned what groups were in conflict within the respondents community; and the problems they faced in personal

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life, in the community, and in the nation. The interviewers noted down if the respondent spontaneously mentioned race in response to any one of these questions. Group consciousness was then divided into three different levels: those that failed to mention race; those who mentioned it once, and respondents whom mentioned race more than once. The survey found that 64% of the black sample answered the questions with some mention of race, while 24% mentioned race more than once.

In their operationalization of group consciousness, Miller et al.[1981], distinguish four separate SRC components: (1) subjective group identification; (2) 'polar affect', which distinguishes between a preference for the respondents 'ingroup' and dislike for the 'outgroup'; (3) 'polar power', finding the respondent's expressed feelings about his/her group's current status, power, resources in relation to the outgroup and finally (4) a 'Individual-System blame' component, which is closely related to an awareness of status deprivation. The presence of these four factors leads the members of the group to "express a sense of grievance as victims of injustice, perceive a lack of legitimacy in the social hierarchy, and eventually set about collectively to correct the injustices."[Miller et al.:p495]

When these measures where used to determine the effect of 'politicized group consciousness', Miller et al. found that they had little correlation with political participation as either simple zero-order correlations or in an additive model. However, when they are used in interactive terms they have a much greater

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effect on promoting participation, persisting even after controls for socio-economic status[p500]. Particularly in the case of the Black and poor groups, Miller et.al. find that the interactive term have a strong effect on those with either relatively high or low levels of education[p503], though for both electoral and non-electoral modes of political participation Black's demonstrated the strongest set of interactive correlations, compared social groups[p507]. These four separate components of `politicized group consciousness', and the importance of how they are related, is further evidence of the multiple dimensions of the concept, and justification of their close study.

The Miller et.al. `group identification' component [1981;p509] is an index created from two related questions. The first question asked: "which of these groups do you feel particularly close to - people who are most like you in their ideas and interests and feelings about things?", from a list produced by the interviewer. Following this, a supplementary question asked, which out of the preceding list of groups does the respondent feel closest to. The responses were then grouped into an index where `not identified' indicted that the respondent had not chosen the particular group; `identified' meant that the respondent had chosen the group on the former question and lastly, `strongly identified' was based on a reference to ones group in response to both questions. The actual sociological group that the respondent was placed into, was based on purely objective criteria.

'Polar power' is an index ranging from negative two to positive two; negative indicating that the respondent subjectively feels that a particular subordinate group has 'too little' and the dominant group 'too much' influence. 'Polar affect' was computed by subtracting the thermometer ratings towards certain 'outgroups', from the ratings for specified 'ingroups'. When answering a thermometer question, the respondent gave a rating of between 50 and 100 if they felt 'favorable and warm' toward the group in question; a score of 50 meant the respondent did recognize the group, but neither felt warm nor cold, the bottom section of the thermometer showed the respondent did not feel favorable. 'Polar' or group affect denotes that the respondent attaches a positive or negative valence towards a group. Therefore, neither group membership, identification nor consciousness is necessary for a person to experience warmth towards a group.

The final component, the primary indicator of politicization, asked questions which ask the respondent to explain causes of poverty, sexual and racial differences. The range of response either finds cause in "systemic obstacles and institutional arrangements while the other attributed causality to personal deficiencies."[p509], and thus provided an indices to measure the legitimacy of race, sex and income differentials.

Zingraff and Schulman, in a study of class consciousness among Southern Textile workers, use slightly different categories to operationally define class consciousness

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[Zingraff/Schulman:1984]. 'Class-verbalization' is seen as the ability of the respondent to use class based explanations for the structure of society. The sample are asked open-ended questions such as why the rich are rich, and the poor poor. Again it required detailed recording by the interviewer to enable responses to be classified. A simple 'identification' question asked the respondent to place him/herself in a certain social group, much the same way that was done by Miller et al. 'Class action' was designed to discover whether the respondent endorses collective action on the groups behalf for achieving specific goals. Class action is the most politicizing element of group consciousness, but is lacking in the SRC election surveys. Finally, a number of attitudinal questions were asked to find whether the respondent was positively orientated toward change; and was termed 'Egalitarian change'.

Brown and Lansing (1985), in a study of church-based activism, using data from the National Black Election Study, used two sets of indicators to tap 'racial consciousness', and three measures of 'gender consciousness'. Their definition of black consciousness is when one "believes in taking part in collective activities that will benefit the group." [p.8] As with other literature, this definition seems to be biased towards groups that are in some form of perceived deprived situation that requires activity to overcome. The first indicator of black consciousness, is a measure of common fate, "a belief that all blacks are confronted with a common situation."[p.8] The

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questions asked such things as, how the respondent feels their life will be altered by events that occur for blacks as a whole in the United States; and how often the respondent thinks about being black, and what blacks have in common with one another.

The second element of black consciousness is created out of indicators of a black nationalist ideology. It is designed to "measure respondents' level of obligation to collective cultural, social and political action."[p.9] Questions included asking the respondent if blacks should always vote for a black candidate when they run for office, and if blacks should avoid having anything to do with white people wherever possible.

Gender consciousness is based on three indicators; the first repeated the common fate question, substituting the term black women for blacks as a whole. A question was asked whether the respondent felt that sex discrimination was a real problem for both black and white women in the United States. Finally, the sample was asked if they thought men were better suited emotionally to politics than women. Gender consciousness is not measured as precisely.

A final independent variable included in the analysis was an index of group political efficacy. Brown and Lansing argued that previous research had always looked at efficacy in terms of the individual's perceptions personal effectiveness, while a sense of collective efficacy is possibly just as crucial in explaining levels of activism. Therefore, though blacks and women as individual's may not feel efficacious, they may still believe

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that the group can have influence. They operationalized group efficacy with an index composed of questions asking whether the respondent felt that blacks can make a difference to who is elected as president, and if the various oppressed groups worked together they could run the country. It seems that this could be an important element in finding whether 'politicized group consciousness', especially the 'double whammy' of black women, does result in higher levels of participation. This question is, however, beyond both the scope of the data set and this paper.

Research Questions

The multidimensionality of both black and feminist consciousness, and the diversity of definitions and indicators, raise serious problems for empirical research on group consciousness. This is coupled with the fact that due to the data "the availability of certain questions, rather than theory, has guided the operationalization of key concepts." [Conover:p4-Known as data driven political science] Several questions about the SRC measures follow:

1. What do the SRC closeness and thermometer questions measure?

With the 'closeness' question, it seems to be assumed that those who strongly identify with blacks as a group do consequently not feel close to whites, and thus are somewhat separatist in outlook. However, many blacks believe in integration, and thus may feel very close to whites and indeed desire simply to be closer to them. The SRC questions are most

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appropriate for identifying black separatists, and are likely to ignore the majority of black activists who may not necessarily be integrationist per se, but are also not against whites to such a degree that requires separatism. Dr Martin Luther King Jr. with his stress on the 'love ethic' seems to be representative of large portions of black opinion. This seems to be particularly true in the case of the black middle class, whom, as was mentioned previously, wish to be accepted fully into white capitalist society. Indeed, this bias toward separatists is prevalent in all the literature on group consciousness.

It is also probable that a number of respondents are either of the type that feel close, or would like to feel close, to all groups under consideration and thus answer positively in all respects; or from the other side, some people dislike such group mentality and would not like to show consideration for any particular group, while still having firm opinions about the position of blacks and women and desiring to act on such opinions. Such personality traits influence the accuracy of the measures.

2. In what ways are the closeness and polar affect elements of 'politicized group consciousness supposed to be related?

If the respondent strongly identifies with blacks as a group, does he/she necessarily feel relatively warmer towards blacks. Those that feel affect toward a group, as was stated earlier, do not have to identify with the group. The empirical literature has not adequately addressed this question. It is

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generally implied that the warmth and closeness questions are positively correlated.

3. How are black and feminist consciousness related? and how can they be measured with SRC data? Is it possible to measure black feminism with SRC data?

Much of the literature seems to assume that black consciousness and feminist consciousness are positively related for black women, that the condition of the 'double whammy' leads black women to have a unique world view. The previous discussion provides reason why black feminism may not be prominent, but also why it may be on the rise. It will be of interest to see whether black women see the cause of black and women's liberation as contradictory forces, and hence choose one over the other, or if common cause is recognised. Black feminism may be measured by combining SRC measures of black consciousness and feminist consciousness.

2. Empirical Analysis

A. Data

The major problem faced when trying to study the political behavior of the Black minority, particularly when it is narrowed down further to include only women, is the lack of surveys which have a big enough black sample to make any empirical analysis statistically significant. In an attempt to overcome this

problem, a pooled data set was created out of three SRC survey's carried out in 1976, 1980 and 1984; with a combined black sample size of 661 people, of which 65% were women and 35% men. This study will analyze only these black responses.

The analysis that is carried out looks in detail at how the concept of group consciousness has been operationalized in prior research, in particular Miller et.al's SRC measures [1981]. Of the four components that the original study used, only three are asked for all three years and therefore are available within the pooled data set. The item `polar power' is not available. The following analysis is designed to see how each of the remaining SRC components of group consciousness are related for black men and women.

B. Group Consciousness Items

(a) Group Identification.

The closeness question is the basis of Miller et.al.'s measurement of `group identification'. The manner in which this question is coded affects the way in which it relates to the other items that constitute `politicized group consciousness'. This may be illustrated with three different forms of group identification question: absolute closeness and relative closeness, and the `closest group' index created by Miller et.al. The closeness measures will be discussed first, black closeness first.

The absolute and relative closeness measures are constructed

from the question which asked: 'which of these groups do you feel particularly close to - people who are most like you in their ideas and interests and feelings about things?'. The question seems straight forward and specific, though it could be argued that men may be inclined to answer that they feel close to women for merely sexual reasons. The absolute closeness measure is taken as those respondents who said that they felt close to blacks and women as a group. In Appendix 1 it can be seen that 56% of the black women felt close to blacks as a group, and 59% of men. Controlling for gender did not significantly affect the results. The absolute measure is the most basic and straight forward indicator of group identification.

There is a need for a relative measure of closeness that distinguishes between those respondents who simply feel close to all groups and those who showed a specific identification with blacks. A relative closeness measure helps distinguish between separatist blacks and integrationist. Black activists, such as Dr Martin Luther King Jr., do not dislike whites as a group but demand an equal position for blacks within society; also the successful black middle class might feel equally close to whites for the reasons outlined in the literature review; such people are liable to feel close to both blacks and whites. These types of respondents should surely be distinguished from the separatist activitists that have played such a prominent part in black political history [Garveyism and Malcolm X]. Those respondents who feel closer to blacks relative to whites, are perhaps those

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that see black and white relations from a much more conflictual standpoint, and/or have a significantly stronger identification with their objective social group. Such a separation is also a limitation of a relative measure, since it reinforces the bias in the literature noted previously. Obviously, 'politicized group consciousness' can belong to both types of respondent, and so the absolute measure is used to reconcile such differing outlooks.

The relative measure of closeness is constructed by subtracting the respondents score on closeness to whites away from the score for closeness to blacks. The item was recoded such that a score of 1 meant that the respondent felt close to blacks, but not close to whites. While a score of -1 showed that the respondent felt close to whites but not blacks. A score of 0 could mean either that the respondent felt close to both whites and blacks, or close to neither. The resultant index shows that 16% of the black sample felt relatively closer to whites; 48% were neutral, in the sense that they either felt close to both blacks and whites, or close to neither; and 36% felt closer to blacks relative to whites. Gender has little effect on these proportions (see Appendix 1).

The final measure of group identification is the 'closest' index, used by Miller et.al.[1981]. This includes an additional question from the data set: 'Of the groups you just mentioned, which one do you feel closest to?'. The composite 'closest' index was divided into three categories: 1. If the respondent felt close to, and they also felt closest to, blacks or women as a

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group, they were labeled as 'strongly identified'; 2. 'Identified', consisted of those respondents that simply said that they felt close to blacks or women; 3. Those that did not indicate feeling close to either blacks or women were categorized as 'not mentioning' a group identification.

The 'closest' index, has the advantage of being a much stricter measure of group identification than the absolute and relative closeness measures, because it separates those respondents who have a distinct preference towards blacks. However, it also excludes respondents that may have a very distinct and firm identification with blacks, but given the limited choice of only feeling closest to one group, did not fall into the category of 'strongly identified' with blacks. This is particularly relevant for this study with regard to black feminists, who under such conditions cannot have chosen both blacks and women as their closest group. Perhaps for this reason, very few black women chose women as their closest group [see Appendix:2].

(b). Polar Affect

The polar affect measure is based on thermometer questions which are used by Miller et.al. to measure feelings towards a number of specified groups. In their study, they constructed a relative affect measure in much the same fashion as is created for the group identification; subtracting the respondents score on feelings towards whites from their feelings towards blacks. For women, such a measure was not possible, since thermometer

ratings were not inquired about, for either women or men, in all three election studies that comprise the pooled data set. The possible reason for the lack of a thermometer question, referring directly to women as a group, again, may be due to the potential problem of men feeling very warm towards women on merely sexual grounds. The only thermometer question that was asked for all three years is about how the respondents feel towards womens' liberation. This is a much more discriminating question than simply referring to women, if we are trying to discover 'politicized group consciousness'. However, the whole concept of 'womens' liberation' has had such a derogatory image within the media and society in general over the recent years, that the term may alienate certain respondents that actually are sympathetic to womens issues.

An absolute measure was also used in the analysis; since, as already mentioned, creating a relative measure based on feeling towards specified 'ingroups' and 'outgroups', biases the measure toward those of a separatist outlook, rather than integrationist who may feel exceedingly warm toward whites, but still exhibit a specifically black 'politicized group consciousness'.

With the resultant relative 'polar affect' index, of the 485 valid cases, 19.2% felt more favorable towards whites than blacks, 39.6% liked both groups to a similar degree and 41.2% felt more favorable towards blacks rather than whites. The extreme pro-black position was held by two respondents, while only one respondent got close to the opposite extreme. Taking a

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score over 60 as the most extreme opinions, only one black respondent felt much warmth towards whites, while five people took the opposite stance, strongly favoring blacks against whites. Once again, controls for gender do not significantly affect these percentages [Appendix:3].

For the thermometer question asking about feelings towards the women's liberation movement, over two-thirds of the respondents, both men and women, felt positively warm towards women's liberation. This seems to be a surprisingly high figure, especially for men, and is in sharp contrast to the opinions of white respondents, less than fifty per cent of whom feel warm towards the women's liberation movement. White women do feel stronger than white men [results not shown]. It is possible that the word 'liberation' has rather different connotations for blacks than for white middle class Americans.

(c). Policy Questions

Group identification and polar affect do not necessarily indicate a perception of deprivation, and may not mean that the respondent attributes his/her position to systemic or political causes. There is a need for additional questions which politicize. Several policy related questions accomplish this:

1. "Some people feel that the government in Washington should see to it that every person has a job and a good standard of living. Others think government should just let each person get ahead on his own."

2. "Some people feel that the government should make every effort

to improve the socio-economic status of blacks and other minority groups, even if this means giving preferential treatment. Others feel that the government should not make any special effort to help minorities because they should help themselves."

3. "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 a women's place is in the home."

For each question, the respondents were asked to place themselves on a scale from one to seven between these two extreme positions. The first two items are most distinctly political policy questions, which distinguish between those that attribute income and racial differences to either 'systemic obstacles' or 'personal deficiencies'. However, the question dealing with sexism does not provide this dichotomy. It addresses sex roles, but is not clearly political in calling for governmental action, as the first two. It was, however, the only question, other than the identification and affect items, that pertained to women and was asked across all three election studies.

I decided to collapse the seven point scale into three categories, to make the positions more distinct: 1. 'governmental responsibility' included the respondents who scored one or two on the scale; 2. 'middle-of-the-road' respondents placed themselves at three, four or five; 3. 'individual responsibility' being composed of respondents scoring six and seven on the scale.

For the minority aid question, 48% of the respondents fell

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into the `systemic causation' category; 44% were `middle-of-the-road'; and 8% in the `personal deficiency' category. There is no significant gender differences in these percentages [Appendix:4]. This seem to shows a particularly strong consensus among blacks in the need for government aid for minorities.

The question on the governments role in people's standard of living, showed blacks to be even more in favor of government intervention, 51% in the first category; 38% in the second; and 11% in the third. Women are (56.2%) significantly more in favor of government intervention for providing jobs than men (43.2%). [Appendix:4].

Concerning the roles of women in society, 46.2% of black men and 50.3% of black women felt that women should be on a equal basis with men.

(d). Race Saliency

An attempt was also made to create a measure of race saliency, along the same lines of Verba and Nie [1976]. However, it was not feasible with the pooled data set that was used for this paper. The `open-ended' questions involved asking the respondents to say what they thought were the three most important problems facing the country at the time, and then say what they thought was the single most important problem. By recoding the `national problem code index', it was possible to separate out all those responses that referred explicitly to race, either concerning civil rights, busing, positive discrimination or government aid to minorities. An index was then

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created with three categories; 'not mentioned'; 'mentioned', as one of the three most important problems and 'most important' concern of the respondent.

However, it was found that only 4.2% (12 people) of the black sample 'mentioned' race as an important issue; and only 1 respondent thought it was the most important issue, hardly a very significant result from which to draw further analysis; A gender saliency index was also constructed following a similar procedure to before, singling out such answers as abortion and any references to 'women's liberation'. After repeated attempts it was concluded that none of the black sample mentioned women's issues as an important national problem (results not shown).

C. Analysis

First, we will see how the different ways of measuring group identification, are related to polar affect. If the closeness questions and polar affect are the same, then they should be highly correlated. Secondly, we shall see if the closeness and polar affect questions are correlated with the policy questions. Finally, the relationship between closeness to blacks and closeness to women are analyzed, in an effort to locate black women who show signs of black consciousness and women's consciousness

[1] 'Group Identification' and 'Polar Affect':

The wording of the questions, asking about feelings towards and closeness to a particular group, would suggest that there should be a strong positive association between these items. If a

respondent answers that he/she is close to either blacks or women, a group with whom the respondent feels are most like them in ideas, interests and feelings about things, then it should be assumed that they also will feel warm toward this group. However, the relationship between group identification and polar affect is crucially determined by the manner in which the former is measured. The relationship between polar affect and closeness varies dramatically depending upon the method used to create the closeness question.

All three measures of group identification are broken down in each category by the average scores on the polar affect measures. I found that there was no significant difference between the use of the absolute and relative polar affect measures in their association with group identification, except the relative measure gave a more distinct variation, therefore only the results in relation to the relative measure are shown.

Black consciousness

When we look at the relationship between the relative closeness measure and polar affect, we find that the pattern is not as expected [table:1;A]. The relative closeness measure has a curvilinear relationship with relative feelings towards blacks. Those that feel relatively closer to blacks are only slightly warmer in feelings towards blacks than the average black respondent [.12]. Surprisingly, respondents that feel relatively closer to whites, feel warmest towards blacks (.48)! They are nearly a half a standard deviation above the sample mean.

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Controls for gender, though statistically insignificant, shows that women are the primary cause of the positive relationship between being close to blacks and feeling warm towards blacks [.26], while men show no such pattern [.04]. On the other side, women that feel relatively closer to whites, are nearly two thirds of a standard deviation above the mean in warmth towards blacks [.60], while men are only a quarter [.25].

The race 'closest' index has a linear relationship with polar affect [table:1;B]. Those who strongly identify with blacks are a quarter of a standard deviation above the mean in warmth towards blacks (.27). They are nearly a half a standard deviation [.45] warmer to blacks, than those that do not feel close to blacks, a significant relationship. Gender does not significantly affect the relationship; though for men, those that strongly identify with blacks are nearly two thirds of a standard deviation [.64] above those that do not feel close at all, while for women the difference is only a third [.32]. The slightly stronger association for black men may be due to the male motivated nature of much of the moves for equal rights over recent years, and the sexist ideology behind some elements of black nationalism.

The final measure of group identification, absolute closeness, does not agree with either of the other items, it has no relationship with polar affect [table:1;C]. Thus, these results clearly illustrate that even the basic element of group consciousness, group identification, can not be assumed to be

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straight forward as far as operationalization and measurement are concerned.

This leaves us with the puzzle of why would respondents that feel close to whites, feel distinctly warm towards blacks? The explanation may lie within the black middle class. As was discussed earlier, while the black middle class have been 'whitened' to the extent that they do, or would like to, feel close to white anglo-saxon society; the phenomena of 'public-regarding' attitudes, if such a thing does exist, as well as their 'marginal' position, is likely to foster warm feelings towards blacks as a group. Therefore, such respondents would cause the curvilinear relationship: the black middle class stating that they feel closer to whites (either in desire or fact), while also feeling above the sample average in warmth towards blacks as a community.

Women's consciousness

Once again, how closeness is measured affects the relationship between closeness and polar affect. The absolute measure of closeness to women showed no relationship with feelings towards women's liberation. Both the majority of men and women stating that they do not feel close to women as a group [Table:2]. However, the closest group item does have a relationship, in the predicted direction, with women's liberation. Those few respondents that 'strongly identify' with women, are much warmer [.58] towards the cause of women's liberation.

However, at the other end of the scale, those that do not feel at all close to women, do not show any deviation from the mean with regard to their affect for women's liberation. Such a relationship should not perhaps be expected to any great degree, since respondents that do not feel close to women in their 'ideas and interests and feelings about things' are still able to support the cause of equal rights for women and women's liberation.

Concerning the 'closest' to women item; it is of interest to note that only 13 black respondents fell into the category of feeling closer to women than any other group [four of whom were men! Appendix:2], while, 171 respondents felt 'closest' to blacks. This suggests that while black feminism may be on the rise, for reasons previously mentioned, it is certainly no where near as prominent as identification solely with blacks. It therefore seems to make the task of studying black feminism all the more problematic.

[2] Comparison of Group Identification and Polar Affect with the Policy Questions

a) Group Identification [table:3]

All of the items that measure group identification with blacks seem to show a slight positive relationship to the policy questions. Respondents who feel closest to blacks, seem to also believe that government should aid minorities and provide a decent standard of living and employment for all. However, nearly

all of the results are statistically insignificant.

b) <u>Polar Affect</u>[table:4]

The absolute and relative measures differ in their relationship to the minority aid question, though neither are statistically significant [table:4]. The absolute item shows a slightly curvilinear relationship with 'minority aid'. It is possible that the small relationship [.11], in the category against government for minorities, represents elements of the black middle class, in particular those that were successful in raising themselves out of the black underclass by their own efforts, and feel that every individual is capable of such success if they work hard enough.

The relative polar affect item seems to show a more predictable, linear relationship with the minority aid question than the absolute measure, though not very strong. Those that are in favor of government aid are a third of a standard deviation above those who are against aid, in warmth of feeling towards blacks. Neither the absolute measure or the relative measure showed any distinct differences between men and women.

The absolute affect item had a significant positive relationship with policy question concerning governments role in providing a decent standard of living [see table 5]. Those that were in favor of government activity (.22) are more than a third of a standard deviation more warm towards blacks than those against government action [-.17]. Controls for gender do not affect these results.

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For the relative measure of polar affect, there is a significant relationship with support for government guaranteeing jobs, though it is not clear. Respondents against government action are a quarter of a standard deviation below the mean in feelings towards blacks [-.26]. Controls for gender do not significantly affect the results. However, while men show no relationship within any category, women, in the category against government action, are nearly a half a standard deviation [-.48] below the mean. Women are slightly above the mean [.10] at the other extreme. An explanation for the seemingly greater 'politicization' of the responses of women may lie in the fact that black women have historically been major wage earners [Ransford/Miller:1983], and a large minority are the head of household, dependent on the continuance of government welfare [Shingles:1985].

Finally, there exists a strong and distinct positive relationship between feelings towards women's liberation and what opinion is held concerning the proper place of women in society [table:6]. The difference between the two extreme positions is nearly two thirds of a standard deviation [.61]. It is, however, surprising that virtually no differences are seen between men and women on this issue [results not shown].

[3] In Search of Black Feminism

It is interesting to look at how the measures of group identification with blacks as a group are related to the measures

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of women's group identification. Do black women show a strong identification with both groups, or choose one over the other?, or neither?

A straight forward crosstabulation between the absolute closeness items, for both gender and race, is presented in table 7[A]. The results for women are the only ones given, since in men failed to show any significant relationship, and it is the women that are of theoretical interest. The women showed a strong positive association [Tau C.=0.50]. It is also interesting to note that the largest number of black women fell into the category that feels close both to blacks as a group, and women.

When the relative closeness to blacks measure is crosstabulated against both absolute closeness to women and 'closest' to women items [table:7;B], women again show a strong positive relationship [Tau C.=0.23]; however, men showed a strong negative association [Tau C.=-0.031], the relatively closer they felt to whites as a group, the greater the proportion felt close to women. This could be due to the closeness question being interpreted in a sexist manner by the male respondents. Another possible explanation, again lies within middle class black men, whom have adopted certain middle class values, one of which is a more pro-women outlook, as opposed to the stress on masculinity that exists within the black ghetto communities, as was suggested by Ransford and Miller. However, this does not agree with previous research that found middle class men as more traditional in their attitudes towards women than any other subgroup

In table 8, an analysis looks at the crosstabulation between respondents attitudes to the policy questions asking about minority aid and the place of women in society. Women showed a positive relationship between both items [Tau $C_{\cdot}=0.22$]. The largest single number of women fall into the category of aid for minorities and equal role for women.

It seems that black women do exhibit at least the primary source of group consciousness, group identification, in terms of both being black and a women. They also seem to be politicized, to the extent that they see both blacks and women as groups that are being discriminated against, and see the need for corrective action by the government. These results seem to corroborate the research that has been carried out previously [Fulenwider:1980; Welch:1981; Shingles:1985], which found that the 'double jeopardy' of black women did lead to increased politicization, and that feminism was a salient issue among this sub-group. The task of further research would be to find among what type of women these attitudes arise, and how far such attitudes are translated into political activity.

Conclusion

The paper began by reviewing how common the concept of group consciousness has become, as an aid to help us understand why people participate in politics. Indeed, the widespread appearance of such work makes all the more important, questions about how

group consciousness has been operationalized, and the validity of the measures. As was seen in the literature review, there has been a great deal of agreement around what elements compose the concept group consciousness. However, it also seems to be clear that little attention has been paid to how these elements are related and the consequences that may arise through measuring the elements in a different way. Miller et.al. [1981] stress that the four items they use [group identification; polar affect; polar power and policy questions] only significantly promote political participation when used in interactive, rather than zero-order or additive, terms. This does not, however, provide us with a greater knowledge of how the processes, that underlie the workings of group consciousness, are related.

a) Summary of findings

It was found that the way in which group identification was constructed, through different recoding schemes, had profound effects on how it relates to polar affect. Each measure of group identification has certain advantages and disadvantages with respect to the others, and therefore each could justifiably be used.

When the relative measure of polar affect towards blacks was broken down by the relative closeness item, a curvilinear relationship was seen. The 'closest group to' item, that Miller et.al. used, produced the expected linear relationship; while the simple absolute closeness item produced no relationship at all. It seems that the curvilinear relationship can be explained in

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reference to the discussion concerning the black middle class. The linear relationship illustrates why the interaction term, used by Miller et.al. would lead to a stronger effect in promoting political participation.

The reason why no relationship appeared for the absolute measure does not seem to be clear, though as Conover [1986] states, group identification is not a necessary condition for an individual to feel affect towards a group. Despite this, however, it would seem that those that identified with blacks as a group, would be more liable to feel warmer towards blacks then those who do not feel close. The answer may again be found among the black middle class.   It may be that, although they do not feel close to most blacks, they do exhibit extremely warm feelings towards blacks as a group,   Thus, such a relationship would not appear through the use of the absolute closeness measure.

The relationship between the closeness questions and affect item for black women is less confusing. The lack of a relative closeness measure limited the scope of analysis, as well as the fact that the only polar affect question dealt with the particularly political topic of women's liberation, rather than women as a group. There seems to be no reason to believe that those who do not feel close to women, should not still see value in the women's liberation movement, or alternatively, those that do feel close to women will necessarily feel any warmer to the movement than other respondents. It was found that with the

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Miller et.al.'closest item'   , those respondents who felt
closest to women also felt warmer towards women's liberation.
Unfortunately, it is difficult to evaluate the results in terms
of previous research due to the unsatisfactory nature of our
measure.

When the affect and group identification items were related
to the policy questions, no significant differences were found
between any of the measures of closeness or affect. It was found,
however, that both group identification and group affect have
linear relationships with the policy questions. Those respondents
who felt either close to, or warm towards, blacks and women were
more inclined to believe that the government should provide aid
for minorities; should safeguard the jobs and standard of living
for all, and felt that women should fulfil an equal role in
society with men.

It was found that the black women   do identify
with both blacks and women, in a strong positive fashion. This
seems to suggest the presence of at least the preliminary
conditions for a 'politicized group consciousness' among black
women, a group for whom this concept seems to have great
potential validity.

b) Future research

Time limited the scope of this analysis, however, I feel it
is worthwhile noting how the research should develop in any
future work. Primarily, all of the explanations that were offered
in this paper need to be corroborated by breaking down the

results by demographic characteristics.

The literature provides numerous demographics that need to be considered. A Study of the black middle class, in an attempt to explain the unexpected curvilinear relationship, necessitates using a comprehensive measure of both objective and subjective class identification. It would also be of interest to see how the attitudes between middle class and working class black women differ, especially since the literature disagrees on the outcome [Ransford/Miller:1983; Shingles:1985]

The historical situation of black women requires that we look at how employment affects attitudes. In fact, Ransford and Miller found that whether the respondents mother worked, or had worked, had an impact on attitudes to women's roles. It is important to see how being head of a single parent family alters womens' attitudes. Ransford and Miller also found age and education as significant determinants of attitude.

The ultimate aim of such research would be to see how group consciousness can promote political participation, both conventional and unconventional.

This paper took the body of literature that exists around the concept of group consciousness and went back to basics! The potential confusions and nuances that exist(both within the terminology and through the modes of operationalization) require that before further work is carried out, greater care and attention is paid to what it means to talk about, and analyze group consciousness.

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1. The original study carried out by Banfield and Wilson, looks at the voting patterns of various ethnic and racial groups towards a series of referendums concerning municipal bond issues, in a number of northern cities. They concluded that blacks and ethnic groups, such as the Italians and Poles, tended to vote selfishly against 'public projects' beneficial to the city. Thus, it could be said that the new black middle class, that have adopted this trait, will not have the same type of black consciousness that the poor and working class black communities

have, if in fact any distinguishable consciousness at all.

However, a number of studies seem to disagree with this conclusion. Walton [p293], shows that if the study of voting on municipal bond issues had included southern U.S cities, then the pattern would completely disappear, if not in fact be reversed. It seems that in southern political history blacks are known to have been permitted to vote on public bond issues so that it could be passed in the face of strong opposition by the white voters.

2. Historically, black men have been excluded from the public sphere, undermining their status as husbands and fathers. They were refused membership in national trade unions, which helped bar them from the job market. Prejudicial welfare laws, funds being awarded to mothers rather than fathers, in many states paying the funds only when the man is out of the home.

3. Some research suggests that this situation was not necessarily as straightforward in relation to black women as stated. In a survey of black female professionals, it was found that the double prejudice could actually work to the advantage of those at the top [Epstein:1973]. It was found that black women were less likely to arouse traditional sexual hostilities in the mainly white professional world. While among black professional men, though small in number, it was seen that sexism was less prevalent because they were more accustomed to the image of the working women.

Appendix:1

Relative Closeness to Blacks		Gender		Absolute Closeness to Blacks	Gender	
		(men)	(women)		(men)	(women)
pro-white	-1	16.8%	15.9%	not close	40.6%	44.2%
neutral	0	46.6%	47.9%	close	59.4%	55.8%
pro-black	1	36.6%	36.2%		100%	100%
		100%	100%		N(192)	(344)
		N(191)	(340)			

Appendix:2

Closest Group to (women)		Gender		Closest Group to (blacks)		Gender	
		(men)	(women)			(men)	(women)
strong id.	2	2.1%	2.6%	strong id.	2	37.5%	28.8%
identify	3	38.9%	46.6%	identify	3	33.9%	38.2%
not close	4	59.1%	50.7%	not close	4	28.6%	33.1%
		100%	100%			100%	100%
		N(193)	(341)			N(192)	(344)

Appendix:3

Relative Affect blacks		(men)	(women)	Affect For Women's Liberation		(men)	(women)
pro-white	-1	18.1%	19.7%	don't like	-1	11.3%	11.3%
neutral	0	40.5%	39.0%	neutral	0	23.2%	19.6%
pro-black	1	41.4%	41.3%	like	1	65.5%	69.1%
		100%	100%			100%	100%
		N(185)	(300)			N(168)	(301)

Minority
Aid
Scale

		Gender	
		(men)	(women)
individual responsible	-1	7.9%	8.8%
middle-of-the road	0	48.7%	38.9%
government responsible	1	43.4% 100% N(189)	52.3% 100% (339)

Chi-square=4   sig=0.0926   NS

Govt.
Insure
S.of L.

		(men)	(women)
individual responsible	-1	14.4%	8.8%
middle-of-the road	0	42.4%	35.0%
government responsible	1	43.2% 100% N(132)	56.2% 100% (217)

Chi-square=6   sig=0.0427

Role
Of
Women

		(men)	(women)
women in home	-1	14.5%	16.6%
middle-of-the road	0	39.3%	33.1%
women equal with men	1	46.2% 100% N(173)	50.3% 100% (332)

Chi-square=1   sig=0.3802   NS

Breakdown of 'Polar Affect' by Black Closeness questions

A) Relative Closeness to Blacks(RCLBLA)		Relative Thermometer for Blacks(RTHBLK)		
		(All)	(Women)	(Men)
pro-white	-1	.48 (74)	.60 (47)	.25 (27)
neutral	0	-.23 (231)	.19 (143)	-.30 (88)
pro-black	1	.12 (165)	.26 (101)	.04 (64)

Sig.of F

	(All)	(Women & Men)
Main Effects		0.000
RCLBLA	0.000	0.000
Gender		0.659 NS

B) Closest Group Id.(CLSBP)		(All)	(women)	(men)
not close	4	-.17 (148)	-.12 (98)	-.26 (50)
identified	3	-.09 (170)	-.01 (108)	-.23 (62)
strong identify	2	.27 (156)	.20 (88)	.37 (68)

Sig.of F

	(All)	(women & men)
Main Effects		0.000
CLSBP	0.000	0.000
Gender		0.500 NS

C) Absolute Close Blacks(CLOBP)		(All)
not close	0	.017 (205)
close	1	-.007 (269)

Sig.of F

CLOBP	0.572

Table:2

Breakdown of 'Polar Affect' by Women's Closeness questions

A)   Thermometer for Women's Liberation(Thermwlb)

Absolute Close Women (CLOWN)		(All)	(women)	(men)
not close	0	-.03 (250)	.003 (148)	-.08 (102)
close	1	.06 (208)	.03 (145)	.12 (63)

Sig.of F
clown   0.468 NS   0.495 NS
gender   0.689 NS

B)

Closest Group Id. (CLSWN)		(All)	(women)	(men)
not close	4	-.04 (245)	-.02 (145)	-.09 (100)
identify	3	.03 (200)	.01 (139)	.09 (61)
strong identify	2	.58 (13)	.66 (9)	.40 (4)

Sig.of F
main effects   0.148 NS
clown   0.069 NS   0.072 NS
gender   0.894 NS

Table:3

Crosstabulations of Policy Questions by 'Group Identification'

A)

Govt. Insure S.of L.		Closest group to(blacks)			Relative closeness		
		not close	Id.	strong Id.	pro-white		pro-black
		(4)	(3)	(2)	(-1)	(0)	(1)
individual responsible	-1	11.1%	10.3%	11.3%	8.9%	11.4%	11.3%
middle-of road	0	41.7%	26.3%	50.4%	42.9%	38.6%	34.7%
govt. responsible	1	47.2%	63.5%	38.3%	48.2%	50.0%	54.0%
		100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
		N(72)	(156)	(115)	(56)	(132)	(150)

Chi-square=19
Sig.=0.0007

Chi-square=1
Sig.=0.84 NS

B)

Minority Aid Scale		Closest group to(blacks)			Relative closeness		
		not close	Id.	strong Id.	pro-white		pro-black
		(4)	(3)	(2)	(-1)	(0)	(1)
indivdual responsible	-1	8.2%	7.1%	7.8%	5.5%	9.7%	6.3%
middle-of road	0	50.7%	40.9%	42.5%	43.8%	47.6%	39.9%
govt. responsible	1	41.0%	51.9%	49.7%	50.7%	42.7%	53.8%
		100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
		N(134)	(154)	(153)	(73)	(206)	(158)

Chi-square=3
Sig.=0.4312 NS

Chi-square=5
Sig.=0.23 NS

Table:4

Breakdown of Policy Questions by 'Polar Affect' items

A) **Absolute 'Polar Affect' toward Blacks**(Thermblk)

Minority Aid Scale(blackses)		(All)
individual responsible	-1	.11 (33)
middle-of-the road	0	-.02 (187)
Government responsible	1	.015 (201)
Sig.of F blacksea		0.73 NS

B) **Relative 'Polar Affect' toward Blacks**(RTHBLK)

Minority Aid Scale(blacksea)		(All)	(women)
individual responsible	-1	-.25 (32)	-.38 (19)
middle-of-the road	0	.00 (186)	.03 (104)
government responsible	1	.10 (197)	.10 (133)
Sig.of F blacksea gender		0.13 NS	0.13 NS 0.66 NS

Table:5

A) Absolute `Polar Affect' toward Blacks(Thermblk)

Govt.
Insure
S.of L.(jobstdli)

		(All)
individual responsible	-1	-.17 (36)
middle-of-the road	0	-.05 (125)
government responsible	1	.22 (163)
Sig.of F jobstdli		0.009

B) Relative `Polar Affect' toward Blacks(RTHBLK)

Govt.
Insure
S.of L.(jobstdli)

		(All)	(women)	(men)
individual responsible	-1	-.26 (36)	-.48 (19)	-.04 (18)
middle-of-the road	0	.03 (124)	-.07 (68)	.15 (56)
government responsible	1	.04 (159)	.10 (105)	-.07 (54)
Sig.of F jobstdli		0.058	0.057	
gender			0.803	NS

Table:6

Breakdown of Polar Affect by 'Role of Women' policy question

C)

'Polar Affect' for Women's Liberation(thermwlb)

Role
of
women(equalrol)

		(All)
women in the home	-1	-.37 (62)
middle-of-the road	0	-.19 (157)
women equal with men	1	.24 (210)

Sig.of F
equalrol   0.000

C) Absolute closeness
    to blacks

Minority Aid Scale		not close (0)	close (1)	
individual responsible	-1	7.4%	8.0%	Chi-square=1 Sig.=0.44 NS
middle-of road	0	47.9%	41.8%	
govt. responsible	1	44.7%	50.2%	
		100%	100%	
		N(190)	(251)	

Absolute closeness
to blacks

Govt. Insure S.of L.		not close (0)	close (1)	
individual responsible	-1	10.0%	11.1%	Chi-square=1 Sig.=0.41 NS
middle-of road	0	43.0%	35.4%	
govt. responsible	1	47.0%	53.5%	
		100%	100%	
		N(100)	(243)	

Crosstabulations of Women and Black Group Identification

A)

Absolute Closeness to blacks

Absolute Closeness to women		not close (0)	close (1)	[For women only]
not close	(0)	80.3%	28.7%	
close	(1)	19.7%	71.3%	
		100%	100%	
		N(152)	(188)	

Chi-square=87
Sig.=0.000
Tau C.=0.500, sig=0.000

B)

		Relative Closeness to blacks (men)				Relative Closeness to blacks (women)		
Absolute Close (women)		pro-white (-1)	(0)	pro-black (1)	Absolute Close (women)	pro-white (-1)	(0)	pro-black (1)
not close	(0)	34.4%	56.2%	77.1%	not close (0)	61.1%	61.3%	35.5%
close	(1)	65.6%	43.8%	22.9%	close (1)	38.9%	38.7%	64.5%
		100%	100%	100%		100%	100%	100%
		N(32)	(89)	(70)		N(53)	(163)	(121)

Chi-square=17
Sig.=0.0001
Tau C.=-0.31, sig=0.000

Chi-square=20
Sig.=0.000
Tau C.=0.23, sig=0.00

<u>Table:8</u>

<u>Crosstabulation of Policy Questions</u>

(For Women Only)

<u>Position of</u>
<u>Women</u>(Equalrol)

<u>Minority</u> <u>Aid</u> <u>Scale</u>		women in home		women equal with men
		(-1)	(0)	(1)
indivdiual responsible	(-1)	17.5%	11.1%	3.4%
middle-of-the road	(0)	37.5%	57.6%	32.7%
government responsible	(1)	45.0%	31.3%	63.9%
		100%	100%	100%
		N(40)	(99)	(147)

Chi-square=31   Sig.=0.000
Tau C.=0.222   Sig.=0.000