Social Identities and Political Disunity Among Women

David O. Sears

Leonie Huddy

University of California

The dominant approach to the study of groups in electoral
behavior has been the reference group approach employed in the
American Voter. This relies principally upon identification with the
group, and the clarity and content of group norms, to predict the
group's influence over the individual's voting behavior. This
approach has evolved over time into a "group consciousness" approach
that Miller, Gurin, and others have used to advantage (see A.
Miller, et. al., 1981; Gurin, 1985; Klein, 1984; Sapiro, 1983). For
instrumentation, this approach has relied most heavily on
respondents' closed-ended ratings of "closeness" to various groups,
and on ratings of which group the respondent felt "closest" to.
While of considerable value, the approach has some shortcomings
which the present report is intended to address. Along with
reference group theory a number of other theories can now be
usefully applied to group-based electoral phenomena, focusing on
symbolic politics group conflict (or group interest), or social
identity. However, the "closeness" rating is theoretically
ambiguous, as it may measure simple affect toward the group, shared
interests with group members, or shared identity with them, or all
at once. It would be valuable to develop instrumentation that would
allow us to test among these theories.

Existing measures are also cumbersome. It may be that
relatively few groups influence the electoral behavior of large
numbers of individuals in each national politics at any given time
(even though many groups influence some voters). Existing measures
try to assess whatever group-based factors are important to all
voters, at the expense of measuring in depth the influence of those
few groups that may really have a mass impact in any given election.

This report, then, along with its two companions (Huddy &
Sears, 1986; Jessor & Sears, 1986) have two purposes: 1) to report
on instrumentation that is intended to permit tests among various
theoretical approaches to group-based factors; 2) explore in depth
group-based responses on three cases which seem of clear political
importance at this time: the responses of women and the aged to
issues and candidates bearing on their interests, and of issues
affecting blacks.

Theories

As just indicated, the dominant theoretical approach stemmed
from the reference group theory current in the 1950's (Campbell et

al, 1960; Campbell, Gurin and Miller, 1954: Kelley, 1952; Hyman and Sheatsley, 1967). This emphasized such variables as identification with the group, salience of group membership, and clarity of group norms.

A second theoretical approach is group interest theory, or realistic group conflict theory in the two group case (LeVine and Campbell, 1973; Bobo, 1983). This suggests that group members policy and voting preferences flow from their perceptions of their group's (and their own) interests, principally economic and other material interests. The 1983 pilot work developing measures of perceived group financial situation bears on this approach (see Kinder, Rosenston, & Hansen, 1983). This may or may not involve perceived competition with another group; racial conflict is frequently cited as a case that does.

The symbolic politics approach, in its simplest form centers on the affects individuals have toward various group symbols; they will support candidates and policies linked with groups they like, and oppose those linked to groups they dislike (Sears, Huddy, & Schaffer, 1986).

Social identity theory (Tajfel, 1982) begins with the notion that group membership stems from cognitive categorization of oneself as part of a group. Simple inclusion in such an ingroup leads to tendencies to favor other group members of the group, relative to members outside the group (whether or not in an explicitly designated outgroup). A dominant motive for that favoritism (called "ingroup" bias) is to enhance one's own status, by enhancing the status of the fellow group members; hence there is likely to be a stronger need, and therefore tendency toward ingroup bias, in low status groups. The key variables in a social identity analysis are, therefore, one's own perceived group identity, interdependence with fellow group members for one's status, and the perceived status of the group.

There are some politically consequential clashes among these theories, particularly with respect to (1) the relative roles of economic versus status motives, (2) real interdependence of outcomes versus simple group affects. They also raise the important question of variation across groups in terms of whether (3) their political effects are matters of ingroup affect and interest, or opposition to and conflict with an outgroup.

Women as an Interest Group

Our primary interest in this first report is to examine interest group behavior among women. Women have an uncertain role as an interest group. Partly this is due to checkered findings of a "gender gap" that has emerged in connection with the Reagan Administration, violence, and domestic programs. However, neither its magnitude nor its stability has proven to be overwhelming (Shapiro, Majahan, & Veith, 1986). It is also partly due to the lack of systematic gender differences on women's issues (Klein, 1984; Sears, Huddy, & Schaffer, 1986; Mansbriege, 1985). Such

findings indicate an absence of clear interest group behavior on the part of women.

Since women do not apparently operate as a simple, cohesive political interest group, they may be stratified in terms of their allegiance to women's interests, as the reference group approach would suggest. The standard indicator of this variation has been group identification (Gurin, Miller, & Gurin, 1980; Conover, 1984). This has been operationalized as feeling close to other women; i.e., feeling that women are similar to oneself in terms of their interests, ideas, feelings and things. Women who identify with other women in this way are more likely to be politically involved (Miller, Gurin, Gurin, & Malanchuk, 1981), and more interested in women's issues (Conover, 1984). Other indicators of this cleavage, used less commonly, include sex role orientation (Sapiro, 1983; Klein, 1984), support or opposition to gender equality (Sears, Huddy, & Schaffer, 1986).

The 1985 NES pilot study yields both of these standard findings: mixed evidence on the "gender gap," yet some cleavage among women according to their perceived closeness to women as a group.

The 1985 Pilot Study

The findings reported below are based on the 1985 National Election Studies Pilot study and is solely concerned with the national cross-section sample (N=380). Items are largely drawn from the 1985 pilot but in a few cases 1984 pre and post-election it4ms are used. Appropriate references will be made whenever this occurs.

Our primary goal is to focus on women as an interest group. Therefore dependent variables concerned support for policies and candidates furthering the group's interests.

Support for women's issues was based on support for increased spending on childcare for working mothers, affirmative action programs for women and improving the position of women. Child care was the program on which the largest percentage of respondents wanted more spent (44%), improving the position of women was next (29%) and affirmative action programs the least popular (23%). A single dimension underlied all three variables accounting for 65% of the variance and items were additively combined to form a single scale. Support for Geraldine Ferraro was also relevant, as the first female major-party nominee on a presidential ticket. This was based solely on 1984 post-election thermometer ratings; the mean thermometer rating was 55. Finally, opposition to President Reagan was used, since he was generally not supportive of women's issues or supported by women's groups.

Support for Reagan was assessed by two items in 1985 -- thermometer ratings of Reagan and evaluations of Reagan's handling of the presidency (r=.77). Items were standardized and combined to form a scale with a mean of 5 and a standard deviation of 3. In 1985 most respondents rated Reagan positively giving him an average

themometer rating of 69. A further 79% approved of his handling of the presidency.

There is no clear gender gap in support for women's issues in the 1985 Pilot study (greater spending on child care for working women, affirmative action programs, and programs that improve the position of women), or liking for Ferraro, Mondale, and Reagan in 1984 (Table 1). Women are slightly more supportive of women's issues, Ferraro, and Mondale, and less supportive of Reagan, but none of these differences reach significance.

Women in the 1985 pilot are, however, divided on the basis of their "closeness" to women and this has predictable consequences. Women who felt close to other women were significantly more likely to support women's issues, liked Ferraro more, and liked Reagan and voted for him less (Table 1).

A smaller percentage of women felt close to feminists (14%), but this distinction had even more marked political effects. Women who felt close to feminists were even more supportive of women's issues and Ferraro, and more opposed to Reagan. A mere 29% of women close to feminists reporting having voted for Reagan in 1984 compared to 66% of those who did not feel this closeness. Our aim is to explore the theoretical origins of this intra-group political divisiveness.

These findings are consistent with the reference group approach. However, they test only the effects of a positive reference group: identification with the ingroup. They do not test for negative reference group effects; i.e., that group identification actually masks an underlying conflict with men, and generates policy and candidate preferences opposing that outgroup. This negative reference group approach does not, however, appear to be borne out by findings in the 1985 pilot study. Women who report not feeling close to men (80%) are no different in their support for women's issues or 1984 candidates than the 20% of women who do report feeling this closeness (Table 2). Likewise there are almost no significant political differences between women who feel close to women only (40%), close to men only (9%), close to both (12%), and close to neither (39%).

Table 1

Differences in Support for Women's Issues and 1984
Candidates by Gender and Group Closeness

	Women	Men	Close to Women	Not Close	Close to Feminists	Not Close
				Women Only		
% (N)	55 (192)	45 (155)	48 (101)	52 (109)	14 (29)	86 (181)
Women's Issues ($\bar{X}$) [a]	5.2	4.8	5.5**	4.7	6.7**	4.9
Ferraro ($\bar{X}$)[b]	57.0	53.0	62.0**	51.0	67.0*	55.0
Mondale ($\bar{X}$) [b]	54.0	50.0	56.0	52.0	60.0	53.0
Reagan ($\bar{X}$) [b]	65.0	67.0	61.0	69.0*	45.0	68.0**
1984 Reagan Vote (%)	60	64	53	70*	29	66**

* p< .05

** p<.01

a. Support for greater spending on childcare, affirmative action and government programs
   that improve the position of women. Standardized scale with $\bar{X}$=5 and SD=3.

b. 0-100 feeling thermometer scale

Table 2

Gender Conflict: The Effects of Group Identification
on Policy and Candidate Support

Women Only

	Close to Men	Not Close to Men
% (N)	20 (43)	80 (167)
Women's Issues	5.2	5.1
Ferraro	56.0	58.0
Mondale	54.0	55.0
Reagan	66.0	63.0
1984 Reagan Vote	60	61

	Close to Women Only	Close to Both	Close to Men Only	Close to Neither
% (N)	40 (76)	12 (23)	9 (18)	39 (74)
Women's Issues	5.6	4.5	5.6	4.8
Ferraro	62.0	54.0	62.0	50.0
Mondale	55.0	52.0	58.0	52.0
Reagan	61.0	64.0	62.0	71.0
1984 Reagan Vote	51	57	67	70

The political consequences of group identification seem clear, then, and reflect differences among women rather than conflict with men. What is unresolved, however, is the theoretical explanation lying behind such divisions among women. Findings consistent with reference group theory could reflect any of three quite different

underlying theoretical patterns. Group identification may be accounted for by shared interests with other group members, as the group interest theory would suggest. On the other hand it could be due to affects toward such political symbols as feminism. A third possibility is offered by social identity theory. This entails an explanation for political divisions among women based on women's identities, the extent to which their personal status is affected by the group, and a dissatisfaction with women's societal status (Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Tajfel, 1982). The new items developed for the 1985 pilot study stem from this theoretical approach, and present a contrast with these otehr two theoretical approaches.

According to social identity theory, merely categorizing oneself as a group member is sufficient to cause bias toward other in-group members (Tajfel, 1978; Brewer, 1979). In-group bias has obvious implications for group solidarity in the political realm since support for candidates or public policies benefitting the group can easily be viewed as an extension of such favoritism.

One implication of this cognitive approach is that group bias must depend in part on perceiving group members as homogeneous, since categories are formed on the basis of similarity among those included (Campbell, 1967). Indeed ingroup bias is eradicated when group members are explicitly dissimilar from each other (Allen & Wilder, 1975). Members of large heterogeneous social categories clearly do not always perceive members as completely heterogeneous. Moreover there is evidence that in-group members handle this perceived diversity by dividing fellow in-group members into distinct subcategories (Brewer & Lui, 1984). These additional distinctions within the in-group should reduce in-group bias toward the larger group, and thus reduce solidary support for the in-group in the political realm.

The application to women is obvious. Women may lack identities as members of the larger category and instead divide themselves into divisive subcategories. We have ample evidence that women are a disunited group. Intra-group conflict emerged most noticeably in the debates over ERA, and it has further characterized most of the issues in which gender has been relevant. Other findings suggest that the origins of this split may be between homemakers and working women (Poole & Zeigler, 1985), suggesting key subcategories to be measured.

Status-based motivation are another key determinant of in-group bias. Recent studies within social psychology suggest that in-group bias is stronger when group status is low (Brown, 1984; Branthwaite & Jones, 1975; Mummenday & Schreiber, 1983; Hewstone, Bond, & Wan, 1983; Jaspars & Lalljee, 1982). The research, presumably, is that adopting a social identity leads to adopting that group's ascribed status. For example, a woman's adoption of an identity as a worker, in a society where increasing numbers of women work and have greater prestige, should have positive consequences for her personal self-esteem (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). According to this view in-group bias is engaged in to maintain or elevate the group's standing, and thereby, one's own status. Hencce the working woman's support for

ERA would be viewed as a desire to elevate both personal and group status. The lower the group's status, the greater the impetus to engate in in-group bias.

Thus social identity theory can plausibly account for political divisions among women by arguing that women vary in the extent to which their identities, and consequently their personal status, are allied with those of other women (or different subgroups of women). Our goal is to develo the social identity approach to political behavior among women while distinguishing it from existing theoretical approaches such as economic group interest and symbolic politics.

In doing this two different sources of potential cleavage will be developed. The first focuses on the impact of women's identities as workers and/or homemakers, and their concomitant status concerns. This particularly needs to be differentiated from the economic group-interest approach that also separates working women from those not working. For instance, observed differences between working and non-working women in support for women's policy issues may reflect greater concern among working women about job discrimination and pay inequity. While this seems an inutitively plausible notion, based on economic interest, it appears not to be borne out by the findings. Very few women at all see their finances as being interdependent with that of other women (Sears, Jessor, & Gahart, 1983; Kinder, Rosenstone, H.& Hansen, 1983). Close economic associations between the genders may eradicate this potential source of group interest. The status implications of their identities may have more powerful political effects. The second regards women's identities as feminists as critical.

This especially needs to be untangled from a symbolic politics approach, which treats group symbols as psychologically equivalent to any other political symbols that carry positive or negative valences. Particularly potent symbols surrounding women's issues include feminism and the women's movement. What is of interest here is the degree to which feelings about feminism divide women in their support for relevant policies and candidates. The impact of affects toward the symbols of feminism will be distinguished from a social identity approach, in which a personal identity and shared status interests with other feminists are more crucial.

The key variables for the social identity approach are, then, (1) subjective social identity (as a woman and as a member of various subcategories of women), (2) perceived interdependence of status outcomes with other women, and (3) perceived status of women (and various subcategories of women). For the economic interest approach, they are perceived financial well-being of (1) the self, and (2) women in general. For the symbolic politics approach, they are affects toward the various relevant group symbols.

Identity as a Woman

In the current study we asked women how often they thought of themselves as women, homemakers, working women, and feminists (Table 3). The vast majority thought of themselves as women most of the time (91%), and the 9% that did so less often were not discernibly different from the rest in terms of their age, marital status, education, occupation and work status. Furthermore a social identity as a woman had no obvious political consequences in terms of the dependent variables indicated earlier (support for women's issues, Ferraro, and Reagan).

Table 3

Social Identity Items

Sometimes a woman might think of herself as woman, as a working women, and sometimes as a homemaker. Do you think of yourself as a homemaker, most of the time, some of the time, occasionally or never?

	most of time	some times	occasion- ally	never
woman	91	6	2	2
working woman	67	13	6	14
homemaker	50	27	17	6
feminist	21	20	32	28

Thus women are not much divided in placing themselves in the most general category, women. Gender is a pervasive social category that almost all women frequently use to define themselves. Women simply think of themselves as women and this has no political ramifications.

Worker/Homemaker Identities

Women also endorse subcategory identities, though not as often. The majority of women think of themselves as workers and homemakers most of the time (Table 3). Our hypothesis that homemaker and worker identities are at odds with each other is partially confirmed, with the two identities being slightly negatively correlated ($r=-.16$, p .05). Women were thus easily divided into a three way typology: those thinking of themselves more often as workers than homemakers (39%), more as homemakers than workers (24%), and equally often as
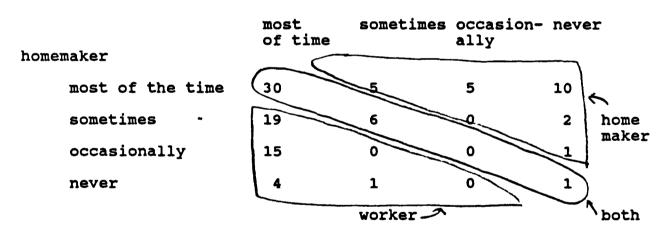
both (37%), as portrayed in the bottom half of Table 4. Note that
most of those thinking of themselves as both workers and homemakers
think of themselves as both most of the time.

Table 4

Worker and Homemaker Identities

	1.	2.	3.	4.
1. Woman	1.0			
2. Working woman	.14*	1.0		
3. Homemaker	.23**	-.16*	1.0	
4. Feminist	.09	-.09	.06	1.0

Note: entries are correlation coefficients

worker

homemaker	most of time	sometimes	occasionally	never
most of the time	30	5	5	10
sometimes	19	6	0	2
occasionally	15	0	0	1
never	4	1	0	1

homemaker

worker

both

Note: entries are percentage of all women.

These measures of women's subjective work-linked identities
provide more information than simple demographic variables. They
are clearly related to actual work status but not identical to it,
as shown in Table 5. The majority of women currently working view
themselves as workers, while the majority of non-working women view
themselves as homemakers. Furthermore most professional or well
educated women describe themselves as workers, whereas women with
the least education or who work in service or laboring jobs describe
themselves as both homemakers and workers, and homemakers in turn
tend to be less well educated than workers. Not surprisingly workers

are also significantly younger and more apt to be single than homemakers. In other words women who think of themselves as workers tend to be young, single, well educated, professional working women, whereas women thinking of themselves as homemakers are older, non-working, less well-educated women. Women who think of themselves as both workers and homemakers tend to be intermediate: more inclined to be currently working than homemakers, but similarly less well educated, and working in non-professional occupations. Our three way typology of worker/homemaker identities thus has some appeal because it is logically linked to work status but not synonymous with it.

Table 5

Background Determinants of Worker/Homemaker Identities_

	Worker	Worker/ Homemaker	Homemaker
% (N)	39 (82)	37 (79)	24 (50)
Working now	53	38	8
Not working χ^2 =51.2**	14	29	55
Professional	53	30	17
Sales/technical	38	38	25
Service/laborer χ^2 =6.67	43	46	11
Age (X)	39	45	57 *
Married	32	43	25
Single χ^2 =5.61*	47	31	22
High school or less	27	43	30
Some college	47	31	22
College + χ^2 =10.12**	55	29	16
Most women at work	44	35	21
50/50	49	33	18
mostly men	38	45	17

Note; entries are row percentages except for mean age.

The political consequences of this worker homemaker distinction are consistent with social identity theory, but in simple bivariate form are non-significant. Workers were more supportive of women's issues than homemakers (5.4 vs 4.5), more supportive of Ferraro (60 vs 54) and less supportive of Reagan (4.6 vs 5.1).

The crux of social identity theory is that members' identities have political consequences because their status is interdependent with the status of the group as a whole. Status interdependence was assessed with two items asking respondents whether the respect they received from others would increase, decrease, or stay the same if a) women were more actively involved in running the country and b) women were treated with more respect (Table 6). They were moderately correlated ($r = .21$, $p < .05$).

Table 6

Status Interdependence Items

If women/homemakers/feminists were more actively involved in running the affairs of this country: Do you think this would increase the respect you personally receive from others, decrease it, or wouldn't it have any effect on you? Would this increase a little or a lot?

	Increase a lot	Increase a little	No effect
Women	15	17	68
Homemakers	10	13	77
Feminists	6	10	83

If women in this country received greater respect, would this increase the respect you receive from others, decrease it or wouldn't it have any effect on you? Would this increase the respect you personally receive a lot or just a little?

	Increase a lot	Increase a little	No effect
Women	18	17	65
Homemakers	15	22	64

These two items yielded a reasonable distribution: 18% of women claimed interdependence (that their status would increase a little or a lot) under both sets of circumstances, 29% claimed interdependence on just one, and 53% felt their status would remain unaffected in either situation. An additive scale combining the two was used in subsequent analyses as an index of status

interdependence with women (Table 7). A parallel pair of items was asked for felt status interdependence with homemakers, with very similar distributions, (Table 7) from which a second additive scale was created.

Table 7

Cross-Tabulations of Status Interdependence Items

Women

Women received more respect

	Increase a lot	Increase a little	No effect
Women run country			
Increase a lot	6	2	5
Increase a little	1	9	7
No effect	11	6	53

Note: entries are percentage of all women.

Homemakers

Homemakers received more respect

	Increase a lot	Increase a little	No effect
Homemakers run country			
Increase a lot	4	3	3
Increase a little	2	6	5
No effect	8	13	56

Note: entries are percentage of all women.

Experiencing status interdependence with other women is linked in predictable ways to women's background characteristics, as shown in Table 8. The majority of working women, and women with a college degree, feel status interdependence with other women. Women feeling status interdependence with homemakers, on the other hand, demonstrate the opposite pattern of demographic characteristics, coming heavily from non-working rather than professional or well

educated women do (Table 8).

Table 8

Background Determinants of Status Interdependence

	Women		Homemakers	
	A lot/ little	No effect	A lot/ little	No effect
% (N)	46 (96)	54 (114)	44 (76)	56 (98)
Working now	51	49	35	65
Not working	35	65	57	43
	$\chi^2 = 3.85$**		$\chi^2 = 7.83$**	
Professional	43	53	22	78
Sales/technical	44	56	42	58
Service/laborer	54	46	43	57
	$\chi^2 = 1.13$		$\chi^2 = 7.28$**	
Age (X)	43	46	43	47
Married	40	60	37	63
Single	53	47	40	60
	$\chi^2 = 3.83$**		$\chi^2 = .20$	
High school or less	39	61	38	62
Some college	55	45	49	51
College +	53	47	26	74
	$\chi^2 = 5.15$*		$\chi^2 = 5.11$*	
Most women at work	48	53	40	60
50/50	43	57	43	57
mostly men	55	45	34	66

The political consequences of status interdependence with women are considerable, in simple bivariate form. Perceived status interdependence with women results in greater support for women's issues (5.9 vs 4.5; $p < .05$), Ferraro (63 vs 52; $p < .05$), and greater opposition to Reagan (4.02 vs 5.3): $p < .05$). The only Significant consequence of status interdependence with homemakers is greater opposition to Reagan (4.3 vs 5.2; $p < .05$).

Social identity theory suggests that identities and status interdependence might interact, such that women (or homemakers) who feel both might demonstrate the greatest political support for women's issues. Status interdependence and social identity were

clearly related. A majority of workers perceived their status to be
interdependent with women in general (63%), whereas a minority of
worker/homemakers (34%) and homemakers (35%) felt this to be the
case. Similarly, a majority of homemakers felt their status to be
interdependent with homemakers' (50%) but only a minority of the
other two groups felt the same way (34% of workers and 36% of worker
/homemakers). However, a series of ANOVA's testing for interaction
effects between social identity and interdependence uncovered
nothing of significance. Thus felt status interdependence with women
has consistent effects on the political, dependent variables, which
mere identities as workers or homemakers do not. Better educated,
single, working women may bemore inclined to support women's issues,
and candidates that do the same, because they feel their personal
status to be tied to the social standing of women more generally.

Perceived Group Status

An additional component to the social identity theory is that
groups' perceived societal status should influence their ingroup
bias. To test this notion respondents were asked to rate the
societal standing of women, workers, homemakers, and feminists on a
1 to 10 scale (Table 9).

Generally speaking, working women were perceived as having the
highest status, feminists and homemakers the least, and women in
general were in between (Table 9). Men and women tended to rate
status in similar manner, and among women,

Table 9

Perceived Group Status

Some groups of people in our society enjoy higher social status than
others. By this I mean they are thought of by others more favorably,
are treated with greater respect, and work in higher ranking
positions. Imagine a ladder with 10 rungs or steps. The top or tenth
rung or step represents the highest social status, the bottom, or
first rung or step repsresents the lowest social status. What rung
on this imaginary ladder do you think represents the social status
of:

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
women	1	1	0	6	22	18	21	18	6	7
Working women	1	1	1	2	9	19	26	24	10	9
Homemakers	1	6	7	12	24	17	16	8	2	6

Note: entries are percentage of all women

---

perceptions of group status did not vary closely with identities
(see Table 10). Men and homemakers viewed homemakers as having
higher status than did either of the other two groups (Table 10).
However, regression analyses with education and age added to
identities as predictors eradicates any differences. There is no
real tendency to rate one's own group as either especially high or
especially low in status.

Social Identity Theory

Regression analyses presented in Table 11 verify that the
political consequences of status interdependence with women are more
powerful than identities as workers or homemakers per se. Holding
an identity as a homemaker has a slight negative effect on support
for women's issues but this is much smaller than the large positive
effect of felt status interdependence with women (Column 1). Status
interdependence with women also has a large positive effect on
liking for Ferraro, and a somewhat smaller negative effect on
support for Reagan.

Table 10

Group Status

	Women	Men
Women	6.5	6.8
Homemakers	5.4	5.9 *
Working Women	7.1	7.1
Feminists	5.1	5.0

	Workers	Workers/ Homemakers	Homemakers
Women	6.3	6.4	6.8
Homemakers	5.0	5.5	6.1 *
Working Women	6.9	7.2	7.5
Feminists	5.0	5.3	5.2

Note: entries are mean status ratings.

* p .01

Table 11

Social Identity and Economic Interests:
Regressions Analyses for Women Only

| | Women's | | Ferraro | | Reagan | |
	I	II	III	IV	V	VI
Identity						
Worker	-.02	-.05	.01	.02	.00	-.02
Homemaker	-.14	-.15*	.02	-.02	.01	.07
status Interdependence						
Women	.29**	.34**	.34**	.34**	-.18	-.19*
Homemaker	.08	.03	-.10	-.12	-.14	-.09
Group Status						
Worker	.23	.24**	-.02	.06	.19*	.12
Homemaker	-.07	-.06	-.12	-.14	.12	.17
Economic Interests						
Income		-.20**		-.11		.25**
Well-being		-.02		.19**		-.25**
Women's well-being		.19**		.10		-.08
R^2	.171	.236	.106	.170	.138	.271

Note: entries are standardized regression coefficients

* p<.05

** p .01

The effects of perceived group status on political support run contrary to expectations. The ingroup bias notion suggests that low perceived status should produce solidarity. But <u>high</u> status of

working women is associated with support for women's issues policies. It does have the expected effect on Reagan support, however: low perceived status of working women results in greater opposition to Reagan.

The effects of status interdependence are not merely due to the demographic factors associated with it. When working, age, education, and marital status are added to the equations, the effects of status interdependence and group status presented in Table 11 remain largely unaffected. Furthermore effects of status interdependence and group status are independent of the effects of closeness to women or sex role orientation, which both have separate positive effects on all three dependent variables. All effect also remain when party identification and ideology are controlled for, (except for the effects of status interdependence with women on support for Reagan.

Social Identity versus Economic Interest

These effects of status interdependence and group status could represent nothing more than the effects of economic interests. To test this notion a series of items tapping personal and group finances were added to regression equations shown above. Personal finances were assessed with household income and perceptions of deterioration or improvement in personal finances over the last year (subsequently referred to as financial well-being). A parallel item was asked about the financial well-being of women as a group over the last year tapping perceptions of group finances.

When added to the regression equations in Table 11, economic interests have significant additional effects on the dependent variables over and above those due to status interdependence. Low household income contributes to support for women's issues (column II) and opposition to Reagan (column VI). Perceptions of poor personal financial well-being result in greater support for Ferraro, and greater opposition to Reagan. Similarly, women who view women's finances as deteriorating are more supportive of women's issues.

Interaction Effects

The key prediction for a social identity approach is that perceived interdependence and low group status will have its largest effects on political solidarity among those with the appropriate social identity; that is, interdependence perceived group status should interact with social identity. Hence women with identities as working women are should be the most politically influenced by the status of working women, and homemakers should be most concerned about the status of homemakers. To test for these interactions, the regression analyses presented in Table 11 were repeated within the three identity categories of worker, homemaker, and worker/homemaker. The findings are presented in Table 12 and contain three important points.

The first is that status interdependence with women results in greater support for women's issues and Ferraro, and opposition to

Table 12

Comparing Social Identity and Economic Interest Approaches: Workers and Homemakers

	WOMEN'S ISSUES			FERRARO			REAGAN		
	Workers	Workers & Homemakers	Homemakers	Workers	Workers & Homemakers	Homemakers	Workers	Workers & Homemakers	Homemakers
	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX
Status Interdependence									
Women	1.32(.36)**	1.14(.47)*	1.18(.69)°	12.45(3.74)**	15.15(5.89)*	12.45(6.34)°	-.96(.43)*	-.10(.54)	-1.77(.60)**
Homemakers	.27(.50)	-.09(.57)	-.17(.61)	-3.72(5.13)	-13.48(6.76)°	.54(5.57)	-.46(.60)	-.59(.62)	-.19(.53)
Group Status									
Workers	.35(.16)*	.41(.17)*	.24(.24)	-2.14(1.62)	3.02(2.00)	.44(2.21)	.34(.19)°	.07(.18)	.27(.21)
Homemakers	-.20(.13)	-.11(.13)	.12(.19)	-1.08(1.37)	-2.07(1.56)	-3.45(1.72)°	.23(.16)	.22(.14)	.37(.16)*
Economic Interests									
Income	-.04(.04)	-.13(.04)	-.09(.06)	.05(.43)	-1.38(.53)	-.08(.56)	.07(.05)	.14(.05)	.15(.05)**
Financial well-being	-.26(.24)	.67(.27)*	-.69(.36)°	-1.45(2.48)	11.05(3.23)**	9.76(3.27)**	-.16(.29)	-1.14(.30)**	-.88(.31)**
Women's financial well-being	.75(.40)°	.39).43)	.63(.49)	8.75(4.11)*	-1.55(5.14)	5.40(4.48)	-.43(.48)	-.34(.37)	-1.18(.4)**
R^2	.298	.333	.194	.182	.274	.334	.216	.351	.495

Note: Entries are unstandardized regression coefficients (standard errors): °p < .10   *p < .05   **p < .01

Reagan, regardless of identity. That is, status interdependence has a blanket main effect, contrary to the social identity approach.

The second point is that group status has political consequences for women who identity with the specific subgroup, but in the direction contrary to social identity theory. Workers and worker/homemakers who ascribe lower status to working women are the least supportive of women's issues (Columns I and II in Table 12). Similarly, homemakers who ascribe lower status to homemakers are more supportive of Ferraro and more opposed to Reagan (Columns VI and IX of Table 12).

The third point is that identity groups vary in a way contrary to group interest theory as to whether status or economic interests have the greater impact on political support. Among women identified as workers, who should be most affected by women's shared economic interests, status has a greater impact than economic interests on political support in all three cases. do For these working women, status interdependence with women regularly has its predicted effects, but personal finances have no political effect and the financial well-being of women as a group has only a slight negative effect on support for Ferraro. In contrast, political support among homemakers and worker/homemakers is consistently affected by personal finances, with poor financial situations associated in most cases with pro-women and anti-Reagan political stances.

Women are thus politically divided over both status and economics. Yet it is not the same women that are concerned about both kinds of interests. On the one hand young, working, well educated professional women support women's issues because of their vested interests in women's status. On the other hand, homemakers, women with lower incomes, and those who perceive their finances as deteriorating, tend to support women's issues because of implications for their personal finances. While workers and homemakers do not take vastly different political stands, then, the bases of their support for women's issues and political candidates differ.

Feminists and Non-Feminists

A second potential cleavage among women could result in great divisiveness: that between feminists and non-feminists. A social identity approach suggests an important role for women's personal identities as feminists. As already noted, these vary considerably between women (Table 3). Unlike worker and homemaker identities, however, these have little foundation in women's demographic characteristics, as shown in Table 13. Feminists are not significantly different from non-feminists in terms of their age, marital status, education, occupation, or work status. Nor does status interdependence with feminists is less frequently reported than status interdependence with women or homemakers (Table 3). And it has no significant demographic correlates either.

Table 13

Demographics	Feminists	Non-Feminists	Interdependent with feminists	Not Interdependent
% (N)	39 (67)	61 (103)	17 (29)	83 (145)
Working Now	34	66	16	84
Not Working	49	51	17	83
Professional	42	58	13	87
Sales/technical	35	65	27	73
Service/laborer	43	57	16	84
Age (X)	45	46		
Married	39	61	17	83
Single	59	41	17	83
High school or less	42	58	13	87
Some college	37	63	17	83
College +	42	58	27	73
Most women @ work	38	63	16	84
50/50	40	60	19	81
mostly men	33	67	14	86

Note: entries are row percentages

Women thinking of themselves as feminists are more supportive of women's issues (5.6 vs 4.9), significantly more supportive of Ferraro (63 vs 53), and less supportive of Reagan (4.5 vs 4.9). Feminists are also much more likely to feel status interdependence with feminists (30% vs 8%), and rate feminists as having significantly higher status (5.7 vs 4.8). Thus feminists and non-feminists differ in their political support and also in perceptions of their status interests.

To test the overall effects of these social identity variables, feminist identity, status interdependence and ratings of feminists' status were entered into regression equations predicting our political dependent variables. All three sets of status variables affected the dependent variables but in different ways. Most important, feeling status interdependence with feminists resulted in greater support for women's issues, and having an identity as a feminist resulted in more support for Ferraro, as might be expected.

Surprisingly enough, higher ratings of feminists' status resulted in less opposition to Reagan. Overall, three status variables account for approximately 10% of variance for each of the three dependent variables.

Social Identity versus Symbolic Politics

As indicated above, feminist identities and other related status considerations have no simple demographic basis. These three status variables associated with feminist identities are interrelated (see Appendix I) so entering them into regression equations separately diminishes the individual significance of any one. So their effects may be due to women's support for or opposition to the symbols of feminism more generally, rather than to real feelings of status interdependence with other women. This hypothesis stems from symbolic politics theory which stresses the importance of group linked symbols. To test between the social identity and symbolic politics approaches, thermometer ratings of feminists and the women's movement were combined (X=55) and added to the regression equations presented in Table 14.

The data indicate support for both approaches. Affect toward feminists did not eradicate the positive effect of status interdependence with feminists on support for women's issues. But it did have a positive effect itself over and above status concerns. Furthermore both the status and symbolic effectshold with party identification and ideology considered. All this is shown in Table 14 (column II). However, feelings about feminists did eradicate the effect of feminist identity on support for Ferraro (Column IV).

Table 14

Feminist Social Identity versus Symbolic Politics:
Regression Analyses for Women

	Women's Issues		Ferraro		Reagan	
	I	II	I	II	I	II
Identity						
Feminist	-.11	.02	-.18*	-.02	.06	-.08
Interdependence						
Feminist	.27**	.22*	.16	.06	-.11	.01
Group Status						
Feminists	.11	.08	-.10	-.12*	.20**	.17**
Symbolic Politics						
Feminists/Women Movement		.22**		.27**		.01
Ideology		-.24**		-.10		.11
Partisanship		-.17**		-.35**		.61**
R^2	.111	.274	.089	.313	.103	.472

Note: entries are standardized regression coefficients

* $p < .05$

** $p < .01$

Parenthetically it might be noted that the effects of feminist identities and status concerns are independent of feeling close to feminists and sex role orientation. When added to regression equations, closeness to feminists resulted in additionally greater support for women's issues and greater opposition to Reagan. Holding an egalitarian sex role orientation resulted in additionally greater support for women's issues and support for Ferraro.

Feminism is clearly a source of political divisiveness among women and appears to have some basis in personal identities and status considerations surrounding feminists, as well as in symbolic

affects toward feminists and the women's movement. What remains unresolved is how this series of differences maps onto political distinctions between workers and homemakers.

Work-related and Feminist Identities

What remains unresolved is how this series of differences maps onto political distinctions between workers and homemakers. When feminist and work linked social identity items are added to regression equations status interdependence with women (which is more prevalent among workers), is the factor most strongly promoting support for women's issues, followed by perceived status of working women, and status interdependence with feminists (Table 15). Similar trends are also observed in support for Ferraro and Reagan but are not presented in tabular form. The addition of economic factors to this equation eradicates the effects of interdependence with feminists. Thus status considerations associated with working are more politically impactful than those linked to feminists. Liking for feminists does, however, also promote support for women's issues over and above the effects of feminist identities and status concerns.

Table 15
Comparing Social Identity, Group Interest and Symbolic Politics Approaches

Women's Issues

	I	II	III
Worker/Homemaker			
Worker ID	-.01	-.04	-.08
Homemaker ID	-.12	-.13	-.13
Interdependence			
Women	.24*	.30**	.25**
Homemakers	.02	-.02	-.01
Group Status			
Workers	.20*	.21*	.20*
Homemakers	-.08	-.08	-.02
Feminist			
Identity	-.08	-.08	-.02
Interdependence	.15*	.11	.08
Status	.03	.04	.00
Economic Interests			
Income		-.18*	-.18*
Well-being		.04	.03
Women's Finances		-.18*	-.16*
Symbolic Attitudes			
Feminists/Women's movement			.21
R^2	.202	.256	.283

Note: entries are standardized regression coefficients
* p<.05 ** p<.01

What then is the relationship between feminist and work linked
status concerns? Status interdependence with either women,
homemakers, or feminists is stronger among women holding an identity
as a feminist, than for women with identities as workers or
homemakers. Furthermore all kinds of status interdependence, and a
feminist identity are in turn linked to support for feminists and
the women's movement (Appendix I, Table 1). Barring the strong
correlations among all rankings of group status, these relationships
are the strongest among the newly developed measures. In a factor
analysis of all identity, status interdependence, group status, and
women's thermometer ratings, they emerge as a single "feminist"
factor (Appendix, Table 2).

Of this constellation of feminist items interdependence with
women, and support for feminists subsume the individual effects of
feminist identity and status interdependence on policy and candidate
support (see Table 15). Yet they are ultimately a part of a similar
"feminist" linked construct which has both a personal foundation in
work status, and educational attainment (via the determinants of
status interdependence with women), and more abstract symbolic
attitudes.

Distinctions between workers and homemakers, on the other hand,
emerge as a separate dimension in the factor analysis of all new
items. They do not themselves directly affect policy or candidate
support, but rather influence the way issues are construed, and
determine the role that feminist related items have on political
support. Policy and candidate support is clearly more of a feminist
issue among workers. Status interdependence with women and
considerations about the status of working women have more
consistent, and larger effects than among homemakers. The origin of
political support among homemakers, on the other hand, resides more
in their personal finances.

Recommendations
1) Status Interdependence. Status interdependence with women has the
strongest political effect of all the newly developed social
identity items and is best assessed by combining the two alternately
worded items. Interdependence with feminists has lesser, but
nevertheless consistent, impact, and interdependence with homemakers
has little if any. The top priority here is to include the two
status interdependece with women items, and secondarily the item
concerned with feminists which could profitably be expanded into two
items also.

2) Social Identity Items. While social identities as a worker and
homemaker do not have main effects on political support among women
they interact with status considerations, on the one hand, and
economic issues on the other. As such they should be asked in
subsequent NES studies. An identity as a woman had no political
consequences and should be dropped.

An identity as a feminist has no direct effects on political
support among women but items are closely related to existing

Page 24

thermometer ratings and provide an alternative explanation for the origins of feminist support. As such they are perhaps worth pursuing.

3) <u>Group</u> <u>Status</u>. The status of workers proved to be most influential, that of homemakers less so, and the effects of feminist status subsumed by other factors. These are a lower priority series of items, but are nonetheless interesting theoretical companions to identity and status interdependence items. One problem with the status items was a large method effect and a potential confusion over whether normative or personal estimates of group status were sought. Clarification of item wording and the replacement of an item series with individually worded items may be in order.

Table 1

Correlations Between All New Measures

	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.	10.	11.
Identities											
1.Woman											
2.Worker	.14*										
3.Homemaker	.23*	-.16*									
4.Feminist	.09	-.09	.06								
Status Interdep.											
5.Women	-.03	-.09	.17*	-.24**							
6.Homemakers	-.08	.17*	-.13	-.22**	.46**						
7.Feminists	-.07	-.03	.01	-.33**	.35**	.43**					
Group Status											
8.Women	.05	.16*	.04	-.14*	.00	.09	.05				
9.Workers	.01	.13*	.01	-.11	.00	.08	.08	.85**			
10.Homemakers	.10	.18*	-.01	-.12	.00	.13	.07	.50**	.46**		
11.Feminists	-.02	.05	.04	-.25**	.06	.17	.10	.61**	.58**	.44**	

Appendix I
Table 2

**Identities, Status Interdependence, Group Status
and Symbolic Group Attitudes Factor Analyses**

	Factor I	Factor II	Factor III	Factor IV
Identities				
Woman	-.12	-.06	-.14	.78
Worker	-.16	-.04	.64	-.08
Homemaker	-.04	.00	-.67	.30
Feminist	.18	.51	.02	.48
Status Interdep				
Women	-.04	.74	.32	-.23
Homemakers	.08	.77	-.32	-.12
Feminists	.01	.67	.02	.12
Group Status				
Woman	.91	-.04	.06	.04
Worker	.89	-.02	.05	.05
Homemaker	.70	.09	-.14	-.24
Feminist	.76	.17	.04	.09
Group Attitudes				
Women	.23	.13	.52	.26
Feminists/ women's movement	.15	.57	.49	.30