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# Group Discussion of Power among College Women

Tiffany Elizabeth Kelsey
*University of Tennessee - Knoxville*

To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a dissertation written by Tiffany Elizabeth Kelsey entitled "Group Discussion of Power among College Women." I have examined the final electronic copy of this dissertation for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, with a major in Psychology.

<div align="right">Dr. Schuyler Huck, Major Professor</div>

We have read this dissertation and recommend its acceptance:

Dr. Joy DeSensi, Dr. Mark Hector, Dr. P. Gary Klukken, Dr. J. Elaine Seat

<div align="right">Accepted for the Council:<br>
Dixie L. Thompson</div>

<div align="right">Vice Provost and Dean of the Graduate School</div>

(Original signatures are on file with official student records.)

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Accepted for the Council:

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Dr. Anne Mayhew
Vice Provost and Dean of Graduate Studies

(Original signatures are on file with official student records.)

Group Discussion of Power among College Women

A Dissertation
Presented for the
Doctor of Philosophy
Degree
The University of Tennessee

Tiffany Elizabeth Kelsey
August 2003

## Dedication

This work is dedicated to my grandmother, Caryl Kelsey. Her strength of character, love of life, pursuit of knowledge, and fear of nothing are inspiring. For her love and support I am deeply grateful.

Acknowledgments

Abstract

The present study addresses power in a discussion group format. The purpose of the study is to examine the experience of group discussion of power by college women and to test for an effect of that experience on measures of self-efficacy, attitudes about women, and depression. The study uses Foucault's definition of power and a postmodern feminist approach to therapy and research. Sixteen participants joined one of three discussion groups about power. Each group met three times to discuss their understanding and experiences of power. Pre-, post-, and delayed post-test measures of depression, self-efficacy, and attitude towards women were administered to all three discussion groups before the first group meeting, three weeks after the groups concluded, and again after three months. Individual interviews were conducted with ten participants after the last group meeting. In the interviews, participants elaborated on their thoughts about power and described their experience of participating in the discussion groups. A one-way, repeated measures analysis of variance was performed on the questionnaire data and revealed no significant changes on the measures over the course of the study. The content from each group discussion session was subjected to discourse analysis. Discourses on power over others, control over one's emotions, power in the workplace, and power in social situations were present. The contents of the individual interviews were transcribed and reviewed using discourse analysis. Discourses on conflict and manipulation, leadership, and gender roles were present. The group process in the discussion groups was analyzed in terms of the participation of members and the presence of inappropriate laughter, and the stated impact of the study on participants. The results are discussed in the context of the literature on power. Implications of the findings for feminism and the psychology of women are presented and recommendations are made for future research.

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Chapter I

Introduction

When my grandmother was born in 1912, women could not vote or attend most colleges; they had few career choices and little opportunity to play sports. The legal concepts of gender discrimination, sexual harassment, and marital rape did not exist and were not crimes. Women were seen as inferior to men intellectually, emotionally, physically, morally, and psychologically.

My grandmother recalls that her grandmother marched through the streets of Chicago with the Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) carrying a hatchet to break liquor bottles in the saloons. Though not a feminist organization, the WCTU was a women's organization angered by the domestic and social problems it believed were propagated by the alcohol, drugs, and prostitution that were prevalent in saloons. Women organized and fought for a cause in which they believed and, against great opposition, played a large role in the passage of prohibition.

Within my grandmother's lifetime, two waves of feminism have swept across America. First wave feminism increased women's access to power in the public realm. The rights to vote, gain access to higher education, and have a career were among the primary goals of the first wave feminist movement (Friedan, 1963). First wave feminists sought access to the public sphere, to participation in political, economic, and social institutions. Even when legal rights were gained, social change was slow, as it was still not socially acceptable for women to use these rights, or efforts were made to prevent it. Many women did not vote until long after they attained suffrage. A woman was not elected to the United States Senate until 1932 (Congressional Profile, n.d.). Careers other than sewing and nursing were mostly off-limits to women. Though some colleges educated women, such as Mount Holyoke, which opened its doors in 1837 (Friedan, 1963), higher education remained unavailable to most women.

In the 1960s and 1970s, second wave feminism reawakened the need for women to find equality, this time including the private as well as the public realms. The mantra of second wave feminism, "the personal is political," extolled the necessity of including private matters such as the family and sexuality in the power struggle (Griscom, 1991). Women had rights, feminists argued, not only to legal parity, but to fair treatment in their homes and in their personal lives. Into the social fabric were sewn such ideas as the acceptability of women having careers, the necessity of sports for girls in school, and the liberalization of views on sexuality. The first and second waves of feminism had many successes: women won the vote, Title VII forbade discrimination on the basis of sex, birth control methods became widely available, and so on (Estrich, 2000).

At the beginning of the new millennium, young American women can take for granted their access to equal public education, their right to vote, their career options, and their sexual freedom. More gains have been made since the seventies. For example, women were appointed to the Supreme Court and allowed to serve in military combat. However, women in Congress are few, violence against women is prevalent and largely unreported and women of color continue to suffer discrimination. Of the top 2,500 corporate executives in the U. S., 63 are women (Estrich, 2000). Only 14% of the members of both the U. S. House and Senate are female (Congressional Profile, n.d.). According to the U. S. Department of Justice, more than four million violent crimes against women occur every year, and women are more likely to be attacked by men they know than by strangers (Craven, 1996). It is estimated that one in six American women has been a victim of an attempted or completed rape in her lifetime and that 62% of the victims know their attackers (RAINN Statistics, n.d.). The Department of Justice reports that many violent crimes against women go unreported. Among female victims, only 54% of those who sustain injuries, and 39% of those who are not injured, report the crime to the police (Craven, 1996).

An increasing number of feminists (e.g., Tavris, 1992) are wondering why, decades after the second wave of the feminist movement began, the role of women is still debated and equality not accomplished. Estrich (2000) asks why more women are not choosing the high profile careers such as going for law firm partner, majoring in math, or reporting crimes against them. Estrich has said,

> While a constitutional equal rights amendment failed to win ratification, feminist lawyers won almost every major case in the Supreme Court, effectively eliminating gender lines from the law. The 'men only' signs went down. We put on our dress-for-success suits, convinced we could beat the boys at their own game if only they'd let us play. They did. We haven't. (pp. 7-8)

The floodgates were opened, but only a trickle of women have reached the seats of power. Today, feminists continue to address external legal, social, and economic barriers for women such as the *glass ceiling*, hostile work environments, differential treatment of girls in the classroom, lack of funding for research on women's health, and stigmas and myths about domestic violence and rape. Efforts to secure equal rights for women are still being made by feminist activists (NOW Key Issues, n.d.). And yet young women today are not taking full advantage of the opportunities afforded to them (Estrich, 2000).

Feminist researchers examine social, biological, and psychological reasons for the discrepancy between women's opportunities and the gains they have made. Though social and biological factors are likely also at play, the present study is focused on psychological factors related to women's social status. One task of psychologists is to understand what drives and motivates individuals. Feminist psychologists have embarked on a field of research into the subject of power as it relates to women today (e.g., Griscom, 1992; Lips, 1985; Winter, 1988). Questions being asked by feminist research include what women understand their options to be, why women make the choices they do given the options they have, and how they understand power. The present study seeks to elucidate how women's understanding of power may relate to their career choices and achievements.

        While women have come a long way since my great-great-grandmother first picked up her hatchet, the feminist movement has yet to achieve equality and personal freedom for women. This study seeks to understand what young women think about the power they have, and how those ideas relate to the broader position of women in society. The last frontier for the feminist movement in the search for equality may not be the courtroom or the voting booth, but the hearts and minds of women. Inequality may survive longest in the way women think and feel about themselves and each other.

Chapter II

Review of the Literature

The present study was undertaken from a postmodern feminist perspective. Accordingly, reviews of the literature on feminism and applications of feminist theory to psychology are presented in this chapter. The participants in this study were college women who engaged in group discussions of power. The psychological literature on power and the definition of power used in this study are described. Measures of self-efficacy, depression, and attitudes toward women's roles were administered to participants before and after their participation in discussion groups. Therefore, the literature on the relationship between power and self-efficacy, depression, and attitudes toward women's roles is also discussed.

This chapter comprises three sections. In the first section, postmodern feminism is defined and distinguished from other forms of feminism. Also, a review of applied feminist theory, specifically in feminist therapy and group therapy, is presented. In the second section, power is discussed. In this study, the definition of power presented by Michel Foucault is utilized. Foucault has been both praised and criticized by feminists, and both sides of the debate are presented in this chapter. In the third section, the topics of self-efficacy, depression, and attitudes toward women's roles are discussed. These three topics are constructs commonly found in the psychology literature that are closely related to the concept of power. Measures of these three constructs were administered to participants in the course of the present study.

Feminist Theory

The first section of this chapter is devoted to four aspects of feminist theory. First, postmodern feminism, the form of feminist theory guiding this research, is defined. Second, the application of feminist theory to the practice of psychology, specifically feminist therapy, is

reviewed. Third, the emergence of feminist groups is discussed and different types identified. Finally, the principles of feminist group therapy are presented.

Postmodern Feminism

In this work, feminism has thus far been referred to as a single entity. In reality, feminist thought is a diverse field and, over the years, has developed a group of subcategories including liberal, radical, Marxist-socialist, psychoanalytic, existentialist, postmodern, multi-cultural, global, and ecological feminisms (Tong, 1998). The present study utilizes a postmodern feminist perspective. To gain a better understanding of postmodern feminism, one must understand the basic divisions of feminist theory.

Enns (1992) has outlined the liberal, cultural, radical, and socialist feminist philosophies and the corresponding views on the causes of and possible solutions for sexism. Liberal or *mainstream* feminism points to socialization and gender conditioning as the roots of sexism and urges educational, legal, and political reform to address the problem. Cultural feminism places less emphasis on political change and more on promoting *female values* such as altruism, cooperation, and pacifism in society in general. Cultural feminists consider the emotional, nonrational, intuitive, and holistic qualities of women's experiences to be particularly important. Radical feminism holds that gender distinctions impact nearly every facet of life including thinking patterns, relationships, and work. Social institutions such as family and the church are seen as being based on a patriarchal system such that they must be broken down and rebuilt on completely new tenets. Socialist feminism attributes sexism to the systems of production and social class, the control of women's sexuality and reproduction, and gender socialization. Socialist feminism emphasizes race, class, and gender distinctions and places more importance on economic structure as both the cause of and solution to sexism.

While liberal, radical, cultural, and socialist feminism are four major divisions of feminist thought, there are many others. Postmodern feminism is another approach to feminist theory, focusing on the differences among all women. It looks at the relationship between power and knowledge (English, 2000). Similarly to other feminists, postmodern feminists try to avoid using male-centered terms and concepts. However, postmodern feminists differ from other feminists by not claiming a *feminine truth*, a feminine reality, or a single explanation for women's oppression (Tong, 1998). Some cultural feminists, for example, argue that women are by nature more nurturing and peace-loving and that those inherently female qualities can save the world (Tavris, 1992). Some Marxist feminists argue that economic disparities are the single explanation for women's oppression (Tong). By contrast, postmodern feminists claim there is no single truth to be discovered and no simple explanation for complex social structures.

Three major influences on postmodern feminism are existentialist Simone de Beauvoir, deconstructionist Jacques Derrida, and psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan (Tong, 1998). The work of these three individuals represents three principles of postmodern feminist theory. The first of the three influential theorists identified by Tong is Simone de Beauvoir. De Beauvoir has written of women's *otherness,* that women are seen as the *second sex*, the other, but postmodernist feminists do not see this as entirely negative. Rather, postmodern feminists see this otherness as an opportunity to look at societal norms and values from an outsider's perspective and to critique them and other aspects of the dominant, patriarchal culture (Tong, p. 195). The second of the three influential theorists identified by Tong is Jacques Derrida. Derrida and other deconstructionists have studied who is and who is not privileged in society, who is marginalized, who is disadvantaged, and who is favored (Tong, p. 195). Drawing from Derrida and deconstructionism, postmodern feminism is concerned with *deconstructing* the words and *texts* of life and society (Reed & Garvin, 1996) as they pertain to gender and sexuality. The term *texts* refers to written works, as well as trends in thought and ideas spread through word of mouth. The

third influential theorist identified by Tong is Jacques Lacan. Lacan has presented an interpretation of Freud that focuses on symbols, signs, and rituals of society, what he calls the *symbolic order*. Lacan has argued that individuals internalize the symbols and that Freud's developmental theory is a process of fitting into the symbolic order and submitting to the "law of the father" (Tong, p. 196). Postmodern feminists believe that women and femininity have been excluded from the symbolic order and criticize Freud's symbolic order as phallocentric and dualistic (Tong, p. 198). For postmodern feminists, the questions remain, then, of what symbols women have internalized, and what the developmental process is of learning to submit to a male authority.

In short, postmodern feminism understands social norms as patriarchal in nature and critiques them from an other's (woman's) perspective. It pays close attention to the words and expressions people employ to construct the narratives used to describe themselves and their world. From a psychological perspective, postmodern feminism studies what ideas and symbols have been internalized by women and how psychological development transpires within the cultural context.

Applied Feminist Theory

Feminist theory has been applied in a wide range of fields of study, among them psychology. The present study is a psychological one, so it is based not only on postmodern feminist theory, but also on the tradition of feminist psychology. Feminist theory has been applied to the practice of psychology in two central ways: the practice of therapy, and the conduction of research. A review of feminist principles of therapy follows; a review of feminist principles of research is included in Chapter III.

Though the participants in the present study did not engage in psychotherapy, the discussion groups in which they participated closely resembled feminist therapy groups. The

researchers and group leaders sought to interact with the participants in a manner that was consistent with feminist theory. This section of this chapter is devoted to a review of applied feminist theory. First, the principles of feminist therapy are discussed. Second, the more specific area of feminist group therapy is reviewed.

Feminist therapy.

Feminist psychologists have developed approaches to therapy that are based on broader feminist theory. Just as there are many types of feminism, there are many approaches to feminist therapy. The present study is guided by several principles that cut across feminist approaches to therapy. These principles promote the independence and autonomy of women, the examination of the connection between personal and political matters, and the formation of an egalitarian therapist-client relationship.

Brodsky and Hare-Mustin (1980) stated that the common goal of feminist therapists is to promote the development of autonomous individuals who have personal strength, independence, and trust in themselves and others. In order to achieve this goal, feminist therapy aims to help clients distinguish between personal problems and societal or situational problems. Clients are encouraged to change both themselves and their environment rather than to submit to an unfair situation (Brodsky & Hare-Mustin).

Enns (1992) identified two unifying themes within feminist psychotherapy: the notion that the personal is political, and the view of the therapist-client relationship as egalitarian. Beyond those essential similarities, liberal, cultural, and radical/socialist feminists take different approaches to therapy. Liberal feminist therapists view women's difficulties as the result of socialization and stereotyping. For example, therapists may employ cognitive-behavioral techniques to promote learning of new behaviors through such means as assertiveness. Cultural feminist therapists provide women-centered explanations for women's disorders and have worked

to alter mainstream therapeutic approaches to fit women's experiences. Radical/socialist feminist therapists criticize diagnostic categories as politically and economically skewed and reinforcing the patriarchal social structures. They believe that mainstream feminist therapists do not provide enough political analysis and consciousness-raising as part of therapy and instead have focused too much on intra-psychic elements.

In summary, in spite of the differences among feminist therapies, several overarching principles of feminist therapy remain. First of these principles is the goal of helping women become autonomous individuals with a healthy trust in themselves and others. The second principle is that the personal is political, and that interpersonal relationships reflect broader social and political issues related to women and women's rights. The third overarching principle of feminist therapy is that the client-therapist relationship should be egalitarian in nature. These three principles guide the present study.

Feminist groups.

The present study examines the group discussion of power among college women. Groups exactly like those included in the present study were not found in the literature; however, the use of groups is well-established in the feminist psychology literature. Two types of feminist groups are commonly found: consciousness-raising groups and feminist therapy groups. First to develop were the consciousness-raising groups that emerged in the 1960s. Consciousness-raising groups do not have leaders and are strictly political in nature. The aim of consciousness-raising groups is to promote feminist ideas and encourage political action by the participants (Enns, 1992). By the 1980s, feminist group therapy emerged. Feminist group therapy uses trained group leaders to facilitate change among and *empower* the participants (Enns, 1992).

The discussion groups held in the present study are neither therapy groups nor consciousness-raising groups, but they most closely resemble feminist therapy groups. The

groups in this study are not overtly political in nature like consciousness-raising groups. Like feminist therapy groups, the groups in this study do have group leaders trained in the practice of psychology. The discussions are open-ended and are designed to elucidate what the participants think and feel about the issue of power.  The discussion of participants' thoughts and feelings is an essential element of group therapy. Unlike feminist therapy groups, the participants in the present study were not seeking therapy or psychological help. Likewise, the leaders did not confront participants in a therapeutic manner, make interpretations, or encourage them to make any changes in their lives. The group leaders used their therapy skills to serve as non-judgmental listeners and to lead the groups in a manner that fostered discussion among the participants. The discussion groups in this study more closely resembled feminist therapy groups than consciousness-raising groups for two reasons. First, the groups in this study had trained leaders who helped the participants explore their thoughts and feelings, whereas consciousness-raising groups do not have leaders. Second, the goal of the groups in this study was to gain information from the participants and encourage them to discuss power, whereas consciousness-raising groups aim to change the participants' political views. Because the groups in this study most closely resemble feminist therapy groups, a further discussion of the principles of feminist group therapy follows.

The main focus of feminist group psychotherapy is empowerment of the participants. Empowerment can be defined in several ways. Kravetz and Maracek (1996) have defined empowerment in a group therapy setting as "helping women to discover their personal strengths, to achieve a sense of self-sufficiency, to view themselves as equals in interpersonal relationships, and to respect and trust themselves and other women" (p. 356). For feminist therapists, empowering women means helping them make changes in their lives and view themselves differently.

Another definition of empowerment has been offered by Smith and Siegel (1985). They have defined empowerment as "the process of helping a powerless individual or group to gain the necessary skills, knowledge, or influence to acquire control over their own lives and begin to influence the lives of others" (p. 13). Empowering a woman includes enabling her to recognize her own power and interpersonal tactics. She is encouraged to *rename* certain aspects of her behavior, to change the words she uses to describe herself. Those behaviors previously labeled as "manipulative" or "crazy" (p. 14) are renamed as attempts to achieve power given the social constraints under which she lives.

Reed and Garvin (1996) have outlined 13 principles of feminist practice of group psychotherapy. The principles are described in three groups. Four relate to social and political issues, two relate to the role of the therapist, and seven relate to the group process itself. The first four of the principles define the importance of social and political issues to the group itself. First, social justice and social change are major goals of therapy. In this, feminist therapists guard against encouraging clients to adapt to unjust situations. Instead, therapists help clients identify ways they would like to change and help them learn and practice new skills in order to bring about that change. Second, therapists act from feminist values, theory, and knowledge. Feminist values emphasize women's strengths and critically examine critically gender role expectations and stereotypes. Feminist practice is informed by current research and the experience of feminist therapists. Third, therapists use the processes of *praxis*, defined as the interrelation between theory, practice, reflection, and action. Therapists bring theory to the group as a way for clients to understand their experience, and they incorporate the experiences of clients into their theories. Fourth is the feminist mantra, the personal is political. This idea is a key concept in practice of feminist group psychotherapy according to Reed and Garvin. In this, events at the personal level are understood to be related to events at the societal level; therefore, changes in the individual must be considered in a social and cultural context.

The next two of Reed and Garvin's (1996) 13 principles of feminist practice of group therapy define the role of the therapist. The first of the principles related to the role of the therapist is that therapists are to engage in their own ongoing process of self-reflection and consciousness-raising. Self-reflection refers to reflection of the self in relation to theory, one's own socialization and cultural background, and one's areas of privilege and disadvantage. The second principle related to the role of the therapist is that therapists pay serious and lasting attention to all sources of oppression. For the group leader, this means examining one's own life and paying particular attention to the ways in which one has been privileged. In the group, participants explore dynamics of privilege. They examine how a person with multiple disadvantages can have an entirely different experience from someone with a single disadvantage.

The remaining seven of Reed and Garvin's (1996) 13 principles of feminist group psychotherapy involve the process of the group itself. The first of the remaining seven principles is the reconceptualization and reexamination of power. One type of power is social status; the effects of this type of power are examined in therapy. The second principle is that process and product are equally valued. Feminist groups may examine the therapeutic process and the power dynamics in the group as a consciousness-raising technique. The third principle is that the group examines gendering and other culturally based assumptions and processes. Areas to examine include the life experiences of the group leaders and participants, both within the groups and in their lives outside the groups. The fourth principle is that the group aims to reduce false dichotomies and promote wholeness and unity. A focus of the group is the idea of connectedness between social groups, between individuals, and between women and nature. The fifth principle is that group members rename and examine the meanings of words and symbols and how they impact individual and group thinking. The process of reconceptualizing words and symbols can bring into awareness the ideas that maintain gendered social structures. The sixth principle is that the group examines and strengthens relationships among women, including the mother-daughter

relationship. If a woman's worth is seen as tied to her relationship with a man, then relationships between women can be competitive or even dangerous. In the group, participants examine significant relationships with other women, particularly their mothers, through a process that can be a healing experience. At the same time, conflicts between women are seen as opportunities to learn, not situations to avoid. Finally, the last of Reed and Garvin's 13 principles of feminist group therapy is that participants are encouraged to seek other ways of knowing, learning, and practicing. This suggests the inclusion of different approaches to learning within the group. For example, participants may learn more about themselves, their culture, and social roles through maintaining journals, or becoming involved in drama, music, art, or athletics. In conclusion, the principles of feminist group therapy emphasize the social and political context in which therapy takes place, defines the obligations of the therapist to be self-aware and to engage in consciousness-raising, and define the group therapy process as one of empowerment and social criticism.

Having therapy groups that consist of only female participants is another key aspect of feminist therapy groups (Kravetz & Maracek, 1996). According to Eichenbaum and Orbach (1983), the psychodynamics in an all-women therapy group are different from the dynamics of mixed-sex groups. Though women often spend time in the company of other women, women's therapy groups provide an opportunity for women to come together on their own terms and to get to know one another at a psychological level. By being able to share their experiences with one another in a safe environment, women are able to escape the isolation in their homes or their personal relationships and discover a new way of relating to other women (Eichenbaum & Orbach, 1983).

In conclusion, feminist therapy groups grew out of the consciousness-raising groups of the feminist movement in the 1960s. Therapy groups differ from consciousness-raising groups in that therapy groups having a trained therapist as a group leader and lack an overt political aim.

Feminist group therapy seeks to empower the participants by looking at their lives in regard to social and political power. Feminist group leaders draw attention to the power dynamics within the group and reflect on their own access to privilege. Feminist therapy groups consist only of female participants and allow the sharing of experiences with other women in a safe environment. Though the groups in the present study were not therapy groups but discussion groups, the groups in this study were entirely female with trained group leaders, the discussions were aimed at allowing the participants to examine their own lives with regard to power, and the group leaders were cognizant of the power dynamics within the group. Therefore, though the groups were not conducted with people seeking therapy and the leaders refrained from making therapeutic responses or interpretations, the principles guiding the discussion groups closely resembled those principles guiding feminist group therapy.

<div align="center">Power</div>

The following section covers the presence of the topic of power in the psychology literature. Included are discussion of  the definition of power, and specifically the definition provided by philosopher Michel Foucault. Foucault's definition is used as the basis for the present study. The connection between Foucauldian theory and feminist theory is discussed, including a review of feminist criticism of Foucault.

Any discussion of power must first begin with its definition. The portion of this section on power is devoted to a review of the definition of power. Bierstedt (1950) observed,

> In the entire lexicon of social concepts none is more troublesome than the concept of power. We may say about it what St. Augustine said about time, that we all know perfectly well what it is – until someone asks us (p. 730).

The word power comes from the Latin verb *potere* meaning "to be able" (Bonucchi, 1985), yet the definition seems far more complex than the simple ability to act. In a societal context, power has come to be understood as an elusive substance held by a few individuals and institutions.

Studies of power often begin with a definition of power. Yoder and Kahn (1992) have suggested

that the "continual definition and redefinition of power has led to a lack of focus" (p. 385) in the

study of women and power.

In spite of inconsistencies in the feminist literature on the definition of power, Yoder and

Kahn (1992) found one consistent theme. They found a consistent distinction in the literature

between two types of power found in the literature: *power-over* and *power-to*. Power-over is the

control of one person or group by another; power-to is "control over one's own thoughts, feelings

and behaviors" (p. 384). Yoder and Kahn state that feminists focus on the latter type, the power-

to, which is closely related to the concept of empowerment. Empowerment is essentially helping

people experience more power-to so they can be less on the receiving end of power-over. The

distinction between power-over and power-to is used in discussion of the present research in an

effort to maintain consistency with the literature on power as Yoder and Kahn have suggested.

Power in the Psychology Literature

Griscom (1991) has identified three trends in the psychology literature on power. First,

psychologists have moved from defining power in terms of control and coercion to using broader

terms. Second, they have moved from studying power at the individual level to studying it at the

group and societal level. Third, psychologists have moved away from the traditional dualism of

person and society and toward an understanding of a connection between them. The present study

follows all three trends, defining power in broad terms, studying power at the group level, and

attempting to understand the connection between person and society as it relates to power.

Looking at the development of the literature on power, one can see the progression of the three

trends.

The first theorist to make power an overt part of a psychological theory was Alfred Adler.

Adler's definition of power was simply domination and control and his focus was largely at the

individual level. According to Griscom (1992), Adler has said the drive for power is a natural part of the human psyche. Adler's (1927) theory has two central concepts: superiority, or power, and social interest (*Gemeinschaftsgefühl*). The theory replaces Freud's emphasis on the drive for sexuality with emphasis on the drive for superiority/power. Adler conceives of striving for superiority as an attempt to compensate for inferiority. The superiority drive is not viewed as beneficial, but rather as the "most prominent evil of our civilization" (Adler, p. 73). Adler has said the will to power has caused men to gain an "unwarranted dominance over women" (Adler, p. 123) and that girls learn early "the long process of subjugation" (Adler, p. 129). Griscom (1992) and other feminist writers have called Adler a feminist. They make this claim based on Adler's views that gender is one of the most important issues in society and that male domination is a social illness.

The next major effort to tackle the topic of power came from French and Raven's (1959) article on social power in Cartwright's (1959) collection of *Studies in Social Power*. Here the trend to move from a focus on the individual level to the group and societal level is evident. The type of power discussed is *social power*, the power that exists at the societal level. Cartwright's work, and the French and Raven article in particular, have become frequently cited discussions of social power. French and Raven identified five bases of social power, essentially defining power by breaking it down into five distinct types. First, *legitimate power*, is that stemming from *internalized values* that dictate that one person has a right to influence the other. Second, *reward power*, is based on one's ability to reward another by making something positive happen for that person, or by removing something negative. Third, *coercive power*, is the same as reward power, only by making negative consequences or punishments happen or removing something positive. Fourth, *expert power*, is based on one's attribution of knowledge and expertise to another person; one has knowledge of the other desires. Fifth, *referent power*, is the identification of one person with another, and could also be called respect or love. Raven (1965) has added a sixth social basis

of power, *informational power*, which is the power one has in the information one possesses. French and Raven's definition of social power is a descriptive analysis of the different types of social power. However, the definition is written from the perspective of those with authority, expertise, and information, not from the perspective of people over whom power is exercised. French and Raven list mechanisms for social power (e.g., rewards and punishments) but do not explain what allows them to be effective.

An example of research based on French and Raven's (1959) definition is that on the *power motive*. Power motive is an individual's need or drive for power as it was defined by French and Raven. Much of the research on power motive has tested for differences between men and women. Winter (1988), one of the primary writers in the area of power motivation, conducted a meta-analysis of 27 studies on the topic. No differences in power motive were found between men and women in average levels of power motive, the ways in which the power motive is aroused, or in the relationship between the power motive and social rewards. However, Winter did find a sex difference in the relationship of the power motive to *profligate behaviors* such as drinking, aggression, and sexual exploitation. In men, the power motive predicts profligate behaviors, while in women, it does not. Interestingly, Winter found that socialization experience, particularly having younger siblings, moderates the relationship between power motive and profligate behaviors. Nevertheless, Maccoby and Jacklin (1974) reported that males described themselves as more powerful and stronger than females did.

Recent literature on power has followed the trend of moving toward understanding of the connection between individuals and groups. The literature on women and power has included research on power in personal relationships, looking at aspects of relationships that affect women as a group. Bonucchi (1985) has studied women who have a strong sense of interpersonal power. Bonucchi's data have shown that women with higher scores on a questionnaire about their sense of their own power describe themselves differently from women with lower scores. High scorers

have positive self-esteem and do not speak of power over others but of "the power that comes from within; the power that comes from being oneself and expressing one's perceptions of the world. They do not use their power to control and restrict others; rather, they use their power in the interest of their own development in an assertive manner" (p. 121). High scorers report a higher incidence of *spiritual awakening* that is noticeably lacking in the stories of the low scorers. High scorers have a greater ability to express and accept anger whereas low scorers report difficulty expressing anger.

Consistent with the trend of broadening the definition of power, Huston (1983) distinguished power from influence and dominance in the context of close relationships. Influence, Huston wrote, occurs where "instances in one partner's chain are causally connected to events in the other's chain" (p. 170). Power is the exercise of power to achieve something. Power is an *ability*; like other abilities it is not always exercised, when exercised it is not always successful. Power is "the portion of influence that is under the actor's control" (p. 186). Huston has also made reference to resistance: "a person's power is evident only in the amount of resistance the individual is able to overcome" (p. 190). Dominance is defined as when "one partner consistently exercises more influence than the other" over a wide range of activities, in magnitude as well as frequency (p. 185). The definitions of Huston and French and Raven (1959) are largely descriptive, parsing out the different types of power and distinguishing them from similar concepts like dominance and influence.

Not all studies of power in the context of relationships have been about domestic relationships. Kipnis (1972) conducted an experiment simulating a work environment in which participants were given the power to fire employees, provide raises, or cut pay. Kipnis found that participants with power were more likely to try to manipulate others. Those with power attempted to maintain a social distance from those without power. The more those with power tried to influence the workers, the less they wanted to socialize with them. Those in power believed they

influenced the workers' behavior and devalued the workers for being under their control. Kipnis concluded that an unequal distribution of power between individuals is disruptive to interpersonal relationships and makes it difficult for those in power to have close social relations with those without power.

While many studies have presumed a definition of power, Lips (1985) has studied how women define power by asking them. Five hundred college students were asked three open-ended questions: (1) "Who is the most powerful person you know?" (2) "What do you think power is?" and (3) "When have you felt most powerful?" The results show that men and women are more likely to list a man (usually their father) as the most powerful person they know. Though they do not define power differently, men were more likely to list physical strength and possessions as sources of power. Miller and Cummins (1992) pointed out that "it is not clear from the Lips study whether the women were defining power from their own perspective or from their understanding of society's definition of power" (p. 417). Miller and Cummins conducted their own study, focusing on whether there is a difference between how women believe society defines power and how they define power for themselves. The results show that women define power with an emphasis on *personal authority* whereas they see society's definition as focusing on control over others. At the same time, the women do not see power as related to *empowerment* in the feminist sense but more about autonomy and self control. Interestingly, the women report they feel powerful when they lose weight and powerless when they gain weight. The researchers note that society equates weight with self-control, which fits with the participants' focus on personal authority. The researchers questioned whether there is something inherent in women's lower social status that fosters the emphasis on personal authority. In another explanation of the differences between men and women on the subject of power, Lips and Colwill (1978) suggested that women have internalized associations between femininity and weakness, and between masculinity and strength and competence.

In conclusion, research on power in the psychology literature has progressed from focusing on the individual to focusing on the relationships among individuals, groups, and societies. Discussions of power often begin with its definition, largely because that definition continues to change over time and varies between researchers. Some research has investigated sex differences in the understanding and expression of power. While no differences were found in motivation for power, definitions of power differed between men and women. The present study seeks to further the understanding of women's beliefs about power. The present study, being of postmodern as well as feminist theoretical grounding, utilizes a definition of power from outside the field of psychology. The definition used is that of philosopher Michel Foucault. Foucault's definition is best suited to this study's postmodern and feminist theoretical foundations. A discussion of Foucault's definition of power, and its connection to feminist theory, follows.

Foucault

Michel Foucault (1926-1984), a French post-structuralist philosopher, has offered a definition of power that differs considerably from traditional theories of power and the traditional way of defining it. Most importantly, unlike the definitions found in the psychology literature, Foucault has looked at power not in terms of groups or relationships, but in terms of individuals. The present study seeks to examine the *individual's* experience and understanding of power; therefore, Foucault's definition of power is well-suited for use in this study.

Foucault wrote, "Mechanisms of power in general have never much been studied by history. History has studied those who held power – anecdotal histories of kings and generals" (1980, p. 51). Rather than focusing on why individuals exercise power over others, Foucault focused on what mechanisms allow individuals to become and to remain subjects of power and domination (Keenan, 2001). Essentially, Foucault was concerned with power at the grass roots level, with the individuals at the bottom of the power hierarchy:

> Power must be analyzed as something which circulates, or rather as something which only functions in the form of a chain. It is never localised here or there, never in anybody's hands, never appropriated as a commodity or piece of wealth. Power is employed and exercised through a net-like organisation. And not only do individuals circulate between its threads; they are always in the position of simultaneously undergoing and exercising this power. They are not only its inert or consenting target; they are always also the elements of its articulation. In other words, individuals are the vehicles of power, not its points of application. (1980, p. 98)

Foucault's definition is, in essence, a reversal of the traditional way of looking at power. Sawicki (1991) has identified three key ways in which Foucault's definition of power differs from the traditional definition. First, in the traditional definition, power is possessed by individuals and institutions. In Foucault's model, power cannot be collected as a substance but only exists through its use, through action. Second, in the traditional model, power flows from a centralized source at the top of the hierarchy to the people at the bottom of the hierarchy. For Foucault, this is reversed, and power actually is exercised from the bottom up, giving considerable credit for the maintenance of power systems to those at the bottom. Third, traditionally power is seen as repressive, using prohibitions, punishment, and in the most extreme form, force. Foucault has claimed that the most effective forms of power are productive rather than repressive. Examples of productive power include the production of forms of knowledge and definitions of normalcy. In summary, the three key ways in which Foucault's definition differs from the traditional view of power are that power is exercised rather than possessed, works from the bottom up rather than the top down, and is productive rather than repressive. Other theorists have centered discussions of power on those in powerful positions. Foucault has taken the focus off of individuals in positions of authority and has looked at the subjects of power instead. Similarly, the present study focuses on young females without status or authority rather than people in powerful positions.

Another key aspect of Foucault's definition of power is the inclusion of knowledge.

Knowledge is so essential to Foucault's definition of power that many scholars refer to Foucault's

definition as *power/knowledge*. Foucault wrote,

> Knowledge and power are integrated with one another, and there is no point in dreaming of a time when knowledge will cease to depend on power; this is just a way of reviving humanism in a utopian guise. It is not possible for power to be exercised without knowledge, it is impossible for knowledge not to engender power. (1980, p. 52)

For Foucault, power is productive, and the most important production is knowledge; knowledge

is disseminated though discourses. Power works not by overpowering, but by spreading

knowledge about what is *normal* and *how things are*. In doing so, those who produce knowledge

and influence discourses in effect have power over the minds, opinions, and desires, and therefore

the behaviors, of individuals. Foucault said,

> I would distinguish myself from para-Marxists like Marcuse who give the notion of repression an exaggerated role – because power would be a fragile thing if its only function were to repress, if it worked only through the mode of censorship, exclusion, blockage, and repression, in the manner of a great Superego, exercising itself only in a negative way. If, on the contrary, power is strong this is because, as we are beginning to realize, it produces effects at the level of desire – and also at the level of knowledge. Far from preventing knowledge, power produces it. (1980, p. 59)

Foucault discounts those who overemphasize repression and force as the mechanisms of power.

While authorities do use these devices, the strongest power does not need to use them because it

influences peoples' knowledge and desires. Force is not necessary to control a population that

monitors itself. People monitor their friends and neighbors, but more importantly, monitor their

own thoughts and behaviors. Foucault explained,

> But in thinking of the mechanisms of power, I am thinking rather of its capillary form of existence, the point where power reaches into the very grain of individuals, touches their bodies and inserts itself into their actions and attitudes, their discourses, learning processes and everyday lives. The eighteenth century invented, so to speak, a synaptic regime of power, a regime of its exercise *within* the social body rather than *from above* it. (Foucault, 1980, p. 39) [italics original]

To clarify what is meant by a "capillary," Foucault wrote that one "should be concerned with

power at its extremities, in its ultimate destinations, with those points where it becomes capillary,

that is, in its more regional and local forms and institutions" (1980, p. 96). The bulk of power, then, is not lodged at the top of the hierarchy, but locally, and individually, at the base of the hierarchy.

Rather than studying power in order to understand subordination, Foucault studied resistance and struggle in order to understand power (Faith, 1994). Because feminists seek to study those in a subordinate role, traditionally women and minorities, Foucault's definition of power has often been applied to feminist theory and research.

Foucault and feminism.

The concept of power is essential to feminist theory. Feminists have long searched for a definition of power that is useful to their theory and their movement. Hartsock (1990) wrote,

> If we begin with a general question about the association of power and gender, the answer would seem to be self-evident: power is associated firmly with the male and masculinity. Commentators on power have frequently remarked on its connection with virility and masculinity. Yet, efforts to change the subordinate status of women require a consideration of the nature of power. In order to change the relations of domination which structure society and define our subordination, we must understand how power works, and thus we need a usable theory of power. (p. 157)

The question, then, is whether or not Foucault's definition provides a *usable theory* for feminists. Much has been written about the relationship between Foucault and feminism, and much criticism of Foucault has been written, yet his definition of power has continued to be used frequently by feminist theorists and researchers.

Foucault's definition and theory of power have been adopted by many feminists because certain aspects of the theory, such as competing discourses and resistance, fit well with feminist theory. Foucault conceptualized power/knowledge in terms of discourses that change over time. A discourse states what is true about a given topic, such as a discourse about what insanity is and what people and behaviors are sane and insane (Ramazanoglu, 1993). For Foucault, then, there is no single truth, but many competing discourses which define truth for a given culture in a given

period of time. Because there are many competing discourses, at one time there are both dominant

discourses and non-dominant discourses, accepted discourses, and excluded discourses

(Ramazanoglu, 1993).

Feminism is largely concerned with discourses about women, sexuality, and gender roles.

Discourses in American society about these topics have changed dramatically in the last century.

To illustrate the concept of competing discourses, consider the idea of women working outside

the home. It is easy to think of several competing discourses on this topic in the last century and

to see how non-dominant discourses have become dominant ones and vice versa. A century ago,

the discourse about women working included such *scientific facts* as that work damages women's

reproductive organs. What was considered common knowledge is no longer considered *true*,

demonstrating that the discourse about women's working has changed. Consider, then, the power

shifts that occurred with the discursive changes. With the acceptance of women working outside

the home came economic power and independence for many women, as well as dramatic changes

in the workplace. This example illustrates Foucault's point about the connection between

knowledge (discourse) and power.

Foucault explains the mechanisms by which dominant discourses produce power

imbalances (Faith, 1994). Feminist viewpoints about the exclusion of women from systems of

power are consistent with Foucault's idea that the creation of definitions and classifications by

experts or those in power can exclude certain groups (Martin & Meyerson, 1998). These

classifications, such as defining what is appropriate masculine and feminine behavior, are not just

theoretical categories, they affect people's behavior and the rewards or punishments they get for

certain behaviors (Martin & Meyerson, 1998). Also of interest to feminists has been Foucault's

description of how discourses reflect and also influence power dynamics in relationships,

particularly unequal power dynamics (Grunebaum & Smith, 1996). Feminists have been

interested in what creates unequal power dynamics; Foucault's explanation offers hope to

feminists because by creating new discourses, power dynamics can be shifted. Feminists have

offered new discourses on gender which compete with older ones and other new discourses which

emerge.

Another aspect of Foucault's work that is consistent with feminist thought is the focus on

*microprocesses* or details of everyday life that appear to be unrelated to power dynamics and that

are widely accepted as "just being how things are" (Martin & Meyerson, 1998, p. 313). If

microprocesses are part of how systems of power operate, then details about how men and

women behave and are treated, such as holding open doors, become relevant areas of debate.

Foucault's definition of power fits with some of the core ideas in feminist theory. As a

result, the feminist theory of power has become one of "energy and competence rather than

dominance" (Hartsock, 1983, p. 224). Power has become that of action, of knowledge,

particularly that exercised by those at the lower end of the power structure.

Resistance is another key aspect of Foucault's definition of power and another way the

definition fits well with feminism. Foucault has said that wherever there is power, there is

resistance; the two concepts exist only in relation to each other. This means that wherever there is

power, there is the possibility of resisting it. Foucault does not define power as the overcoming of

resistance, but describes a perpetual struggle between power and resistance (Sawicki, 1991). The

feminist movement is, in effect, a form of resistance. According to Faith (1994),

> Feminist resistance challenges prevailing discourses and delegitimizes presumptions of
> female inferiority in local and specific ways. As resistance, feminism is the power of
> women disrupting patriarchal truths - which may both loosen some holds and invite re-
> entrenchment of others. Feminist disruptions produce backlash effects which, in turn,
> compel new strategies of resistance. (p. 47)

Feminism offers new truths about gender to replace the *patriarchal truths* and thereby resists the

dominant discourses on gender and power. Exercising resistance in this manner is in effect

exercising power (Faith, p. 53). "However, resistance, like power, is not static, monolithic or

chronological; there is no one resistance, but rather infinite multiplicities of strategic resistances" (Faith, p. 57).

Foucauldian theory has been applied not only to feminist theory, but also to feminist psychology. *Disciplinary power* is the term Foucault has used to describe the system of power in the judicial, educational, and medical systems. Disciplinary power operates through three primary *instruments*: hierarchical observation, normalizing judgment, and examination (Foucault, 1977, p. 170). Keenan (2001) has applied each of these three instruments to the practice of counseling. Hierarchical observation is accomplished through supervision; the supervisor exerts power over the supervisee by guiding the supervisee's acquisition of knowledge and skills so that they are consistent with the standards of practice. Normalizing judgment is best seen in the practice of psychology through the formalized system of diagnosis, particularly the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (American Psychiatric Association, 1994), in which distinctions between *normal* and *abnormal* are painstakingly made. Healthy behavior is defined by the absence of the behaviors listed as abnormal. Examinations are also a key part of the practice of psychology. Keenan gave the example of an intake session in which a client is examined in terms of presenting problem, duration of symptoms, history of mental health treatment, family history, and substance use. Therapists themselves are examined as students, by licensure boards, and upon complaint, by ethical boards. Essentially, Keenan has described the mental health system as a network of power relations stretching from client to therapist and therapist to supervisor, supervisor to licensure board, and so on. The system of power is hierarchical but is also lateral as consultation with and judgment by one's peers defines the standard of practice. Therapists and clients are subjects of a system of disciplinary power enforced by the instruments of hierarchical observation, normalizing judgment, and examination.

Thus, Foucault's definition of power fits well with feminist theory and feminist psychology in numerous ways, particularly the role of competing discourses and the importance

of resistance. Foucault's theory gives hope for the possibility of change. If women can introduce

new discourses about gender, the way people think about gender can change. If resistance is an

essential component of power and power is exercised upward from the bottom of the power

structure, then women are able to resist effectively and exercise power. For these reasons, many

feminists have adopted Foucault's definition of power. However, that process has not been

without heavy debate and criticism.

Feminist criticism of Foucault.

Feminism's relationship with Foucault has been a rocky one. While Foucault's theory can

be applied to women's struggle for power, Foucault himself never made that application.

Feminist theory places gender at the center of any discussion of systems of power; Foucault does

not. Faith (1994) wrote,

> [Foucault's] published work is conventionally androcentric, with only fleeting or
> incidental references to women. His work reflects male dominance but without
> presuming male superiority. He engulfs the reader in a patriarchal voice critically and
> instructively reflecting on its own uses of power, the very forms of power to which
> feminism, among many progressive movements, offers resistance. (p. 36)

The problem lies therein. While Foucault's theory opens the door to discuss women's means of

resistance and ways in which gender inequalities are maintained by a system of power, Foucault

himself overlooked gender and made women nearly invisible in his theory. Faith wrote, "Foucault

is himself part of the problem that feminists resist, in so far as he is dismissive of gender in

examining discursive bases of power relations - thereby representing and contributing to the

androcentricity of dominant discourses." (p. 61) Given that Foucault lived until 1984 and saw the

second-wave feminist movement develop, one must assume that he was aware of feminist ideas

and, had he wanted to, could have included more than the occasional mention of gender in his

work. How, then, can one take Foucault's theory and add gender where he did not? Does it not at

that point cease to be Foucault's theory and begin to be someone else's? And thus Foucault has

become "a useful ally as well as a sparring partner" to feminist theorists (Faith, 1994). One

cannot make the claim Foucault was a feminist, yet his theory remains useful to feminists, and so

the rocky relationship continues.

Hartsock (1990) argued that Foucault and other postmodernists fail to provide a useful

theory for feminism to use. Foucault claims to rebel against the Enlightenment ideals of universal

reason and truth and to put forth a radical new theory that there is no objective truth and the very

knowledge we hold to be true has been molded by discourses of those in power. Yet Hartsock

says postmodernists, including Foucault, have not fully broken away from those Enlightenment

ideals:

> Despite their own desire to avoid universal claims and despite their stated opposition to
> these claims, some universalistic assumptions creep back into their work. Thus,
> postmodernism, despite its stated efforts to avoid the problems of European modernism
> of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, at best manages to criticize these ideas without
> putting anything in their place.... At worst, postmodern theories can recapitulate the
> effects of Enlightenment theories which deny the right to participate in defining terms of
> interaction. Thus, I contend, in broad terms, that postmodernism represents a dangerous
> approach for any marginalized group to adopt. (p. 159)

Hartsock has argued that Foucault, in spite of his "obvious sympathy for those who are

subjugated," writes from the perspective of the dominator, the "self-proclaimed majority" (p.

168). Foucault, a white, educated male, wrote from the perspective of those in power, because

that was the perspective he knew. Hartsock's argument, though, is about more than Foucault's

being male. At the core of her argument is that Foucault proposes no alternative to replace the

Enlightenment ideals of objective truth and rationality. Foucault, Hartsock says, insists on

resisting power, but does not try to transform it, does not propose any action. This failure to

propose action constitutes a veiled suggestion that the system cannot or should not be changed

and reinforces the current system and "that those of us who have been marginalized remain at the

margin" (p. 167). Hartsock essentially wants Foucault to be political, to be an activist, not simply

a philosopher. However, another way to view Foucault's silence on what should be done is to say

that he left it to the reader to choose her or his own course of action. The idea that the reader is free to make what political assumptions he or she would like may be the best argument that Foucault and feminism are compatible. Foucault defines how power functions and feminists suggest courses of action that can be taken to help women gain a greater sense of their own power and to participate in the creation of knowledge and discourse. It is with this assumption of compatibility that the present study is undertaken.

Self-Efficacy, Depression, and Attitudes Toward Women's Roles

The final section of this chapter focuses on three topics in the literature associated with power. The psychological research directly on the topic of power is limited. Therefore, it is necessary to review several related areas of research to gain a full understanding of the background behind the current study. Three areas of the literature related to the present study are self-efficacy, depression, and attitudes toward women's roles. Self-efficacy is the closest concept to power, or more specifically one's conception of one's own power, found in the psychology literature. Depression and attitudes toward women's roles are two topics commonly associated with power by feminist researchers. A review of these three topics follows.

Self-Efficacy

An area of study in mainstream psychology that is linked to research on women's empowerment is Bandura's self-efficacy analysis (Yoder & Kahn, 1992). Bandura has conceptualized self-efficacy as a mediating factor between knowledge and behavior. He has suggested that an individual's thoughts about one's ability to do something affects one's behavior. In his research, Bandura showed that one's beliefs about his or her self-efficacy affected performance outcomes by increasing effort and persistence (Bandura, 1977).

Bandura defined self-efficacy as "beliefs in one's capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments" (Bandura, 1997, p. 3). In effect, self-efficacy is one's belief in one's own power, though Bandura does not use the word power. Bandura has identified four sources of self-efficacy beliefs. The first source is one's experience and accomplishments. One learns from one's successes and failures. Second is through vicarious experience; one learns by observing others' successes and failures. Third is verbal persuasion, encouragement, or feedback from others. Fourth is physiological; one's beliefs about one's abilities are impacted from the message one is receiving from one's body, such as muscle tension, arousal, or rate of breathing (Bandura, 1977).

Bandura has linked his theory to women and power in a study of an empowerment program for women. Ozer and Bandura (1990) studied an empowerment program designed to increase participants' self-efficacy beliefs. The program aimed to use all four sources of self-efficacy that Bandura identified. Participants learned and practiced self-defense techniques, watched others performing the techniques, were given verbal feedback on their performance, and learned to monitor their arousal responses during the exercises. The results indicated that participants had higher scores on a self-efficacy scale than did a control group.

The present study is not designed to increase self-efficacy or even to empower, but only to examine the issue of power in a discussion. Nevertheless, the author was aware that such discussion may impact how women view their own power, or abilities to do things, and as a result may show changes on self-efficacy measures.

Depression

Depression is often linked to women's lack of power in the feminist literature. The suggestion is made, in part, because women are more likely to become depressed than men. In the literature, the fact that women are twice as likely to become depressed as men is a well-

established finding (Chodorow, 1989; Gut, 1989). According to the American Psychological

Association's National Task Force on Women and Depression, women are diagnosed as

depressed twice as often as men (McGrath, Keita, Strickland, & Russo, 1990). A study of

depression in 30 different countries has shown that the depressed women's outnumbering of

depressed men by two to one is an international, cross-cultural phenomenon (Weissman &

Klerman, 1987). Occurrences of depression in women begin in adolescence and increase with

age. Studies have found that the two-to-one ratio of women to men with depression begins at age

fourteen (Nolen-Hoeksema, 1995; Nolen-Hoeksema & Girus, 1994). The incidence of depression

among adolescent girls is astounding; in one study, 3% of 11-year-olds, 20% of 14-year-olds and

43% of 16-year-old girls met criteria for Major Depression, and an additional 21% of the

participants met criteria for Dysthymia (Goodyer & Cooper, 1993). Mirkin (1994) suggested that

female adolescent depression is a reaction to an oppressive environment. A report by the National

Institute for Mental Health (1987) on gender difference in depression offered three possible

explanations: differences in how children are raised, social roles, and less favorable economic and

social opportunities for females (Sands, 1998).

The higher incidence of depression and mental illness in general among women was well

known in Victorian times. At that time, doctors believed the cause of mental illness in women to

be related to their reproductive organs. They thought there was a strong connection between the

brain and the uterus (Steen, 1991). However, women writers at the time attributed women's

mental illness to a "lack of meaningful work, hope, or companionship" (Showalter, 1985, p. 61).

Feminists have long linked the occurrence of depression in women and girls to their lack of

power and their oppression (Prince, 2000; Steen, 1991). According to Fossum (1997),

> Feminists and other researchers have pointed to the societal expectations of the traditional
> female gender role, often associated with powerlessness, passivity, and dependency, as
> contributing to an increased diagnosis of depression in women. The stereotypical female
> gender role may suppress the growth of a healthy, individuated, autonomous self.

In a study of the relationship between feminist identity development and depression, Fossum found that a strong feminist identity was negatively correlated with depression. Women who scored low on feminist identity development measures had significantly higher depression levels than women who did not score low. Women with high scores on the feminist identity development measure had lower depression levels than women who scored low on the measures (Fossum, 1997).

Prince (2000) studied dependency, depression, and power in close relationships between men and women, heterosexual and homosexual. The research has found that women with lower scores on measures of *dyadic power* in their relationships had higher rates of depression. The results suggest a relationship between power and depression and between dependency and depression.

Morgan (1997) found that survivors of childhood sexual abuse show a decrease in depression, as measured by the Beck Depression Inventory, over the course of a 20-session feminist group therapy program. In the study, participants also showed improved social adjustment, decreased self-blame, and decreased post-traumatic stress symptoms.

The occurrence of depression women is a highly researched topic, and no final answers have been reached. Feminists argue that the greater occurrence of depression in women is linked to their social status and lack of power and some studies support that assertion. The present study includes measures of depression because of the suspected link between the topic of power and the occurrence of depression.

Attitudes Toward Women's Roles

In the United States and Western Europe, women have traditionally been responsible for child rearing, housekeeping, and providing emotional support for the entire family. This sexual division of labor has been the norm since the eighteenth century (Abramowitz, 1985). As

children, males are rewarded for exercising independence, aggression, control, and lack of emotion; females are rewarded for exercising dependence, passivity, compliance, and emotionality (Maccoby, 1990). Brown, Perry, and Harburg (1977) defined attitudes toward women's roles as internalized values or beliefs about what behaviors are appropriate and satisfying for men and women. These attitudes are generally characterized as traditional or non-traditional with the understanding that views may fall anywhere between the two. *Traditional* attitudes emphasize the role of women as mothers and wives and that the needs of the family should supercede the woman's individual goals. *Non-traditional* attitudes emphasize a woman's development of an individual identity beyond the roles of wife and mother and that a woman's individual needs are of equal importance to those of the family (Zavoina, 1996).

Attitudes toward women change over time, both across generations and across an individual's life-span. Research on the Attitudes toward Women Scale (AWS) has found that attitudes toward women have steadily become less traditional since the 1970s (Spence & Hahn, 1997; Twenge, 1997). Gender differences in AWS scores steadily increased between 1970 and 1985 and steadily decreased from 1986 to 1995. Southern samples tended to be slightly more traditional than northern samples (Twenge, 1997). In a two-year, longitudinal study, Etaugh and Spandikow (1981) found that individual women's and men's attitudes become more liberal over time. However, attitudes about women's educational and vocational rights became more liberal than attitudes toward women's marital and maternal responsibilities.

Much of the research using the AWS has examined correlations between attitudes toward women and various behaviors. In particular, feminist researchers study behaviors that are linked to women's acquisition of power, (e.g., career choice), and sense of their own power, (e.g., eating disorders). While the AWS measures attitudes that would seem to define if a person is a feminist or not, scores on the AWS do not correlate with behavioral support of the feminist movement (Goldberg, Katz, & Rappeport, 1979). The researchers suggest that acting on one's beliefs is

moderated by the social desirability of those actions. However, attitudes toward women have been linked to career decisions. Women who have traditional attitudes as measured by the AWS choose or would choose for their hypothetical daughters more traditional careers than women with non-traditional attitudes (Yanico, 1981; Foss & Slaney, 1986). Women with non-traditional attitudes are more likely to identify a videotaped work interaction as sexual harassment and to believe a woman should take action when such harassment occurs (Lartigue, 2001). Eating disorders have been conceptualized as a result of a woman's desire for a sense of control; when she does not feel she has power in society, she tries to gain a sense of control over her eating and her body. College women with bulimic behaviors tend to have more traditional attitudes toward women (Brown, Cross, and Nelson, 1990). Therefore, the AWS does not measure feminist activism, but it does translate into behavior differences in other areas related to power including career choice, sexual harassment, and bulimia. The present study uses the AWS to measure the attitudes of the participants toward women's roles before and after they explore the topic of power in group discussions.

<p align="center">Summary</p>

The review of the literature presented in this chapter describes the feminist principles guiding the present study, the literature on power, and three topics in psychology related to power, self-efficacy, depression, and attitudes toward women. First, the type of feminism serving as the foundation for this study is postmodern feminism. Postmodern feminism is a form of feminism that focuses on discourse, analyzing the use of words, and the relationship between knowledge and power. Because of its emphasis on discourse, postmodern feminism fits well with Foucault's definition and understanding of power. One primary tool used within the feminist movement to advance theory and gain support is group discussion. Feminist group discussion has often taken place through group psychotherapy or consciousness-raising groups. The fundamental

principles of feminist group discussion require that social and political context be an integral part of group discussion and that group leaders create an environment in which a healthy critical understanding of social mechanisms can take place. Consciousness-raising groups are political rather than therapeutic and have no leader but, like feminist therapy groups, they promote an understanding of the social and political context in which women live.

Second, the literature on power is presented. Power is a concept often discussed in feminist literature, but it has not been integrated into mainstream psychology literature. Power has frequently been discussed in the field of philosophy, and the work of one philosopher in particular, Michel Foucault, has been brought into the literature of feminist psychology. Foucault's definition turned the traditional definition of power on its head. Power as a top-down entity has appealed to many feminists because it offers the possibility of resistance and of changing discourses to help the feminist cause. Feminist criticism of Foucault has also been strong, largely because Foucault himself never applied his theory of power to the women's movement and said very little on the subject. Power, though not an integral part of psychological theory, is an integral part of feminist theory.

Third, self-efficacy, depression, and attitudes toward women are discussed. The links between the study of power and mainstream psychology literature are few. The closest psychological construct to power is self-efficacy. Bandura defines self-efficacy as the belief people have about their abilities to do things. Also, feminists have linked the psychological disorder depression, which occurs twice as often in women as in men, to women's lack of power. Attitudes toward women is another topic from psychology that relates to power. Discussion of gender roles and attitudes toward women has been a part of mainstream psychology for the last several decades.

Chapter III

Questions, Method, Instruments, and Procedure

This chapter contains the research questions asked in the study, and a discussion of the method, instruments, and procedures used. First, the research questions are presented. Second, the theoretical basis for the study and the specific methodologies chosen are described. Third, details about the questionnaires used in the study are provided. Fourth, the participants and the specific procedural steps taken in execution of the study are described.

Research Questions

Three research questions guided the study. First, what discourses will be found in the content of group discussions of power by college women? Second, how will participants make personal meaning of the discussion group as expressed in individual interviews? And third, what impact will the group discussion have on the participants' self-efficacy, mood, and attitudes toward women as measured by questionnaires? The hypotheses were that participants would 1) describe both dominant and competing discourses on power, 2) report, in individual interviews, an increased awareness of issues of power in their own lives as a result of participation in the group discussions, and 3) experience no effect on their sense of self-efficacy, mood, and/or attitudes toward women as evidenced through scores on questionnaires measuring these factors.

Method

The present study was guided by feminist research theory. A wide range of methodologies may be used within the feminist framework. In this case, the research questions were best addressed using two different methods. One of the research questions was whether participants' self-esteem, depression, and attitudes toward women would be affected by

participating in the study. This question was best addressed using objective measures of these

traits, in this case three well-established questionnaires. The questionnaires used were the Self-

Efficacy Scale, the Beck Depression Inventory-II, and the Attitude toward Women Scale. The

data from the questionnaires were analyzed using common statistical methods. This approach

stems from a positivist paradigm and is a traditional approach to research. The other two research

questions were best addressed using subjective rather than objective measures. Foucauldian

discourse analysis was used to study the content of the group discussions and the individual

interviews. This approach stems from a post-modern paradigm and is a less-traditional approach

to research. Following is a discussion of feminist research theory, the practice of combining

methodologies, and a description of Foucauldian discourse analysis.

<u>Feminist Research</u>

Feminist research is an approach to research based on feminist principles. The present

study is undertaken from a feminist perspective. Feminism is a political movement; therefore,

feminist research is inherently political. As a result, feminist research has been criticized as being

biased; however, many feminists have argued that all research is political. Fine (1992) argued that

researchers who present themselves as objective and uninvolved are merely disguising their

"privileged interests" (p. 209). The present study is undertaken from the perspective that no

research is unbiased. To clarify the nature of the approach taken in the present study, a discussion

of feminist research follows.

Enns (1992) outlined three approaches to feminist research. First, *feminist empiricism*

attempts to eliminate sexism and bias from empirical research by paying close attention to gender

in research design and methodology, use of representative samples, and unbiased interpretation of

results. Second, *feminist standpoint research* uses qualitative methodologies and in-depth

inquiries into women's lives. This approach emphasizes reducing hierarchical boundaries

between researchers and participants and using collaboration and consensus to draw conclusions. Third, *feminist postmodernism* rejects the attempt to define a single feminine viewpoint and focuses on how meaning is negotiated and how persons and groups in authority influence the way individuals make meaning (Enns, 1992). The social constructionist approach to research is compatible with the feminist postmodernist approach as it assumes reality and meaning are created, not discovered, and that psychology must be understood in a social context (Enns, 1992). The present research takes the viewpoint of feminist postmodernism in that it seeks to explore how meaning is made on the subject of power. The use of a qualitative methodology and in-depth interviews in this study resembles social constructionism, but the participants were not asked to draw conclusions about the topic or to engage equally with the researchers in the data analysis.

Combining Methodologies

The present study involves both subjective and objective methods. The following section addresses the issues involved in combining research methodologies in feminist research. Tiefer (1987) said that feminist psychologists should employ a "collaborative stance, using participants' subjective perceptions to enrich objective measurements and planning research to benefit the participants as well as the researchers" (Tiefer, 1987, p. 24). Therefore, feminist researchers often combine methodologies with subjective and objective measures as is the case in the present study. Questionnaires were used to measure objective differences before and after participation. Foucauldian discourse analysis was used to study the content of the group discussions and individual interviews. Further discussion of Foucauldian discourse analysis follows in the next section.

A single study usually uses only one research method. In feminist research, that method has often been qualitative in nature, coming out of the post-modern paradigm. Feminists have often been critical of the traditional practices of science. Nevertheless, a considerable volume of

research has used traditional, objective approaches, and it is impossible to label all feminist research as falling into one methodological realm.

Romkens (1997) conducted a feminist study of wife abuse using both surveys and in-depth, semi-structured individual interviews. She said that choice of methodologies in research can be politically motivated. Specifically, qualitative methods have been labeled feminist approaches. The danger in associating a specific methodology with feminism, Romkens wrote, is that

> A political labeling of methodological approaches may reify and unintentionally contribute to an antagonism between mainstream and feminist science. Instead, I would plead for crossing boundaries and reaching for creative cross-fertilization, both in terms of methods and in political-philosophical views that are at stake in the debate. (p.114)

The present study uses both types of methodological approaches with this spirit in mind. The choice of a research methodology should be based on the research questions asked and the resources (including time and finances) available to the researcher (Romkens, 1997). The present study asks three research questions that require different methodological approaches to answer, yet the study still fits squarely within the realm of feminist research without being restricted by it.

Foucauldian Discourse Analysis

The method used to analyze the qualitative date in the present study is called *Foucauldian discourse analysis.* Discourse analysis in general treats the world as a system of *social texts* that can be *read* by researchers and understood in terms of the psychological process that underlie the texts (Banister, Burman, Parker, Taylor, & Tindall, 1994). Foucauldian discourse analysis in particular is "concerned with language and its role in the constitution of social and psychological life. From a Foucauldian point of view, discourses facilitate and limit, enable and constrain what can be said, by whom, and when" (Willig, 2001, p. 107).

Foucauldian discourse analysis grew out of the paradigmatic shift in psychology in the late 1960s which allowed the inclusion of research methodologies that focused on language and discourse. These methodologies were rooted in the German phenomenological focus on language and the French post-structuralist focus on discourse (Banister et al., 1994). The new methodologies permitted a postmodernist exploration of meaning and a break from the positivist reliance on numbers and statistical significance.

Having been introduced in the late 1970s, Foucauldian discourse analysis is a relatively new research methodology in the field of psychology; nevertheless, a considerable body of literature has already been published using this methodology (Willig, 2001). For example, Foucauldian discourse analysis has been used recently to examine women's use of cosmetic surgery (Gagne & McGaughey, 2002), ideas of self and identity in school counseling clients (Besley, 2003), and teaching practices and professional development among elementary school teachers (Bushnell, 2003). Studies have been conducted using Foucauldian discourse analysis in a wide range of disciplines, from examination of marketing models used on the Internet and the use of online surveillance (Campbell & Carlson, 2002) to power relations in the law and judiciary (Smith, 2000).

Foucauldian discourse analysis differs somewhat from the broader field of discourse analysis in one key way:

> Unlike discursive psychology, which is primarily concerned with interpersonal communication, Foucaudian discourse analysis asks questions about the relationship between discourse and how people think or feel (subjectivity), what they may do (practice) and the material conditions within which such experiences may take place. (Willig, 2001, p. 107)

Using Foucauldian discourse analysis, a researcher can study a broad range of social texts. These texts are not limited to written texts such as publications or transcriptions of spoken language, though these are often used. For example, Eskes, Duncan and Miller (1998) examined women's

fitness magazines, and Marcellus (2003) studied a 1933 brochure advertising contraceptives for women. According to Willig (2001), texts may include speech, non-verbal behavior, architecture, or advertisements. However, in order to find out how people construct meaning in relation to a particular topic (such as power), Willig recommended working with transcripts of interviews or with focus group discussions. Foucauldian discourse analysis in the present study was undertaken using both transcripts of interviews as well as video tape of group discussions.

The stages of conducting Foucauldian discourse analysis are many or few, depending on whom one asks. Parker (1992) identified 25 stages in discourse analysis; Banister et al. (1994) identified 19 stages, Willig (2001) identified 6 stages, and Kendall and Wickham (1999) identified only three. In spite of different enumerations, these authors agreed on a general progression of steps in the analysis. A description of the common progression of steps distilled from the work of these authors follows.

The researcher begins with a text, which is the subject of the analysis. Since texts used as the subjects of Foucauldian discourse analysis may be in a wide variety of forms, such as written, spoken, or physical forms, it may be necessary to translate the text into a written form. For example, if the text is a book or an article, or a handwritten letter, no transformation is necessary. If the text is a recorded interview, it is turned into a written form through transcription. If the text is a magazine advertisement, it may be turned into a written form by creating detailed description of it. Next, the researcher attempts to identify discourses, different pieces of and assumptions about the social world within the text. In the process of identifying discourses, the researcher looks for competing discourses, those in conflict or disagreement with each other. The discourses that are identified are then named or labeled in some way to aid in a discussion of them. Finally, the researcher considers the discourses in relation to the institutions they challenge or support and in terms of the individual's relationship to those institutions. The role of power and resistance of institutions by individuals is also considered.

According to Banister et al. (1994), the results of the discourse analysis should be presented in a research paper quite differently than the results of an experimental study. The results of a discourse analysis are longer and more descriptive and they include the rationale for how the researcher located the discourses in the text and how those discourses are interrelated or in competition with each other. In the discussion section of the paper, the researcher may extend the analysis to include

> a study of where and when these discourses developed and a description of how they have operated to naturalize the things they refer to; that is, how they "form the objects of which they speak" in such a way that it appears perverse and nonsensical to question that they are really there. (Banister et al., 1994, pp. 102-103)

Foucauldian discourse analysis is not without its critics; Parker and Burman (1993) published a list of thirty-three problems with discourse analysis. One of the chief criticisms is the risk of reification, that the analysis "presupposes what it pretends to discover" and uses common sense to elaborate on the categories that are then discovered (Banister et al., 1994, p. 104). Maxwell (1996) identified two primary threats to validity in a qualitative study: *bias* and *reactivity*. Researcher bias is generally accepted in qualitative research to be unavoidable because it is impossible to strip an individual of his or her ideas, values, preconceptions, and experiences. However, while qualitative researchers do not claim to be able to eliminate bias, they make themselves and the reader aware of their opinions and experiences in order to make the reader aware of the *lens* through which they view their work (Polkinghorne, 1991, p. 178). The second major threat to validity that Maxwell identifies is reactivity, which is the influence of the researcher on the setting or participants. This influence is impossible to eliminate; however, as Maxwell pointed out, "the goal in a qualitative study is not to eliminate this influence but to understand it and use it productively" (p. 91).

In the present study, bias was addressed through use of a bracketing interview. In this interview, the primary researcher examined her own expectations and experiences relevant to the

study which may have influenced her analysis of the results. The second concern, reactivity, was addressed in the study by having people other than the primary researcher lead the groups. These steps were designed to promote the validity of the study but do not eliminate bias or reactivity.

<div align="center">Instruments</div>

This section describes the assessment instruments used in the study. Three questionnaires were administered to the participants in the study: the Self-Efficacy Scale, the Beck Depression Inventory-II, and the Attitude toward Women Scale. Each participant took each questionnaire three times over the course of the study.

<u>Self-efficacy Scale</u>

The first of the three questionnaires used in this study was The Self-efficacy Scale (SES; Sherer et al., 1982). The SES measures an individual's expectations of personal mastery, i.e., what he or she can accomplish. The Self-efficacy Scale was based on Bandura's (1977) concept of self-efficacy. Scores on the Self-efficacy Scale have been positively correlated with vocational, educational, and military success (Sherer et al., 1982). Two subscales of the Self-efficacy Scale were identified by Sherer et al. using factor analysis. The two subscales are the General Self-efficacy subscale and the Social Self-efficacy subscale. The entire instrument has 30 items: 23 test items and 7 *filler* items such as "I like to cook." Of the 23 test items, 17 items comprise the General Self-efficacy subscale and 6 items comprise the Social Self-efficacy subscale. For each of the items, respondents rate the degree to which they agree or disagree with each item using a scale. The four choices of answers are: disagree strongly, disagree moderately, neither agree nor disagree, agree moderately, or agree strongly. Items are scored from 1 to 5 with total scores ranging from 23 to 115.

High internal consistency has been reported for this measure; Cronbach alphas of .86 and .71 were reported for the General Self-efficacy subscale and Social Self-efficacy subscale, respectively. (Sherer et al., 1982). As a result, the authors of the instrument concluded that the General Self-efficacy subscale is more useful than the Social Self-efficacy subscale. Both subscales were negatively correlated with quitting and being fired from a job ($r = .24$ and $-.22$, respectively, $p < .05$) (Sherer et al., 1982). Only one study to date has studied the test-retest reliability of the measure; the results indicated low ($r = .23$) test-retest reliability. (Chen, Gully, & Eden, 2001).

Sherer and Adams (1983) established means and standard deviations based on a normative sample ($N = 101$). For the General Self-efficacy subscale, a mean of 64.31 and a standard deviation of 8.58 were found. For the Social Self-efficacy subscale, a mean of 21.20 and a standard deviation of 3.63 were found.


Beck Depression Inventory-II

The second questionnaire used in the study was The Beck Depression Inventory-II (BDI-II; Beck, Steer, & Brown, 1996). The BDI-II is a 21-item questionnaire measuring depression. Each item consists of four statements; respondents select the statement or statements which they feel is most true for them during the last week. The statements have corresponding scores from zero to three; the scores on all items are totaled. Scores may range from 0 to 63. Scores from 5 to 9 are considered normal; 10 to 18 represent a possible mild to moderate depression; 19 to 29 represent a possible moderate to severe depression; and 30 to 63 represent a possible severe depression (Stinton, 2002). Scores below four represent a possible denial of depression or *faking good*; scores over 40 may represent an exaggeration of symptoms or *faking bad* (Groth-Marnat, 1990).

Research has supported the construct validity of the BDI-II (Steer, Ball, Raniere, & Beck, 1997) and the BDI (Robinson & Kelley, 1996). The instrument has also been shown to have strong internal consistency, with a split-half reliability co-efficient of .93 (Stinton, 2002).Test-retest reliabilities ranged from .48 to .86, depending on the interval between re-testing and the type of population (Groth-Marnat, 1990). Beck, Steer, and Brown (1996) reported normative data in the manual for the BDI-II. The mean score for a sample of college women ($N = 152$) in a classroom setting (a non-clinical population) was 14.6 (*SD* 10.7). In contrast, the mean score for college men was 10.0 (*SD* 8.2). A significant difference between women's and men's scores indicated higher prevalence of depressive symptoms among female college students. O'hara, Sprinkle, and Ricci (1998) also published normative data for both the clinical and non-clinical college student populations. For female students in a classroom setting, the mean was 10 (*SD* 9.3). In contrast to the findings of the publisher, a sex difference in scores was not found.

Attitudes toward Women Scale

The third questionnaire used in the study was The Attitudes toward Women Scale (AWS; Spence & Helmreich, 1972). The AWS measures the respondent's attitudes toward the roles of women in society. The original, 55-item version was later shortened to a 25-item version (Spence, Helmreich, & Stapp, 1973). In 1978, Spence and Helmreich published an even shorter, 15-item version, which was used in the present study. Each item is a statement about the role of women such as "It is insulting to women to have the 'obey' clause remain in the marriage service." For each of the items, respondents have four choices as answers: agree strongly, agree mildly, disagree mildly, or disagree strongly. Items are scored from 0 to 3 with total scores running from 0 to 45. (Spence & Helmreich, 1978). Low scores are associated with traditional attitudes toward the roles of women; high scores are associated with liberal attitudes. Daugherty and Dambrot (1986) found that average scores on the 15-item version were 31.68 (*SD* 6.05) for college

students, 29.05 (*SD* 7.97) for those students' mothers, and 22.13 (*SD* 8.96) for their

grandmothers. A significant difference was present between the groups, suggesting that older

generations have more traditional attitudes toward women while younger generations hold more

liberal views.

The three different versions of the AWS have been shown to be highly reliable. Smith

and Bradley (1980) studied the 55-item and 25-item forms of the AWS and found that a single

factor accounted for 23 to 30% of the variance on the short form, and that the reliability

coefficient was .86 to .90. A correlation coefficient of .99 was reported between the 55-item and

25-item forms of the AWS (Smith & Bradley, 1980; Spence, Helmreich, & Stapp, 1973). A

correlation of .91 was reported between the 55-item and 15 item forms of the AWS (Spence &

Helmreich, 1978, p. 39).

Daugherty and Dambrot (1986) obtained alpha and split-half reliabilities of .92 and .93,

respectively, for the 55-item version, .89 and .86 for the 25-item version, and .85 and .86 for the

15-item version. Additionally, they found a pre-test alpha reliability of .81, a pretest split-half

reliability of .83, and a test-retest reliability of .86 for the 15-item version.

Kilpatrick and Smith (1974) asserted the validity of the scale as it was able to

differentiate significantly between members of the National Organization of Women from college

students and parents of college students. Not surprisingly, members of NOW had significantly

higher scores than the other two groups.

In summary, three questionnaires were used in the present study. The first questionnaire

was the SES, a measure of what a person feels he or she can accomplish. The second

questionnaire was the BDI-II, a measure of depression. The third questionnaire was the AWS, a

measure of attitudes toward women's roles.

Procedure

The procedures used in execution of this study are explained in this section. The steps were: (a) completion of a bracketing interview by the primary investigator, (b) recruitment and screening of participants, (c) obtaining of informed consent by the participants; (d) conduction of discussion groups, (e) conduction of individual interviews, and (f) administration of questionnaires. Participants were assigned to one of three discussion groups based on the times at which the participants were available to meet. Each group consisted of three to eight people and was led by two group leaders. Ten of the participants gave individual interviews following the conclusion of the discussion groups. All participants took pre-, post-, and delayed post-test measures of three questionnaires. A detailed description of each of these steps follows.

<u>Bracketing Interview</u>

The first step taken in execution of the study was the completion of a *bracketing interview* by the primary researcher. The purpose of this interview was to identify pre-existing ideas the researcher had about the subject of the study. Husserl introduced the idea of bracketing, which he considered *setting aside* concern with causation and empirical fact (Dukes, 1984). According to Colaizzi (1978), one's approach to research consists of one's preconceived meaning that is attached to the subject of the research. This approach then affects all elements of the researcher's work with the project, including the choice of a topic and a research method. Colaizzi asserts the need to *interrogate* those presuppositions and ask about the researcher's choice of this subject to study. The researcher is also asked what his or her personal inclinations and dispositions might influence or even bias the investigation, and what hidden gains he or she may have in conducting this investigation. Colaizzi recommended this interrogation take the form of an interview, followed by an analysis of the interview and summary of the findings. The

summary would contain a statement of the researcher's beliefs, hypotheses, and attitudes about the subject under study.

In the bracketing interview, the researcher was asked, "What are some of your experiences and your ideas about power and what are you hoping to think you might hear in your groups?" The bracketing interview was audio taped, transcribed and analyzed by a research group. A summary of the bracketing interview is presented in Chapter IV.

<u>Participants</u>

The second step taken in execution of the study was the recruitment and screening of the participants. The participants in this study were 16 female, full-time students at a large, public university. The participants ranged in age from 18 to 27 with a mean of 21.37 (*SD* 2.3). Fifteen participants were Caucasian; one was African American. Two participants voluntarily identified as having a lesbian sexual orientation during the discussions and/or interviews. Participants were sought in psychology, education, communications, business, biology, and engineering classes. They  were invited to participate in a research study involving group discussion of contemporary social issues. Sign-up sheets were passed for those who were interested to provide their names, phone numbers, and email addresses. Those interested were given copies of the informed consent form (Appendix A) to review.

Potential participants were screened to ensure they were appropriate participants for the study. First, to be considered appropriate for the study, the participant was required to be a female between the ages of 18 and 28. Second, she had to be a full-time student enrolled at the university. The reason for this requirement was so that the student would have access to free counseling services should any personal concerns arise as a consequence of the study. Third, she must be fully informed of the nature of the study and willing to participate. Several days after first indicating an interest in participating and receiving a copy of the informed consent form

(Appendix A), the participant was contacted by telephone or email and was encouraged to ask

any questions she may have had. Participants were assigned to one of three discussion groups

based on the times at which they were available to meet.

Informed Consent

      The third step taken in execution of the study was the obtaining of informed consent from

the participants. At the first group meeting, before the discussion began, participants were asked

to review and sign the informed consent statement (Appendix A). Any questions were answered

regarding video or audio taping, confidentiality, the nature of the study, or any other participant

concerns. The participants were specifically advised that: (a) they had the right to refuse to

participate or leave at any time, (b) they had the right to inquire about the procedures at any time,

(c) the group sessions would be video taped and individual interviews would be audio taped, (d)

video and audio tapes would be kept in a locked file cabinet until they were destroyed, (e) the

video tapes would be erased after one month and audio tapes after two months of when they were

made, and (f) although group members would be asked not to share what was said outside of the

group, it was not possible to guarantee confidentiality in a group setting. A copy of the signed

informed consent form was offered to each participant for her records.

Discussion Groups

      The fifth step taken in execution of the study was facilitation of three discussion groups.

The discussion groups were comprised of three, five and eight participants, respectively. Each

group met three times and was facilitated by the same two female group co-leaders. Each session

lasted one hour and each group met once per week. The co-leaders were doctoral students in

Counseling Psychology who had received training in conducting groups. The co-leaders focused

the discussion on the meanings and experiences of power in the lives of the participants using a

list of questions (Appendix B) as a guide. The discussion groups were video taped and the content

of the discussion summarized without identifying information about the participants. The tapes

were then erased.

Individual Interviews

The sixth step in the execution of this study was the interviewing of ten participants. Ten

participants gave individual interviews about the experience of being in the discussion group.

Participants were told at the beginning of the study that they would have the opportunity to

volunteer to participate in an individual interview after the groups ended. The groups ended just

before final exams began, so many of the participants were limited by final exam demands and

schedules in their ability to volunteer. However, ten of the participants did volunteer to given an

individual interview with the primary investigator. The interviews took place in a private setting

agreed upon by the researcher and participant. Interviews were not limited in length, but lasted

approximately 30 minutes each. Each participant was asked the same interview question: "Tell

me a few things that stand out to you about your experience in the discussion group." The

interviewer asked follow-up questions to clarify points the participant made, to summarize things

which were said, and to ask for elaboration in central areas of interest.

Following the interview, the audio tapes were transcribed and the original audio tapes

were erased within two months of the interview. During this process, all identifying information

was eliminated from the transcript and replaced with pseudonyms or initials.

Administration of Questionnaires

At three separate points during the course of the above steps, three questionnaires were

each administered to the participants three times. The three administrations are referred to as the

pre-test, the post-test, and the delayed post-test. The pre-test measures were administered at the

first discussion group meeting before this discussion began. The post-test measures were given

immediately following the conclusion of the third group meeting. The delayed post-test measures

were given three months after the post-test measures and were sent and returned by mail. Return

postage was enclosed so that participants would bear no expense in returning the questionnaires.


Data Analysis

This section contains descriptions of the methods used to analyze the data obtained in the

study. The data analysis consisted of three parts: Foucauldian discourse analysis of the group

discussions, Foucauldian discourse analysis of the individual interviews, and statistical analysis

of the questionnaire data.


Group Discussions

The first part of the data analysis was analysis of the group discussions. The method used

to analyze the data from the group discussions was Foucauldian discourse analysis, as described

earlier in this chapter. The objective in analyzing the group discussions was to identify discourses

on the subject of power that the participants expressed. The primary researcher reviewed the

video tapes of each group session. Elements of discussion content, group process, and nature of

participation were noted. The primary topics discussed were recorded, particularly topics which

were repeated throughout the session. The level and nature of participation in the discussion were

also noted, as were non-verbal behaviors and group dynamics. Due to concerns about the

participants' privacy and IRB requirements, no one other than the primary researcher was

permitted to review the video tapes. Therefore, the primary researcher completed the analysis of

the group discussions independently. Due to the large quantity of data, it was necessary to break

down the data into sections for the analysis. Accordingly, the data was divided by section

number, i.e., the first sessions of all three groups were studied together, the second sessions were studied together, and then the third.

Because the groups were all using the same question guide, the topics discussed in the first sessions should have been roughly the same, the second sessions the same, and the third sessions the same. However, group leaders were given latitude to allow the group to vary from the order suggested in the discussion guide, as long as they remained on a topic from the guide. Two of the three groups kept to the discussion guide, but one group remained on topics from the second session through the third as well. The group seemed to have more to say about the subjects in the second session (power in the workplace and power in social relationships) than they could cover in one session. As a result, the content of that group's third session was analyzed along with results from the other second sessions because the topic was the same. In summary, the results were analyzed according to the topics they were intended to cover in that session, but not necessarily according to the session number in which the discussions took place. The results are presented in Chapter IV.

Individual Interviews

The second part of the data analysis was analysis of the individual interviews. The methodology used was Foucauldian discourse analysis. Prior to the analysis, the primary researcher transcribed each interview. All names and identifying information were deleted from the written transcripts to protect the identity of the participants. All copies of the transcripts were retained by the researcher for confidentiality purposes. Though Foucauldian discourse analysis is often completed by a single researcher, the participation of the members of a research group was gained in the analysis of the individual interviews in this study. The purpose of using a research group was to have corroboration of the findings and a broader perspective on the data. Transcripts of the interviews were read aloud in the research group and the content was discussed. Members

of the research group identified different elements of discourses present in the transcripts. Research group members shared what they felt were the points the participants were trying to make and identified repeated ideas or phrases. The primary researcher made notes during the research group meetings. Next, the primary research worked on her own to synthesize the research group members' comments and her own observations of each interview. Finally, the results of the analyses of all ten interviews were compiled and a single set of discourses on power was identified based on their presence in the majority of interviews. The results of the analysis are presented in Chapter IV.

Questionnaire Data

The third part of the data analysis was analysis of the questionnaire data. Data from all three administrations of each questionnaire were analyzed using descriptive statistics and analyses of variance (ANOVAs). Descriptive statistics including mean and standard deviation for each of the three groups at each of the three administrations is reported in Chapter IV. A full set of planned pair-wise comparisons was conducted to compare the pre-test measures to the post- and delayed post-test measures, as well as to compare the post-test to the delayed post-test measures. The pair-wise comparisons were accomplished using one-way, repeated measures ANOVAs. The scores were tested for significant differences between the administrations at the .05 alpha level. Because the number of procedures conducted raises the risk of a Type I error, a Bonferonni correction was made to the alpha level. Three ANOVAs were conducted, so the differences between the mean scores were tested at the adjusted .017 alpha level (.05 / 3 = .017).

Summary

The present study was undertaken from a postmodern feminist approach to research. It combined both subjective and objective measures of college women's understanding of power.

Execution of the study consisted of recruiting and screening 16 female students between ages 18 and 27 to participate in discussion groups and individual interviews. Participants joined one of three discussion groups that each met three times. In the groups, participants discussed a wide range of topics related to power. Following the groups, ten participants participated in individual interviews in which they discussed the experience of being in the discussion groups. Participants also completed pre- post- and delayed post-test measures of three questionnaires. The three questionnaires used were the Self-Efficacy Scale, the Beck Depression Inventory-II, and the Attitudes toward Women Scale.  Foucauldian discourse analysis was used to analyze the results of the group discussions and individual interviews. One-way, repeated measures ANOVAs were used to analyze the results of the questionnaires.

Chapter IV

Results

This chapter comprises four sections. First, the results of the bracketing interview are presented. The bracketing interview outlines the expectations and potential biases of the primary researcher that may have impacted the data analysis. Second, an analysis of the content of the group discussions is presented. The analysis is broken down by session number; the first sessions of the discussion groups are studied together, the second sessions together, and so on. Third, a discourse analysis of the individual interviews is presented. In the individual interviews, participants elaborate on their thoughts about power and describe their experiences of the group discussion. Fourth, the questionnaire data are reviewed. Tables 1 through 4 displaying the results are in Appendix C.

Bracketing Interview

Before beginning the analysis of the group discussions or individual interviews, the researcher participated in a bracketing interview to identify her expectations and potential biases regarding the topic. The interview was analyzed by a group of researchers familiar with the bracketing process. Assumptions about power held by the researcher were identified, as were her expectations about the study. These assumptions and expectations are described in this section, prior to the presentation of the analysis of the group discussion and individual interviews. The purpose of the bracketing interview was to aid the researcher in understanding her own potential biases so that she could try not to project those views onto the data. However, since complete objectivity is not presumed to be possible in discourse analysis, the researcher's views are described here to provide the reader an understanding of the lens through which the investigator viewed the data.

Three assumptions about the nature of power were identified as being held by the researcher. First, the researcher believed that women's understanding of power is dynamic. She said that across recent generations, women have progressively seen themselves as wielding more power both publicly and privately. She also said the understanding of power develops and changes across an individual's life-span. She believed that talking about power in a group discussion format could increase awareness of power in many areas of a woman's life and thereby advance the developmental process. Second, the researcher believed that conflict exists about the power of women in society, and that individual women, herself included, experience this conflict on a personal level. Third, the researcher expressed an emotional connection to the subject of power, having experienced a variety of emotions when researching the topic.

The first and most prominent of the three assumptions was the idea that the understanding of power is dynamic. The researcher was aware of differences in views about women's roles across the last century. She was critical of traditional roles of women and presumed that more liberal views are forward progress. She said that her own understanding of power has changed across her lifetime and that she believes other women also go through a developmental process in the understanding of power. As a child, she said she thought that "the women's movement was over" and that women had achieved equality with men. By the time she was in college, she believed that women had achieved a great deal, but were not equal. She understood conflict over gender roles as a need for men to make adjustments to their roles as a result of changes to women's roles. At the time of the bracketing interview, she believed that women's individual behavior had not caught up to the changes made legally and socially and was interested in women's understanding of power on an individual level. She said,

> Well, we've been gaining, I think, slowly, power, certainly legally we've made big strides, and socially. And I think that the thing that I'm looking at now is why don't we take more advantage of the legal and social liberties we've been given?

As a result of this view of the understanding of women's power as a developmental process, both socially and individually, the researcher believed that the participants, being ages 18 to 27, would be relatively unaware of the concept of power in their own lives. Due to the racial and cultural backgrounds of the majority of the participants, the researcher believed many of the participants would hold traditional views of the roles of women.

The second of the three assumptions identified in the analysis of the bracketing interview was the assumption of conflict, again both socially and individually. Socially, she believed that, "our whole society is struggling with the role of women right now. I think that we're as a whole not sure about where women fit in." She experienced this struggle on a personal level as she realized that the women's movement had not brought women as much power as she had thought earlier. She said, "I was disappointed when I realized how pervasive myths and [traditional] ideas about women are, that they are threaded through our culture just everywhere."

The third of the three assumptions identified in the bracketing interview was that beliefs about power are linked to emotions. She said that she experienced feelings of depression and disappointment in the process of developing her own views of power. She believed that other women also experience power on an emotional level. She predicted that participants in the group would react emotionally to their experience in the group, perhaps with increased or decreased levels of depression, or with other emotions. These assumptions about power held by the researcher no doubt had some impact on the way in which the data were analyzed; however, every effort was made on the part of the researcher to separate in her mind her own views from those of her participants to produce the least biased analysis possible.

Group Discussion

Three discussion groups met three times each for a period of one hour each time. The meetings took place one week apart, spanning three weeks in total. The first sessions of the three groups were analyzed together; likewise, the second sessions and third sessions were analyzed together and are presented according to those groupings. The group discussions were analyzed in this manner because the question guide used (Appendix B) posed three sets of questions: one set for the first session, one set for the second, and one for the third. In other words, each group responded to same set of questions in the first session and their discussions of those questions were analyzed together.

First Sessions

The first session of each discussion group began with introductions and a discussion of rules for the group. Rules that were set by the members included agreeing not to talk to anyone outside of the group about what was said in the group and being respectful of each others' ideas. The topics of the first session, as suggested by the question guide, were what power is, what types of power exist, and who has power.

Discourse on the definition of power.

The discussion of power began with the group leader asking the question from the question guide (Appendix B), "What is power?" Definitions that were given included those that focused on power over oneself and those that focused on power over others. One participant said, "There are different types of power; within society or within your own life you can have power." Participants first gave simple definitions, such as "strong," "able to handle yourself," and "control." As the discussion continued, participants were asked to expand on these definitions; some gave examples and some shared personal stories.

Participants' discussion revealed a discourse on power over others. One participant described power over others as, "being a good leader and being able to have people follow up, lift you up." Another woman used the words power, strength and control almost interchangeably: "I think it's strength because to have control and have power you have to have strength to be in control. If you're weak you're not going to have much control, not going to have much power." Other participants defined power as influence or money. One participant said, "If you are influential in society you have power." Another explained, "You have much more influence over things that are going on if you have more money, so money gets you that power. So money equals power, it means pretty much the same thing." Several participants gave examples of power and influence within the family. One woman said, "I taught my niece how to share.... I helped mold her into a better person." Another said,

> I had younger brothers and sisters and I had power over them. I used to say, "If you do this chore for me, I won't tell Mom you got an F on your paper," and I was the big sister, I had that power over them. And at the time I didn't feel bad about it, because I was the big, bad, big sister, and you know, but now looking back I think, yeah, it was an abuse of power and I should have handled it differently. But I think that power was just set into that relationship because I was the big sister.

Another person said, "Power is taking control of my future. I want to go to med school. I do volunteering, getting to know people so I have connections." Another participant said that to be powerful is "to complete goals and accomplish things." When thinking of power, one participant said her boss came to mind:

> When I think of power I think of my boss. When I think of power I think of her. She has total control of the situation, as well as the people under her, as well as herself. You rarely see her flying off the handle, unless it's for a good reason.

In this example, power was seen not only as control over others, but also over oneself and one's emotions.

<u>Discourse on self-control.</u>

Throughout the initial discussions, participants revealed a discourse on self-control that describes power as strongly connected to self-control. Self-control was spoken of as a good thing, whereas control over others was a bad thing. One participant said,

> Control, for me, I want to have power over control of myself, I want to be able to make decisions for myself and not be limited. And for other people it may be control of people and situations. That's not something that's important to me, no. I don't want anyone else to have control over me but I don't need to have. And we talked about that too, I don't need to have control over anyone else, as long as I am free to make my own decisions and I don't feel trapped. That's important, or … power in that way is important, to me.

She asserted her desire for self-determination and at the same time distanced herself from the desire to control others.

In the discussion of self-control, a discourse on control of one's emotions became evident. One woman gave a personal example of having been in a position of power on a class project:

> I think people with power aren't emotional, they can't be. In my video production class we have about eight people in a group and everyone has their own things. I was the producer in the last thing and now I'm the director, and those are like the two big people and I've got to be really bossy.... I've got to be calling the shots and everybody had better be doing what they're supposed to be doing when they're doing it. I, I don't think I have, I have trouble bossing people around because I'm worried about what people are thinking of me and I don't want to hurt anyone's feelings. I don't want to be that bossy person that they're like, [in a whisper] "Gosh, I wish she'd like," you know. And I think that somebody who has power kind of doesn't have to have those emotions like, "What if they don't like me? They don't like me." They can't worry about that, you need to do what you need to do. I mean, I'm not saying that everybody in power are stepping on people left and right, but I think that a lot of it is your attitude of, "This is how, this is what I'm saying, this is how you do it, I don't care if you like it or not, you're going to do it." And that's the kind of thing that people in power have.

In this example, the emotions being controlled are feelings of wanting others to like her and not wanting to hurt others' feelings. Another participant talked about control of feelings of anger. She said,

> Extreme anger can be seen as being weak, a lack of power because you can't control it.... If you let [anger] come to extreme, you're giving the person you're mad at more power

because you're letting them drive you. They have power because you think about them but they don't think about you at all.

Another participant said,

I think anger drives you more than any other emotion. Anger is the emotion that pushes you forward. When you're sad you just sit there, but when someone says you can't do that, it makes you mad and you just want to get it ten times....

Other participants who talked about control of emotion associated greater emotionality with women and control of emotions (power) with men. One participant talked about how being emotional affects her power in her romantic relationship: "For me, in a relationship, if I'm really emotional about something, if something's really affecting me, I lose some of the power, because then this man, my boyfriend, has more power over me because it does emotionally affect me."

One woman said she thinks that women's emotionality would prevent them from being able to be an effective U.S. President:

I think that's why guys are always in leadership roles of our country because women naturally don't like war as much and men know what has to be done.... I think if we had a woman President she wouldn't have been able to be emotionally as strong and I think if she went to Ground Zero, she would have just lost it.

In response to that statement, another participant said,

In my opinion, you can't completely generalize all women. I think some women could. Some grew up in a harsh environment and they get used to it and can stay on top of it. It may be okay to say statistically, but you can't say one way or another.

She did not disagree that most women are more emotional, or that emotionality prevents one from being President, but she argued that some women, due to a harsh childhood, are able to control their emotions as well as men. Another participant disagreed with the idea that all women are highly emotional, stating that she does not like to display her emotions: "I have a lot of friends who aren't very emotional and don't like to cry at all. I don't like to cry in front of others or be emotional in front of others." Another woman disagreed with the idea that women's emotionality would prevent them from being good Presidents:

But you can't say that a woman that would be qualified would be like that because not all women are like that - really, really emotional. I think it's okay to be emotional. I think Bush is doing what he knows to be right, but maybe some things were a little too hasty. Maybe men can be too quick to go to war. When there are a lot of lives at stake, maybe you should be more compassionate, not really emotionally involved but don't put this whole power, revenge, not revenge, who knows?

In this exchange, competing discourses were apparent. One discourse states that women are more emotional than men and another discourse says some women are exceptions to the rule and assumptions should not be made about all women.

Discourse on gender differences.

Discussion of the perceived greater emotionality of women was followed by a discussion of the roots of gender differences. Participants expressed views supporting both sides of the nature vs. nurture debate. In support of the idea that gender differences arise from biological differences, a participant said,

The woman carries the baby for nine months and getting attached, and the man just sits around looking at her big belly and she's connecting to that life inside of her and that's something a man will never be able to experience and that's why women are better, women are emotionally attached.

In support of the idea that gender roles are nurtured, that is, brought about by different socialization, the same participant said,

In society, when you're a little girl, you get a baby doll; if you're a boy, everyone wonders what's wrong with him. We're brought up from the beginning, we're given dolls and pretty things. Our emotions are nurtured and they grow as we grow. Because society makes it that way, and boys are given toy hammers and GI Joes [laughs] and they hit you with them. But that's just part of our society and I don't think that'll ever change. When my nephew pushes a stroller, they make fun of him.

She has clearly accepted aspects of both sides of the nature versus nurture debate, an example of the result of two strong, competing discourses influencing an individual's opinions. Another participant shared a story about her father having expected her not to do well athletically, but also said that she thought women's athleticism had changed since the last generation. She said,

> I played soccer. My dad wouldn't come to my games because he didn't think I was serious about it and my brothers were all playing football. And he came to one game and I got mowed down by a girl, I got knocked down. My father turned to my mother and said, "She's not going to get up," and I did get up. And guys don't think girls are tough. Guys think of girls as just cheerleaders, but they can be tough nowadays. It's like soccer, basketball, they can be brutes out there and that's new. When my mother was in high school, they were all cheerleaders. In basketball, there'd be girls at either end; they wouldn't run all the way down. That's changing.

Her perception was that girls are tougher now than in her mother's generation, but are still not thought of as such by men.

The first session discussions covered many topics, but these topics centered mainly on defining power. Participants defined power in terms of both power over others and power over oneself. The discourse on self-control included an emphasis on power over one's own emotions to be seen as powerful. A related discourse on emotion was evident in the perception of women's greater emotionality and competing ideas about the origin of gender differences in emotionality.

Discourse on types of power.

In all of the groups, participants made judgments about what they felt were good and bad uses of power. One participant said,

> I think power can be addictive. If you have a lot of power, you want more, sometimes in healthy ways and sometimes in unhealthy ways. If you can use power to make a positive difference in the lives of others, then that would be a good way to use it, but then you could also be manipulative and use your power for personal gain while stepping on others, then that would be my example of having power for the wrong reason.

Using power to help others was described as good, whereas using power for manipulation or personal gain was seen as bad. Another explained, "Power can be tricky in relationships. Whoever has the upper hand has more power. Whoever has power is more manipulative because they can use that power, so it's not always a good thing." Some participants talked about power in the college environment such as the power of professors: "I think there are teachers that abuse power. My friend was wrongly accused of plagiarism. The teacher wasn't understanding; she was

like, `I am the teacher.' She was really macho and wouldn't back down and wasn't listening."

The participant used the term "macho," a word with a strongly masculine connotation, to describe

a female instructor. Use of that word suggests she was seen as behaving too much like a man in

her assertiveness. The participant thought she should "back down" and "listen," that is, be more

understanding and accommodating. In this case, a woman's use of power in a "macho" way rather

than an "understanding" way was viewed negatively by the participant.

One woman described a difference between earned and unearned power, which was

suggestive of a good/bad contrast, though it was not explicitly stated:

> I think there can be earned power and unearned power. I think some people get power
> that they haven't really earned it, whether it be because of their social status or their race
> or their gender. Maybe their father is the one that owns the company, and they get the job
> though they haven't done anything for it, whereas some people start from the ground up.

Another participant said she thinks the idea that some earn power while others do not is a widely

held belief: Most people agree with what we are saying, that powerful positions are given to

people who don't earn them, but then they still manage somehow to get there." The assumption

that most people agree suggests the participant is aware of a discourse on people in power or on

the use of power. She has perhaps heard others say this and believes it is a widely accepted idea.

Overall, distinctions were made between good and bad uses of power and earned and unearned

power.

Discourse on knowledge as power.

Several participants stated the belief that knowledge and education are powerful. One

participant said,

> I think that [an education] gives you so much power when you go for a job. They want a
> college degree now and it didn't used to be. When someone runs for office, they need a
> college degree – that's so important, can take you so much further. When you have an
> education behind you, you feel better about yourself.

Another participant gave an example of when knowledge of computers has earned her respect

from her peers when working together on school projects:

> Um, just working through like group projects and stuff like um, I know a lot about
> computers so I can help people. I feel like my knowledge in that area is kind of power
> that way. In a group, when people don't know what to do or they need help and they can
> always come and ask me and I can help them or whatever. But they have respect like,
> "Oh, you know, I know you know how to do this or show me how to do this or teach
> me." You know, I feel not like powerful, almighty guru of computers or anything, but I
> just feel like I have the respect of them to be like, "Oh I trust you to know what to do to
> help me in this way."... I see that power and it's not abusive or, it's just like a respectful
> power, I guess.

One participant explained that she thought having a college degree would give her options in the

future: "My friends ask what I want to do, I say have a family. They say you're wasting your

parents' money. If I have a degree, I have options. It might not work out down the road and I'll

have that option." In this statement, the participant expressed that she had been criticized for her

choice to pursue an education in spite of her intention to work inside the home. This exchange

suggests the presence of competing discourses. One discourse states that education is of value

only to women who seek careers. Another, which is preferred by this participant, says that

education gives women options. After hearing the participant's comment, another member of the

same group said,

> I think a lot more girls are getting educated and they want nothing more than to be a
> housewife, but they're getting degrees. I think parents are pushing them whereas they
> used to not. Like she said, you never know. You could have a kid who's sick and you
> might have to go to work. I have a friend from Iran but she doesn't know how to work....
> It's something to fall back on. I think education gives you power and a woman would
> have more power in a relationship and not feel as submissive with an education. It keeps
> you from feeling so dependent on a man to provide for me and my family.

Again, an education is seen as a backup plan to give a woman options in case she is forced to

work outside the home. Education was seen by one person as useful in making women self-reliant

but not as a value in itself.

Discourse on avoidance of power.

A number of participants distanced themselves from the concept of power in their statements. One said, "I respect that [famous coach] is a very powerful figure, and I really respect what she has, but I can't really understand that, how she gets it, or where she gets it." Others said they had no desire for power over others, such as the woman who said, "I don't want anyone to have power over me, but I don't really care if I have power over anybody else." One woman described power as an attitude but said she doesn't want it:

> It's sort of like a confidence, it's sort of...just having that attitude that "I know what I'm doing and technically you're the person that's supposed to be listening to me, so listen to me."... I guess it's just that attitude and that air of confidence....I don't want to do that because it bothers me to think of what other people might be thinking of me.

In this statement, the participant distanced herself from the idea of being confident or having power because of a fear she would be judged negatively. One participant distanced herself so far from power that when asked to think about power, she could only describe submission:

> I think it's submission...I usually think of what my role would be, and it's usually submission ... I don't have power over hardly anything, so usually whether it's my boss or my professors or my family, I usually submit to whatever they want me to do, so that's what I think of.

By contrast, another participant described a change in her feelings about having power after experiencing it. The example she gave was of being in a position of authority in her sorority and having to "put [her] foot down" and "step up to the plate" about getting others to wash dishes. In regard to having to assert herself in this manner, she said, "At first I didn't like it. I don't like controversy that much, but when it was done, I felt like I had accomplished something." Comments acknowledging any affinity for power were very few. For these college women, power was largely something foreign and something unwanted, though occasionally something that feels good.

<u>Second Sessions</u>

As led by the discussion guide, the topics covered in the second sessions were the presence of power in the workplace and in social situations. Participants described situations in which they were in positions of power in these settings as well as situations in which they felt they did not have power.

<u>Discourse on power in the workplace.</u>

Participants described ways in which they felt power operated in the workplace. Given the demographics of the participants, few had much full-time employment experience. One participant said, "I'm not really in the workplace yet, but I can imagine that the boss obviously has power." Others had experience such as working in restaurants and retail establishments. One participant shared her view that customers have power in the restaurant where she works. She said,

> This woman came up to us at the hostess stand and said she'd been there forever and things like that. We just got kind of assertive with her and were like, "I'm sorry, ma'am, there's nothing we can do. We'll get you a seat as soon as we can." And she told the manager we were really rude to her and that we were just ugly, being ugly to her. And when the manager told me that I was like, "What are you talking about? We weren't ugly to her." And then I thought, "Well, maybe I wasn't like kissing her butt, so I was really rude for her, you know." Customers really take it for granted that they have the power and they go in there and they're like, "You're not a person, you're there to serve me."

Another participant discussed the hierarchy of power in her workplace, a fitness facility. She felt that she was a the bottom of the hierarchy with both her managers and her customers having power over her:

> I'm very much the low end of the totem pole, and so I have my bosses over me and what's, it, what gives them the power is that they have the power to hire or fire me, obviously. And then the *members,* because I work at a fitness facility, the members also have power over me because their perception of me, whatever they think, you know, good or bad, can go back to the managers, and they're going to take the member's word over ours.... I've seen people that I work with where members have gone to management and complained about people that I work with and they weren't even given a chance to explain their side of the story and they were just kind of booted out. So, I mean you

know, and it just kind of shows you know the member has power because they are the ones paying the membership fees.

The role of gender in the workplace was also discussed. One participant used an example of a male and a female supervisor she had:

> At my last job, the supervisor was a man and the assistant supervisor was a woman. She was kind of a supervisor. She was a real pain. I think she had a hard time because she was a woman in a male dominated field... And he was just real easy-going and I'd have done anything for him because he was just that way. But I think she was kind of that way because she felt she had to be that way because she was a woman. I wonder if it's easier, some people find it easier to be a powerful person just because it's part of their personality. But it's probably, I won't say probably, it makes me wonder *if* it's easier for a man because those are more acceptable traits for a man to have, you know. Kind of like women are supposed to be [folded hands and smiled] sit there and look nice. I think she felt like she had something to prove, she had to be more this is the way it is, where he could kind of lean back and be more easy going and laid back and he didn't have to prove anything like she did.

Another participant discussed the role of gender in the decision of whether or not to work. She talked about the acceptability of women staying at home to raise children but not of men doing so. She referred to men who stay home to care for children as "bums" yet also lamented that they are seen that way:

> What would they think about the bum husband staying at home taking care of the kids while the wife worked, but it's okay the other way around. I would think it would be that he's a bum [if he's] not working, [and] you're having to be support him. But I don't know, it's personality. If you're a nurturing man or an aggressive woman, it should be the same difference.

Competing discourses were referenced in this statement; the participant referred to the idea that a man who does not work is a bum, but she also refers to the idea that some men are nurturing and some women are aggressive.

Since for most of the participants the main workplace was the college classroom, several discussed power in relation to professors. One participant related a personal example about a struggle she had with a professor whom she felt wanted her to write her paper in a manner with which she disagreed. She wrote two papers, one her way and one to suit her professor, thereby giving herself a sense of power:

> I know that this professor wants this paper written this way and that may not be how I think or feel but, so they have the power in how I'm going to write this paper. But on the other hand, I have the right to either stand up and say, "I totally disagree with this, but I know this is what is going to get me the A and this is the paper *you* want and here's the paper on how I really feel. And I've done before with one of my English professors who didn't want to hear my views in class because it wasn't what he wanted to hear, so I wrote the paper to him that he wanted and then I gave him another paper about how I felt about the issues. He gave the paper that I wrote to him an A and then, of course, he just totally tore up my other paper, because that wasn't how he wanted it. But I think that I had the power to make my grade kind of what I wanted. I think that if a teacher has it out for you, but I think those situations like that are few and far between then they totally have all the power. But I think a lot of the time you have a lot of power over what you do and how you handle relationships.

This participant finds power in taking action and standing behind her opinions while also accommodating the professor for the benefit of her grade.

Discourse on power in social situations.

In discussing power in social situations, the two main topics that arose were power among friends and power in romantic relationships. One participant explained that power dynamics exist in many different types of social situations every day:

> I think there's power in something that happens every day in life and we just don't realize it. I think there's power in a relationship with a significant other and with your parents. Certain friends look up to you and you look up to certain friends, so at the point where they look up to you, and if they look up to you, you've got the power. But then if you are looking up to another friend, and you look up to them, then they have the power. So power is around is in all of the relationships we are in whether it be with a friend, or with your teachers or, you know, just anywhere.

Power among friends was most frequently mentioned in the context of deciding what a group of friends is going to do or where they are going to go out. One participant said, "Dominant personalities have more power in social settings. If everyone's deciding what to do, they'll speak up and everyone will be like, 'Okay.'" Another defined a dominant personality as "someone who's not afraid to speak their mind... very outspoken, maybe?" By adding "maybe" at the end of her sentence, this participant was perhaps avoiding appearing as a dominant personality herself. Another woman said,

Or loud, outgoing. It's not even necessarily bad qualities. It's just someone who'll say, "Let's go here." you know instead of "Oh I don't care." [spoken in a quiet, high-pitched voice] they'll step up, so it's not necessarily a bad dominance. Just outgoing, more active than passive, shows more leadership qualities.

Another participant had a more critical view of dominant personalities; she added, "Maybe someone who is a little bit selfish, they don't care what other people want." No one in the groups defined herself as a "dominant personality," but several said they are the opposite. One of the participants said,

I'm the kind of person who's like kind of fits in with what all of y'all are talking about. If it'll make you happy, that's fine. It's really not a big deal to me. If you really want to go to the mall instead of this, that's *fine*. So they kind of have power over that....I think I feel guilty easily, so they have that power over me.

Another said she is similar, calling herself a "doormat":

I'm kind of a doormat sometimes...with two of my best friends. If I'm with one of them, they make the decisions, and when we're all there, I just stand there. And like I said it doesn't bother me if it's something I don't really care about. If it's something I really don't want to do, [in a quiet voice] I won't. And other times I start to get mad because I really start thinking, "I'm not making any decisions here. That kind of pisses me off. [group laughs] We're going to do *this*."

At the end, she added that at times she becomes angry when she realizes she is not making any decisions. This suggests she is not always happy being a "doormat." Another participant said she would only "step in" if what were proposed by others were dangerous or offensive to her:

If it really, really, really, really, really bugged me, because I don't think many things I'm like her, I don't really care. If it really bothered me, I might step in. It's more, like if it offended me to go to this place, or if it was dangerous, or if I really didn't feel I should be doing this, then I'd step in if it affected that, more than just me not liking it.

Obviously, this woman prefers not to contribute her opinion about where she would like the group to go. Another participant explained that she has difficulty saying no to her friends because she cares about them:

I think social settings and friends have a lot of power because it is... your peers, they're people you care about, emotions are involved. So that gives you more power than...people on the bottom of the totem pole, because you care about these people...I wouldn't feel as bad saying no to someone that's just in my classes. Like saying no I can't study tonight. I'd feel more bad if I was telling like a friend that I can't.

For her, saying no to people she doesn't know well comes more easily to her than saying no to

friends. One woman explained power among friends along gender lines:

> Women tend to want their way more, from my experience, and go about it different.
> Women are a little bit more manipulative that way in like a friend setting. They're more
> like, "If you don't want to do that, I *guess* I can..." You know, they put more of the guilt
> trip on. Guys really don't get in to all of that stuff, you know. You even hear guys talk
> about, you know, they don't get into that. Like I live with a guy right now and he'll hear
> me talking to one of my friends on the phone and he'll be like [laughing] "Friend trouble
> again?" And like just, just, you know. And he is so not like that and so they don't really
> understand or get all into that.

This participant believes women are more manipulative than men in their friendships.

In discussing power in social settings, participants talked about power in romantic

relationships. One participant explained how she and her boyfriend negotiate deciding where they

will go out. She describes herself as a passive participant:

> My boyfriend and I are really bad like where we're going on Friday night. I'm like,
> surprise me, he's like, okay. When he comes to pick me up, he's like, "What do you want
> to do?" I'm like, "You were supposed to plan something." And he's like "Well I don't
> know what you want to do." We talk about it and then...he usually gets frustrated and
> he's like "I don't care" that makes me want to do what he wants to do. That way he has
> power over me in an *indirect* way, I guess. He's like, "Well I don't want to make you
> uncomfortable. I don't want to do anything you don't want to do." So then I'm like,
> "Whatever *you* want to do."

In this example, the participant's passivity seems to cause conflict in her relationship, but she still

prefers not to make a decision. Another participant talked about the power in social situations

when she must decide whether or not to reveal her lesbian sexual orientation or to act as if she

were heterosexual:

> I have to choose every day if I'm going to give other people the power or if I'm going to
> keep the power on telling them, "Okay, this is my girlfriend," or not. You know, as you
> know a lesbian you have the choice to either be out or to be safe and kind of hide.... Like
> if we go out to dinner, the choice I have to make is, "Am I going to say this is my
> girlfriend, or am I going to say this is my friend?" So I guess if I say this is my girlfriend,
> I'm taking the power, and if I say this is my friend, then I'm giving them the power.

Power in social situations, then, lies in decisions, whether it be deciding where a group of friends

goes out or whom to tell about one's sexual orientation.

In summary, the second session group discussions focused on discourses of power in the workplace and in social settings including friendships and romantic relationships. Good and bad forms of power were described in both settings. Examples of bad use of power were customers' abuse of employees in the workplace and manipulative behavior in social situations. Participants contrasted "dominant" personalities with "doormat" personalities and seemed to favor the latter.

<u>Third Sessions</u>

According to the question guide, participants were supposed to discuss personal experiences of power during the third session. However, the group leaders were given latitude in allowing the group discussions to go in whatever direction the participants led them. By the third session, each of the groups was cohesive enough to choose its own topic. Two groups focused on a discussion of the media, and the third continued its discussion of power in the workplace. Results from the continued discussion of the workplace were included within the results of the second sessions. Three discourses emerged from the two group discussions on the media: a discourse on the power of the media, a discourse on the media's portrayal of women, and a discourse on children and sexuality.

<u>Discourse on the power of the media.</u>

Group participants discussed the power of the media in influencing individuals and society. Largely, they described the media's and music performers' influence as a negative form of power, particularly for women and girls. One participant said the media the power has to influence people's beliefs and that too many people take what is presented in the media as truth:

> I think the media has a lot of power. There are people that don't even question the media and I don't agree with that. And what you see on the news is true. And even things that are not the news, like Entertainment Tonight, you know, whatever ideas they put in your head, and they're not even the news, and still it's what some people take to be the absolute truth.

Another participant acknowledged that she felt she had learned ideas from the media, but she

expressed difficulty distinguishing between what she learned from the media and what she

learned from her parents or other sources:

> How do we even know where we get our own ideas from. Because it's like in relationships, we all want Prince Charming, a lot of us do, to like come in and sweep us off our feet. I mean, do we get that from our parents? Because in real life, most people don't have that, you know. It's just like so many things - how we think love's supposed to be, how we think we're supposed to look, how we think we're supposed to dress, how we think we're supposed to work, what we're supposed to do. A lot of it comes from the media and you can't even tell, you have no clue. I mean, when can you tell what my parents taught me and what I just kind of picked up from watching TV or whatever. And even your parents, some things they teach you they're getting off TV. How can you even tell what is you and what you got off the media.

Her uncertainty about where she learned ideas suggests that she believes learning from the media

is not a fully conscious process but takes place without being fully realized. Another participant

supported the idea that the media's influence is unconscious. She described how she thinks

portrayal of women in the media has changed with the times:

> I think it's totally the media and how it plays out. Because all the shows on TV, woman gets in trouble and man, Superman, Batman, whatever comes in and saves her, everything, comedies, whatever. It's just like how we're raised and it happens to us and we don't even know it's happening. The media has such and effect on like the sexes and like what they are supposed to do in life. We were talking about it, the woman was seen as this beautiful housewife who stayed at home and whatever and the four of us would think we were supposed to stay home and do this. And now it's like women are out in the workplace and all that and I think it's just. It's kind of with the media changes, society changes right along with it. It's like someone in Hollywood decides, like, well I don't think they should do this, and it changes. So they switch it and we just all unconsciously follow it.

One participant thought it beneficial for the media to have the power to control the views to

which viewers were exposed:

> The news would be horribly depressing if it was always against you. The news has to support the majority of the people, you know. You can't have every single view, it would be awful, it would be called debate. You wouldn't have news anymore, you'd have debate and you'd have people on opposing sides of things arguing on every single issue. I mean to get completely informed on things, to get every side of things, you'd have to be reading the New York Times, the [local] paper, and um, the Paris paper and the London paper. On international things, we'd have to read a whole lot of papers to get the idea, and we can't do that. So we have to leave it up to professional people to decide what we

need to know. Just like people decide what we're going to eat, what we're going to wear. People make decisions for other people. If I go into television, I will make decisions about what people are going to be watching. If you go into teaching, you are deciding what kids are going to know.

She said she found it too difficult to stay informed on issues by reading different sources and preferred to rely on media professionals to decide what she needed to know. She not only felt that the media had power, she seemed appreciative of the influence the media has on her. Interestingly, this participant also mentioned that she is considering a career in television media.

Discourse on the media's portrayal of women.

The dominant discourse on the media present in the discussion blames the media for having a bad influence on women, particularly in regard to weight. Participants expressed particular concern about the media's representation of body weight:

> The media portrays the perfect woman to be like a size four. And I heard that a woman is supposed to be like a ten, an eight or a ten, not the perfect woman on TV as well.... It has to be the media because all of us are under the impression that if we're like a size four, we're great.

One participant suggested a connection between media portrayals of thinness and eating disorders and depression:

> So I think eating disorders are a really bad side effect of the media. And depression when they can't lose weight. Because some people are big boned, you know, I mean they are framed bigger, and they aren't going to be able to lose the weight because it's the way they're made. And then they get depressed when they can't and it's just (shakes head). I'm like, "Love yourself, please."

Another area in which it was suggested that the media has a negative influence on women is in regard to sexuality. One participant described a dichotomous image of women's sexuality:

> I was watching Dateline or something and they were showing all of these commercials that had shown like sex. The things that show men as the aggressor, the sexual aggressor, and they show women as, you know, that whole good-girl, bad-girl... that's the whole school-girl angel, like you know, she's good in her school uniform but she can be bad too, you know, that whole thing. And so, those are the kind of women that are portrayed, you know, they're innocent and they'll still do it. And I guess women think, "That's what I'm supposed to be; that's what men want."

Another participant commented on the prevalence of women on TV wearing revealing clothing:

> You can't turn on the TV anymore without seeing Britney Spears or Christina Aguilera naked practically on TV. I really think Britney wants to be a stripper [laughs]. I'm not sure that relates, well I guess so, she uses that as power.

Interestingly, Britney Spears and Christina Aguilera were named by participants in each of the three discussion groups in the context of sexuality in the media. These two women are popular recording artists known for their provocative clothing and performances. One woman talked about difficulty she has experienced in expressing a negative opinion about them:

> If, like, you say, "Well, I don't like Britney Spears or Christina Aguilera or whoever," [They say,] "You're just jealous." You know, I've heard people say that, "You're just jealous," or "Oh, you just want to be like them." I'm like, "No, you can just think that it's wrong." So I think it causes a lot of turmoil with relationships.

Discourse on sexuality and children.

Another discourse that emerged was the media's portrayal of sexuality and its effects on children. There was a broad expression of concern for children, and particularly female children, by the participants. One woman talked about her reaction to a young girl who idolized Britney Spears:

> I was teaching vacation Bible school and I had the preschoolers. And I asked them their names and this one girl said, "Oh my name is Julie," or whatever, and she's like, "But call me Britney," and she was like in pre-school. And I was like, "Why do you want to be called Britney?" And she was like, "Because I'm Britney Spears, she's my hero." And she was in pre-school and I was like, "No, *No!*" I was like, "No, you don't want her as your hero. We're working to change that." But I called her Britney because that's all she would answer to.

Within the discourse on children seemed to be the belief that things are getting worse for children. Participants said that girls are exposed to sexual ideas and images at a younger age than the participants were, and they engage in sexual behavior at a younger age as well. One participant said, "Eleven year olds get pregnant now," and another added, "These kids are having these babies and they are just babies themselves." Another participant said:

Some girls are on diets at like 9 and 10. I'm like, I didn't think about all of that. I didn't think about dieting, I thought about playing and all that kind of stuff. It just gets younger and younger, like the feelings that you feel. I even see the girls in my high school now and it's like it just gets worse and worse. I saw this was on Oprah one time, (in soft, apologetic tone), I like Oprah, sorry. They asked these girls if they would rather be fat or rather, like, lose an arm. And they would like rather be disabled. And that was, yeah, that was shocking. So they're all about dieting and watching what they eat and even if like their Mom would like cook something for them that was healthy they'd be like, "That has too much fat in it," or "I'm just going to eat the vegetables." It's crazy to think that they're that young and they're worrying about that stuff.

Another participant described how her mother worries about high school freshman girls, an indication of how one participant came to believe that teenage pregnancy was rising:

My mom is a guidance counselor at our high school and she's like worried. All the freshman are concerned with is who they are going to go out and sleep with tonight. I mean our high school is very small and there are so many pregnancies in our high school. My mom is like, "It has gotten so bad just since you graduated in this school and it just gets worse with every class that comes in here. Each group of freshmen is just worse and worse."

Interestingly, participants talked at length of personal concerns about the effect of the media on young girls and on women in general, but shared very little about how the media had affected them personally.

In conclusion, the first session discussions illuminated discourses on the definition of power, self-control (particularly emotional self-control), and gender differences. The second session discussions focused on discourses of power in the workplace and social situations, including romantic relationships. The third session discussions revealed discourses on power in the media and specifically on the media's portrayal of women and children's exposure to sexuality through the media.

Individual Interviews

Ten participants gave individual interviews in the week following the last meeting of their discussion groups. The interviews lasted from 15 to 45 minutes, depending on how long the participants chose to talk. All participants answered the same question: "Tell me a few things that

stand out to you about the discussion group." The interviews were audio taped, transcribed with

identifying information omitted, and then read and analyzed by a group of researchers. The

content of the interviews fell into two main areas: first, the discussion of power; and second,

observations about the group process and personal reactions to the groups.

Discussion of Power

The discussion of power in the individual interviews gave voice to several different

discourses related to different aspects of power. The three discourses that were identified were

discourses on conflict/manipulation, leadership, and gender roles. For some of the topics,

competing discourses were present in the statements of the participants. Because the interviews

were based on the group discussions, many of the same topics were covered. However, in the

individual interviews, participants shared a great deal more of their personal experiences and gave

more personal examples to illustrate their points. They also reflected on what type of impact the

discussions had on their thoughts of power or even on their lives.

Discourse on conflict and manipulation.

The discourse on conflict and manipulation refers to the use of power in relationships and

how conflict and manipulation are conducted. One participant described how her emotions had

been manipulated by her husband in order to gain control over her:

> I was actually married before and I think that you can emotionally can try to control
> people. I think that I, not be talking about my personal business [laughs nervously]. I
> think that he tried to control me by reactions, or, I would try to act a certain way so that
> he didn't react in a certain way. Like, I don't know, if I came home from work and I'd
> stopped by Wal-mart and got the, you know, big third degree about where was I and it
> doesn't take that long to go to Wal-mart and all that rather than thinking, "Gees, what a
> creep," [laughs] I would think, "Well, you know, I just won't go to Wal-mart after work."
> So I think you can control people with, you can try to emotionally manipulate people that
> way too. There are people that, I guess that's their way to get power.

One participant talked about her attempts to avoid fights or controversy:

> My roommate and I, we've had like one fight and I kind of let her take the stage and I kind of put little pieces in. I don't get in fights very often, so when it happens it kind of flips me out. I try to avoid fights altogether, any forms of controversy I won't, like the only people I've ever gotten in fights with are my mom, my boyfriends. And I consider them fights when I can stand up to them, yell back at them. But if someone's angry and states their opinion, I'm like, "Okay." So, it's whoever I'm more comfortable with I can stand up to them.

One participant expressed the belief that anger is unhealthy. She said that anger must be let out, released, or else it builds up and causes problematic behavior. This relates to the idea that a powerful person must be able to control his or her emotions. One participant described her efforts to get her boyfriend to talk about his anger:

> It's gotten better with him. When we first started dating, he would get really angry and I was like, "Okay, just give him his space." But like in the last couple of years he gets really angry and I'm like, "Okay, you need to talk about this," he's like, "I don't want to talk about it," I was like, "Let it out, you'll feel better." It's a fight to get him to talk, but when he talks he feels so much better. So, it took us, it's been the last couple of years to kind of, kind of having to drag it out of him... And he says he's even told me, I was like, "You know when I bring it out you feel better." He's like, "Yeah, I feel better." And he's been able to deal with anger a lot better lately.

> Another aspect of control is the discourse on thinness and exercise. One participant discussed her struggle with hearing different messages from her mother and her boyfriend about her weight, specifically her need to lose weight and to exercise:

> I mean it really hurts. Every time she talks about my weight it's really hurtful. And I try to tell her, to get her to understand that, earlier this year I tried to tell her like, "You know when you talk about my weight that really, really bothers me," and she's like, "Sorry, but…" and she just kind of skirted around the issue and never really said, "Well, I won't do it anymore," and she's still doing it, so. That's one thing that really bothers me, that my mom talks about my weight, which makes me self-conscious about it and so then my boyfriend's like, "You're beautiful, you know, don't let your mom talk about your weight like that, I mean just ignore her," I'm like, "It's kind of hard to ignore your mother." But he's like, "But if you want to work out this summer, you can work out with me." And I was like, "Yeah, I want to." Like I want to work out, I don't want to like diet. I mean I've cut back on like sugars and stuff but going on an Adkins diet was like, not me.

Within this statement, the participant reveals pressure she feels and resents about losing weight. Also evident is the message that exercise is important. Dieting and exercise also relate to the discourse on self-control that arose in the group discussions.

<u>Discourse on leadership.</u>

The discourse on leadership refers to ideas about styles of leadership, the experience of being a leader, the experience of being an employee, and role models. One participant talked about wanting to be respected as a leader and not to abuse her power. She said,

> I want to be one of the top managers and have people work for me, but I don't want to be, I don't want to abuse power, like I want to make sure that I'm *respected* and I want to make sure they know they're respected working for me, so. I don't know, I want there to be an equal balance of power where it's more like respect and not abuse of power, so I think that I want to try to express, like that's how I want to be when I'm out in the workforce.

One participant talked about two different types of leaders that she called harsh and passive:

> Oh, we were talking about different types of leaders and some are really harsh and controlling and others that are like, "Well you don't have to, it's alright," real passive leaders, that they are in the powerful position but they delegate the power to their people.... You're going to have to be more harsh with the people that don't take personal motivation or self-initiative. You can be more delegating you can let them have more power, the people that are more self-motivating.

This participant had to supervise others as part of her job; she explained that with some supervisees she could be more permissive, but with others she felt she had to be more harsh.

Another aspect of leadership that was discussed was the type of leadership inherent in role models. One participant discussed Britney Spears and said she does not think Ms. Spears is a good role model:

> You know, Britney Spears and some of the other role models for like younger girls… She's not the best role model because… you know she doesn't wear a lot of clothes when she goes and does her thing and she's seen as just like this sex symbol, like completely this sex symbol, so like here are these younger girls saying like, "Well I want to be like that, I just want to be a sex symbol" and all that. But I think that came from when we were talking about like how the media portrays like the ideal woman like being a certain size and then, well that led into that's how Britney Spears, she just has a great body and so, again, here are these young girls saying this is how this is supposed to be. And it's not really realistic and it can be really damaging to your self-esteem if you don't, you know… Obviously they probably know that they're not going to ever look like Britney Spears but the higher you set the standard, the closer you want to be to meeting that. And even if you're not quite there, you're still probably setting your sights too high. If you're reaching for, you know, way up there….

She believes that Britney Spears is not a good role model because she is seen as a "sex symbol."

The discourse on the sexuality of role models includes the idea that sexuality and unrealistic

expectations of appearance are harmful to young girls. Another woman talked about herself as a

role model for other lesbians. She said that by being open about her lesbian sexual orientation she

can make it easier for others to be open as well:

> I know as a coach, women's [sport] is a very homophobic place, and so I've decided that I'm going to try to be as open and honest about who I am when I'm coaching. Because a lot of women, they either have to pretend they're straight or pretend that they're dating someone or just pretend that who they are with is really their roommate. So I'm not going to do that because I think that there's women that need, there's girls and women that need those role models and need someone to say, "Well it's okay. I mean… you don't need to be ashamed and hide this." So, that's I mean, that's what I'm going to do and that's how I feel. That's what I was talking about yesterday or last time when we met, that it was really empowering to be that, no matter what it costs me professionally, but just to know that I am helping other people and hopefully the other generation won't have it as hard because I know I don't have it as hard as the generation before me.

One participant talked about the relationship between age and leadership in her own

workplace experience. She experienced difficulty supervising people who are older than she is

because she felt they should have been in the more authoritative position and accorded more

respect due to their age. She explained,

> Also, we talked about having power over people that were a lot older than us. Like there's one that's 78 and another that's 65, the 65 year old's a lot more bossy. And I'm their boss and sometimes I feel really uncomfortable telling them what to do because, um, I've been their boss since I was 18 so… it was awkward, especially if I get a lot of opposition from them, G. will say, "No, I'm not going to go do it." And I'll say, "but I'm your boss." [laughs] it's just awkward because I just respect them and they feel like they have more power over you because they should be in your role.

Gender was also discussed in relation to leadership. One participant discussed her

experience of two different supervisors at work, one male and one female, with different styles.

She speculates that some of the difference in their styles may be related to their genders and

expectations of them based on gender:

> I had a male boss and a female boss and no one really cared for the female because she was kind of hard to get along with and he was easy-going and everything. I mean he's like one of my favorite people period because he's just a really nice guy. But I think that

she didn't have that, um, um, privilege, maybe. She didn't, I don't think she ever felt like she could be like he was because she had something to prove, you know. It was the power thing was different for her than for him. I think she felt like, I worked in a [company], I worked there for seven years and she was kind of known to be hard-headed, but I think that was like because she was one of the few women in a male-dominated, she felt like she has something to prove. She couldn't be nice as [name of male boss] because people like [male boss] wouldn't take her seriously.

Another participant gave an example of what she considers to be a poor leadership style.

I've had managers that were on the same level as I, the same level as me, we were peers, who would you know, who would either like talk down to their own peers or to people below them just because they were the key manager. Not that it's like that great of a job or, you know, position or anything, but they still have more power than other people in their job. But I think they abuse the power as like saying, "I'm the key manager, I can tell you what to do, you have to do whatever I say." And they would, they'll like put off all of their, like they will put all of their jobs onto everybody else and it seems like they don't really have anything to do, or they just do the supervising and let everybody else do the work and it's, you know, they don't understand. Like the girl, a girl who I work with just, she didn't, had never vac-- like the biggest thing is vacuuming and nobody wanted to vacuum and she'd, you know, say, "Oh, we've got to vacuum this and vacuum this," but she'd never, you know, if they were in a crunch for time, she would never get out there and vacuum the floor. She would always make sure that somebody else would, you know, do that and she would do her thing.

In this example, the female supervisor was seen as thinking she is too good to do the work of the employees she supervises.

In summary, a discourse on leadership was apparent in the data. Participants shared ideas about good and bad forms of leadership with bad forms often representing an abuse of power, including role models, and the idea that age and gender may influence leadership style or feelings about leadership.

Discourse on gender roles.

The discourse on gender roles refers to ideas about the roles of women, expectations based on gender, gender differences, and family and career. Competing discourses on marriage and family were present in the data. One discourse emphasizes careers for women outside of the

home; the competing discourse defends a woman's choice not to work outside of the home. One

participant expressed both views. First, she said,

> A couple of the girls wanted to more like, get married, and things. One girl, said that she
> wanted to be a housewife and... that she wanted to get married soon, I mean that was
> something that she definitely saw in her near future that would have a priority. And I
> don't see marriage like that. Like, I want to get married definitely, I definitely want to,
> but it's not a priority for me right now and I know I'll never want to be a housewife.

She explained that marriage is not a priority for her. She explained that she feels that getting

married is submissive and power lies in the hands of the husband:

> Yeah, I guess I see marrying and settling down as being submissive. You kind of give up
> some of your power when you, this is just, you know, maybe a stereotypical way of
> looking at marriage because I'm sure a lot of marriages are totally different, but if you
> just get married and you stay at home and your husband goes out and works and he
> brings in all the power, that's a lot of power and probably more power on his part. I
> mean, she'll have control of the kids more, but the husband probably has as much control
> as he wanted to, too, you know, when he did come home, I don't know.

She expressed surprise that a number of women she has met, including several in her discussion

group, did not want careers outside of the home. She speculated that because these women were

from a different city than she was from, or because they were raised differently, they had different

ideas about careers. She also implied that women who do not want careers outside of the home

typically do not seek an education. She said,

> I've noticed that, more girls than I had expected like, I've had a lot of girls saying that
> they want to get married and they want to have kids. Here in [city] I have, but girls in
> [home city] that I've been friends with, I haven't heard any of them say, "I just want to
> get married, I just want to have kids." There's been quite a few that I've met in [city] like
> that, I don't know that [the city] has anything to do with it, it could just be coincidental,
> but I've noticed that and I'm like, *"Why?"* which, that's cool, that's just not what I
> want.... I can kind of like think about it and think, oh well maybe that was the way they
> were raised and that's the way they just came to think life and I've come to think about it
> in a different way. But yeah, I don't know, to give up going to school like, oh, this one
> girl she's in school but she doesn't think she's going to like make a career out of
> anything she does here and I thought that was good, at least she is in school and still
> trying to get an education even though her master plan right now is to not, not make, be a
> career person.

She said her initial reaction was to wonder, "Why?" which she said with considerable emphasis, but then immediately defended the choice, saying "that's cool." A few moments later she further defended the choice to be a housewife, saying,

> It wouldn't be settling down if it were a certain types of marriages, but the ones they were describing, she wanted to be a housewife and she wanted kids which to me is settling down, and there's nothing wrong with that again, but that's just not where I want to be.

This participant clearly did not understand why other women her age were choosing to get married and not work outside of the home, but she also felt the strong need to defend their choice at the same time. When asked about her disagreement with others in the group on this subject, she indicated she was not comfortable expressing her disagreement directly with them. She explained, "Yeah, but I'm not sure that I explicitly disagreed. I just, uh, I definitely disagreed inside, but I don't know how much I disagreed like to let them know that I disagreed." This is suggestive of competing discourses on women's choices about marriage and career and that the discourse defending a woman's choice not to work outside the home may be the dominant discourse in the participant's environment.

Another participant expressed her desire to be the breadwinner in her family, a relatively non-traditional idea about the role of women:

> Well, I want to be the breadwinner of my family, like I want to be the one who makes the money and, you know, my husband can stay home with the kids, or you know. I want to make sure that I use the education that I'm getting, I want to get out there and, you know, utilize my people skills and all my experience and just kind of get out there and, you know, be a top executive some day or something.

The same participant said she wants an equal marriage, not like her parents marriage in which her mother was "submissive" to her father:

> I was thinking about my family and how power works in my family. It seems like my Dad has all the power, like my Mom has to ask to write a check, and you know, and it's, it's not, I mean they love each other and they're, you know, would never get divorced or, you know, anything, but they're just like my Mom always is like the lower in the family. Like's she's always the one, well, she's very timid and she would never say anything back to my Dad to be mean, she would, you know, never I don't know like how I'm

going to explain [laughs] she just is, not subordinate, but she's very like the housewife who does whatever her husband says and I don't know if that's how she was raised and grew up, so used to seeing that, but um, I was thinking about power and that's maybe why I feel how I do about power? Like I don't want to be like my Mom. I don't want to have, you know, power over me like in that home situation. I'd rather have more of like an equal marriage than a, you know, one person has more power over another.

The last two examples illustrate the discourse on women and family that emphasizes the possibility of equality in marriage or even in women assuming the traditionally male role of breadwinner.

Group Process

Three elements of the group process were identified through both observation of the group discussions and through analysis of participants' comments given in the individual interviews about the groups. The first element is participation in the discussion, the second is inappropriate laughter, and the third is the impact of participation in the study on the participants.

Participation in discussion.

Most participants mentioned the level of participation, either of themselves or of others, in the group discussions. One participant expressed surprise that others were not as ready as she was to discuss the topic of power.

I was struck by the difference in responses. Because the topic of power, I was like, "Oh, okay." I was comfortable with it. Immediately I was like, "Well sure, I'd be happy to talk about this all day." And yet there were people sitting right near me that would you know, shrink down in their seat or be less apt to share right off. I mean, I was very impressed with the sharing that went on, but right off, I mean it was just like, they almost cowered. And I think that's just fascinating, how different people are.... Uh, but then as it went on, some people continued to, not be as responsive as others. And you know they have good examples, they live in the same world.

She distinguished herself from those who would shrink down in their chairs and were more reluctant to share personal examples of experiences of power. Another participant described the

difference between talking in the discussion group and talking in class. She indicated she is more

reluctant to share her opinions in class, where she fears she may be judged:

> I don't know if like, when your teacher is there, I don't know if they have a different opinion, so then you don't want to give your opinion and they, you know, take your opinion and they are totally opposite, so. I know a lot of times especially in some of my philosophy classes, they will play the devil's advocate if you have a point of view then they'll always, no matter what they believe, they'll always try and, you know, get you to keep expressing, you know, your opinions, so I didn't want to be the one who was, you know, standing there fighting about, or not fighting, but you know just in this argument trying to get my points across and, you know, them keep coming back with all these opposing arguments. So it was just kind of, and you never know, like in class, people are like, "Oh, well she wants to get a good grade," she's just talking like this. It was, in these groups no one was judging you, you were just sitting there, you weren't getting a grade, you were just discussing, so it was… you didn't have any pressures I don't think, so, that was kind of cool.

Another participant expressed surprise at the lack of disagreement among the group members.

She said,

> I noticed that nobody really disagreed with each other, I don't know if that's exactly what you want me to say but, nothing, um, just that nobody really disagreed. That's one thing that really stood out in my mind. I expected to see a little bit more of a debate, like, in the beginning… certain issues were controversial but yet we all had the same views....I was just kind of hoping that there would be like different, but we all just agreed, we all just agreed with each other and uh, there's nothing wrong with that, I just, I like to debate a little bit about things. I still enjoyed the discussion, it was still good, but I didn't get to debate.

Notably, while this participant had "hoped" for more of a debate, that participants would disagree

with each other, but she herself did not disagree or debate and she seems to be unaware of her

own reasons for not doing so. She, like the other group members, avoided conflict or

disagreement even though she disagreed with some of what was said. A pattern of not

disagreeing, or if expressing a different opinion, being cautious in doing so, and a general

passivity were pervasive in all three discussion groups.

Inappropriate laughter.

Another striking element of the group process was the presence of inappropriate laughter in both the group discussions and individual interviews. Inappropriate laughter refers to laughter by one or more group members at times when what is being said is not intended to be funny and is in this case more like nervous laughter or a sign of discomfort with what is being said. Several participants laughed in situations in which they were describing a situation in which they were not powerful. None of these comments was made with a sarcastic or joking tone. One participant said in her individual interview, "I think I realized when we were talking about power I analyzed my working situation and noticed that I have absolutely no power [laugh] where I work." Another laughed when she said that her ex-husband, who was controlling and manipulative, at least never hit her, as it could have been worse:

> There were times when I was not happy, but for the most part I wasn't miserable. It's not like he beat me [laughs], so there was, I guess I always looked at it like it could be worse. And plus, I think that I didn't, uh, I just didn't think about it, you know.

Similarly, another participant laughed when talking about how she didn't have some of her essential needs met growing up:

> And you know, in elementary school and middle school and I wouldn't have any clean clothes, I wouldn't have any lunch money, I wouldn't have any breakfast. It was just like, pretty much, there was not a whole lot of being take care of, you know, as a kid, like you would think would be standard [laughs] for kids to have these types of things.

In contrast, inappropriate laughter was noted in one participant's description of power she wanted to have. She described her ideal job by saying, "I'm like you. I wouldn't want to be at the very top, but I want to be close to the top. Like, I don't want to be the CEO of a company, but I'd like that vice-president job [laughter] a little bit underneath." It is unclear why the participant laughed as nothing in her tone indicated she was joking and no one else laughed. In another situation, a participant laughed in describing a situation in which she had to assert her authority over people she supervises at work who were considerably older than she:

Like there's one that's 78 and another that's 65, the 65 year old's a lot more bossy. And I'm their boss and sometimes I feel really uncomfortable telling them what to do because, um, I've been their boss since I was 18 so… it was awkward, especially if I get a lot of opposition from them, G. will say, "No, I'm not going to go do it." And I'll say, "but I'm your boss." [laughs] it's just awkward because I just respect them and they feel like they have more power over you because they should be in your role.

In this case, the participant identified the feeling she had as uncomfortable and the situation as awkward.

In her individual interview, a participant laughed when talking about how surprised she was at the level of self-disclosure by the participants. She said, "There was another young woman who shared about her homosexuality. I was like [laughs], I mean we're talking about things that I didn't expect to come out in a group that I didn't know those people. You know, I was just like, I was, I was very impressed with, yeah, you could said what you just said."

On a number of occasions, the group laughed together at awkward moments, particularly when challenging the group leaders. In one discussion, one of the group leaders asked if there were power in social situations. After a silence, one group member said, "Where do you want us to go with that?" and the rest of the participants laughed. In another session a participant said to the leaders, "I think you guys have power over us in this situation [laughs] because you kind of are dictating kind of where we are going with your questions." Challenging the leaders, a common phenomenon in group dynamics, was perhaps uncomfortable to these participants.

Inappropriate laugher was noted in a variety of contexts and in both the group discussions and individual interviews. Participants laughed when describing situations in which they did not have power, situations in which they did have power, situations in which the group leaders had power, and situations in which other participants disclosed personal information.

Participation in the study.

A number of participants expressed that their participation in the group discussions had an impact on how they thought about power in general, or how they thought about power as it pertained to aspects of their own lives. One participant explained that she had not realized that power exists in many aspects of her life:

> I guess I never really thought about how there's power like in everyday life there's power, wherever you go, it's like, and with your family, you know, your parents have power over you or, you know, just other places, you know, just anywhere there's people always have a power, some type of power in situations that I just didn't realize, you know, that there was power.

Another said she started thinking about things in terms of power after participating in the discussion groups. Specifically, she saw a movie after the groups and considered the character's motives as an attempt to gain a sense of control. She said,

> I guess I had just looked at things in terms of how power, like I'd seen a movie and it got me thinking about how… in the movie she had actually had sex with a guy to kind of feel, I felt to kind of get control, at least over something. And it didn't, in the movie it didn't really come, I mean it wasn't shown in a positive way, it didn't help her any. You know, but it was kind of neat how she, I just thought of it in those terms because we had been talking about it.

Another participant expressed her appreciation of the opportunity to be a part of a group discussion and to learn about other people's experiences and opinions. She said,

> I've never been to therapy or any kind of group discussions session that is just based on discussing, you know, issues or topics or anything. Normally any groups I'd be in would be about work and that, not really discussion current issues or women or you know anything like that. So it was kind of neat to see what it was like to, you know, see what other people thought about it and actually talk about stuff that I normally wouldn't talk about. So it was kind of neat just to, you know, express my feeling and listen to and hear what other people say, it was just kind of neat to find out the people that you don't think you'd have anything in common with, that you really did in the long run.

Another woman was moved by hearing a participant discuss a personal struggle of hers, because it is similar to a struggle a family member had. She was tearful as she explained,

> It was perfect. I mean I'm a very big believer in God's work, and I know, when [Jane] started talking about that, I never knew she struggled with that, and uh, it really helped

me. I think God, I felt like God was saying, "Okay, listen, right here (points), this is for you, this part right here, this is for you." And I was like, I was supposed to be there.

The participants were aware of the level of participation and self-disclosure in the groups with some being disappointed by it and others impressed. Participants may not have been aware of the frequent presence of inappropriate laughter, but it was noted in both group discussion and individual interviews, suggesting that the topic of power was uncomfortable for these participants to discuss. Finally, some women indicated that participating in the study affected how they thought about power or even affected them personally.

Questionnaires

Three questionnaires, the Self-Efficacy Scale (SES), the Beck Depression Inventory-II (BDI-II), and the Attitude toward Women Scale (AWS), were administered to the participants three times. The first administration, referred to as the pre-test, was administered before participation in the discussion groups. The second administration, referred to as the post-test, was administered at the conclusion of the last discussion group meeting. The third administration, referred to as the delayed post-test, was administered three months after the conclusion of the last discussion group. Means and standard deviations of each administration of the three questionnaires are included in Tables 1 though 4 (Appendix C).

Compared to the norms established in the literature, scores on all three questionnaires differed slightly from the means for college women. On the SES, Sherer and Adams (1983) reported a mean of 64.31 (*SD* 8.58) on the SES general subscale and a mean of 21.20 (*SD* 3.63) on the social subscale. The average scores of the participants in the present study ranged from 68.7 (*SD* 10) to 70.3 (*SD* 10.8) on the general subscale and from 21.4 (*SD* 4.4) to 23.2 (*SD* 3.9) on the social subscale. Scores on all administrations of the general subscale and two of three administrations of the social subscale were significantly higher than the normative means,

suggesting higher self-efficacy than participants in the normative sample. On the BDI-II, Beck, Steer, & Brown (1996) reported a mean of 14.6 (*SD* 10.7) for a non-clinical population of college women. Participants in the present study had average scores between 5.9 (*SD* 7.1) and 9.9 (*SD* 8.9) across administrations. Averages from two out of three administrations fell below the mean of the normative sample, indicating fewer signs of depression. On the AWS, Daugherty and Dambrot (1986) found an average score for college students to be 31.68 with a standard deviation of 6.05. The average score of the participants in the present study ranged between 35.1 (*SD* 9) and 36.8 (*SD* 5.5). Across all administrations; the scores were significantly higher than the mean in the normative sample, suggesting the participants in the present study had more liberal attitudes toward women than participants in the normative sample.

A full set of planned, pair-wise comparisons was conducted to test for differences among each possible pair of the three administrations of the questionnaires. The three pairs were 1) Pre-test and Post-test, 2) Pre-test and Delayed Post-test, and 3) Post-test and Delayed Post-test. One-way, repeated measures analyses of variance (ANOVAs) were used to make the pair-wise comparisons. Because the number of procedures conducted raises the risk of a Type I error, a Bonferroni correction was made to the alpha level.

The results of analysis of the General Scale and Social Scale of the SES are presented in Tables 1 and 2, respectively; the results from the BDI-II are presented in Table 3; and the results from the AWS are presented in Table 4. The analysis indicated no significant differences between any of the pairs of administrations at the adjusted alpha level (.05 / 3 = .017) for any of the questionnaires. The null hypothesis was supported. In fact, scores across all administrations of the SES and the AWS were remarkably stable. On the BDI-II, the difference between the means of the Pre-test (8.8) and Post-test (5.9) approached significance ($F = 6.32$; $p = .021$). Had this been a significant difference, it would have indicated a decrease in depression over the course of three weeks while participating in the study. Given the small number of data ($N = 12$) in this

calculation, the slight difference may be a statistical anomaly, or it may suggest that calculations using a larger $N$ and having more statistical power would reveal a significant difference. Future research using more participants is necessary in order to establish if such a change can occur.

The overall lack of change in self-efficacy, depression, and attitudes toward women across administrations demonstrates the relative stability of these factors among the participants. Participation in the discussion groups and interviews did not affect these factors in the participants as measured by the questionnaires. The participants who said that they felt that participation in the study had affected them did not describe it as having made them feel less depressed, more able to accomplish things, or as having affected their views on the role of women. Participants described having thought more about power or having been touched by the contributions of other group members. The questionnaire results, then, did not contradict the participants' descriptions of how they were affected. The results indicate that thinking more about power and talking about power do not necessarily translate into measurable changes in depression, self-efficacy, or attitudes toward women.

Summary

The results consisted of four parts: results of the bracketing interview, results of the discussion groups, results of the individual interviews, and results of the questionnaire data. The bracketing interview revealed three assumptions on the part of the primary researcher. The first assumption was the idea that power is dynamic. The second assumption was that there is conflict regarding the subject of power both socially and within individuals. The third assumption was that ideas about power are linked to emotions.

The analysis of the group discussions revealed a number of discourses on power. In the first sessions of the discussion groups, discourses on the definition of power, self-control, gender differences, types of power, knowledge as power, and avoidance of power emerged. From the

second sessions, discourses on power in the workplace and power in social situations were found. In the third sessions, discourses on the media's portrayal of women, and sexuality and children were described. The analysis of the individual interviews revealed discourses on conflict and manipulation, leadership, and gender roles. In the interviews, participants also commented on levels of participation in group discussions, and the effects of participation in the group. The occurrence of inappropriate laughter by participants in both the groups and individual interviews was also described. The results of the questionnaire data revealed so significant changes in measure of self-efficacy, depression, or attitudes toward women across the course of the three administrations.

Chapter V

Discussion

This chapter comprises two sections. In the first section, an overview of the study is presented. A review is made of the primary methodology and of the hypotheses formed at the outset of the study. In the second section, the findings of the study are discussed in the context of the psychological literature on women and power. The results are discussed in light of the distinction made in the literature between power-over and power-to. Also, the results of the present study are compared to those of previous experimental studies on power. A summary of the discussion completes the chapter.

Overview

The first section of this chapter contains an overview of the primary methodology and results. The principles of Foucauldian discourse analysis, the primary methodology used in analyzing the data,  are summarized. A review of the discourses revealed in the analysis is presented. Also, the hypotheses made at the beginning of the study are discussed in light of the results.

Foucauldian Discourse Analysis

The primary task in Foucauldian discourse analysis is the identification of dominant and competing discourses in the data. A detailed description of the discourses is presented in Chapter IV. The following is a discussion of the discourse analysis and an overview of the dominant and competing discourses.

For Foucault, power lies in action. It is not the actions of rulers, but the actions of the subjects that are essential to the maintenance of their subjugation. Taking part in the production

of knowledge is one of the most powerful forms of action that subjects of power can take. Discourses on what is true and how things operate in the world are spread and reinforced through dialog among individuals. Group discussion is one way to illuminate discourses, including dominant discourses and competing discourses on a topic. Individual interviews are another way to capture elements of discourses and the ways in which people integrate them into their own ways of understanding the world. In the current study, the topic was power itself, so participants were talking about power and at the same time exhibiting its operation through dialog.

Foucauldian discourse analysis is the process of studying the content of materials collected. In the process, the researcher begins with a text, the subject of the analysis, and turns that text into a written form (Willig, 2001). In the current study, the group discussions and individual interviews were transcribed. The next step in the process was to identify discourses, different pieces of and assumptions about the social world within the text. In the process of identifying discourses, the researcher looked for competing discourses, those in conflict or disagreement with each other. The discourses that were identified were then named or labeled in some way to aid in a discussion of them. Finally, the researcher considered the discourses in relation to the institutions they challenged or supported and in terms of the individual's relationship to those institutions.

<u>A Review of the Hypotheses</u>

Three research questions guided the study. First, what discourses will be found in the content of group discussions of power by college women?  Second, how will participants make personal meaning of the discussion group as expressed in individual interviews? And third, what impact will the group discussion have on the participants' self-efficacy, mood, and attitudes toward women as measured by questionnaires?  The hypotheses were that participants would 1) describe both dominant and competing discourses on power, 2) report, in individual interviews,

an increased awareness of issues of power in their own lives, and 3) experience no effect on their sense of self-efficacy, mood, and/or attitudes toward women as evidenced through scores on questionnaires measuring these factors.

Before analysis of the data was conducted, the primary researcher participated in a bracketing interview which revealed three assumptions she held about power. First, she believed that assumptions about power change socially across generations and personally across an individual's life-span. Second, she assumed that conflict regarding women's roles is taking place socially and is experienced by individual women. Finally, she assumed that group participants would experience power on an emotional level and would have an emotional reaction to their participation in the groups. With those assumptions in mind, the primary researcher made every effort to complete a discourse analysis independent of her own ideas and experience.

In answer to the first research question, the discourse analysis of the group discussions did reveal dominant and competing discourses on power. An example of a dominant discourse was the idea that the media has negatively influenced women and girls; examples of competing discourses were the two sides of the nature versus nurture debate. In the discussion groups, participants reflected on the definition of power, the role of power in the workplace and social settings, and the power of the media. The discourse on types of power distinguished between deserved and undeserved power. The participants, in an effort not to be seen as having undeserved power, shied away from any ownership of power or admission of a desire to have any. Rather, they displayed an active avoidance of or discomfort with power. One form of power that was seen as good was self-control and specifically emotional self-control. Gender differences were seen as important especially with regard to the regulation of emotions. Competing discourses were evident surrounding whether women were more emotional than men and what the consequences of that difference would mean.

In answer to the second question, during the individual interviews, participants did report increased awareness of power in their lives. Participants discussed how manipulation, particularly emotional manipulation, was a form of power they had experienced in their interpersonal and romantic relationships. Manipulation is the outward expression of the same concept described in the discussion of self-control in the first group sessions. Emotion is powerful in both situations. The difference is that manipulation is a form of power-over often affecting the emotions of others, whereas emotional self-control is a form of power-to affecting one's own emotions. Manipulation and self-control are part of the same discourse on the power of emotions. Discussion of leadership indicated a discourse on good versus bad forms of leadership. This topic is connected with the discussion on deserved and undeserved forms of power in the group discussion and is part of the same discourse. Gender roles were discussed in individual interviews; similarly, the origin and consequences of gender differences were discussed in the group sessions.

In answer to the third research question, participants displayed no statistically significant change in self-efficacy, depression, or attitudes toward women as measured by the Self-Efficacy Scale, the Beck Depression Inventory-II, and the Attitudes toward Women Scale. Participants took each of the questionnaires three times: once before the first discussion group meeting, once after the final discussion group meeting, and once three months after the discussion groups ended. A set of planned, pair-wise comparisons using repeated, one-way ANOVAs revealed no significant differences in the scores across administrations. The lack of measurable change indicated stability of the factors across the course of the study. Compared with published means from normative samples of college women, average scores of the participants in the present study suggest higher self-efficacy, lower risk of depression, and more liberal attitudes toward women than the normative samples. In conclusion, the hypotheses that participants would describe dominant and competing discourses on power, would report increased awareness of power, and

would show no change in measures of self-efficacy, depression, and attitudes toward women's roles were all supported by the data.

Literature on Power

In this section, a discussion of the results in relation to previous research on power is presented. As a foundation for the discussion, two types of power, power-over and power-to, are discussed. Then, the results are reviewed in comparison to previous studies on women and power.

Power-over and Power-to

In a review of the literature on power, Yoder and Kahn (1992) identified *power-to* and *power-over* as two types of power that are consistently referenced in research. They called for researchers on the subject of power to maintain this distinction to promote consistency in the literature. Power-over refers to control over others, while power-to refers to control over one's own thoughts, feelings, and actions. The participants' definitions of power echoed this distinction. The participants described several different ways in which they or others could exert power-over others. They also described ways that they or others could exhibit power-to. Examples of each of these forms of power follow.

Power-over.

Three examples of power-over were described by the participants: manipulation of others; the influence of role models; and the power of the media. Two of these three examples, manipulation and the media, were strongly criticized by the participants. The third, role models, was the only example of power-over with which the participants identified.

The first example of power-over is manipulative behavior. They discussed manipulation as one way that a person can exert control over another in an interpersonal relationship.

Participants were critical of behaviors they saw as manipulative or controlling. Related forms of power-over were also seen as negative. Assertiveness and aggression were associated with "dominant" personality types and were criticized by the participants. Some participants described themselves as having a passive interpersonal style, even calling themselves "doormats." The passive style was not criticized. In fact, it was described as the expected style for women to have.

The second example of power-over is the influence of the media on women and children. Criticism of the media was widespread in the discussions on power. The topic of the media was the only topic not introduced by the group leaders but that emerged spontaneously in two of the three groups and dominated at least one session in each group. The participants expressed concern that the media was having a negative influence on women and young girls with regard to portrayal of appropriate physical weight for women and exposure of children to sexual material. Several participants described a mixed message they felt they received through the media of needing to be both innocent or childish and sexual or adult at the same time. Pop star Britney Spears was mentioned repeatedly in the group discussions and individual interviews. Perhaps she personifies the dual expectation for women by being young and innocent-looking while also being sexually provocative.

The third example of power-over is role models. The most common examples of role models given by the participants were those from the media. Role models from the media were strongly criticized by the participants. However, participants also talked about role models they knew in their lives in a positive light, or even described themselves as role models. Interestingly, all examples of role models described by the participants, either positively or negatively, were women. Participants described a variety of ways in which people could help others by serving as role models. Some talked about bosses they admired. One participant talked about wanting to be a role model to other lesbian women by being open about her sexual orientation at work. The case of positive role models was one of the few instances in which the power-over was described as a

positive force. Role models exercise power-over in that others are influenced by them; however, being a role model is a passive form of influencing others. That is, serving as a role model means simply living one's life in a manner from which others can learn; it does not involve actively encouraging others to act or think a certain way and certainly does not involve force.

In summary, the women in the study in both overt and subtle ways distanced themselves from manipulative or controlling behavior. They criticized the use of power-over by people in the media as role models, such as Britney Spears. They described the media as having power over viewers and people in the media as being role models. They described a negative effect of the media and entertainers on women and children, particularly in regards to standards of beauty and thinness. With regard to children, the participants expressed concern about their exposure to sexual material and its effect on their behavior. The participants did not want to be seen as having or wanting power-over except as role models. Serving as a role model was the only form of power-over with which the participants identified. This implies that the only acceptable use of power-over is helping others.

Power-to.

In contrast to power-over, power-to was generally described in positive terms. Participants discussed the importance of exercising self-control over one's actions and emotions and several discussed the importance of seeking an education either as a means to an end or as a goal in itself. Three examples of power-to are control of one's emotions, pursuing one's educational goals, and diet and exercise.

Control over one's emotions is one example of power-to. Participants described the ability to control one's emotions as powerful and being seen as not being in control of one's emotions as a position of less power. Opinions differed among the participants about whether women are naturally more emotional than men, but the participants broadly praised the ability to

contain one's emotions. One participant even suggested that a woman could never be President of the United States because she could not contain her emotions well enough.

The second example of power-to is pursuing one's goals. The participants spoke of the power to strive for and reach one's goals in positive terms. Educational goals were the most common type mentioned by the participants. Some described a college education as providing security and independence by eliminating the need to be dependent on one's spouse in the future for financial support. It was seen by some as a back-up plan, something on which to rely if the presumed goal of marrying and having a family did not work out. In an individual interview, one participant shared her view that education should be a goal in itself. She expressed disappointment that others in the group did not see education as having inherent value. Interestingly, she did not share her disappointment in the group setting and only felt comfortable doing so in the individual interview. Though she disagreed with the assumptions and statements other participants were making, she avoided confronting them about it or openly disagreeing with them. This example shows how prevalent passive behavior was, even among participants with more liberal views on the roles of women.

The third example of power-to is diet and exercise. Participants described these as forms of self-control that were to be admired in others. They were critical of media images of thinness, but not of the attempts by women to mimic them. There was no criticism of the type of self-control associated with diet and exercise. Several of the participants described their own attempts to diet and exercise in a positive light. One participant complained that her mother was pressuring her to diet, but she added in a defensive tone that she really *did* want to lose weight and exercise, just not using the method her mother recommended.

In summary, power-to was described by the participants in positive terms. The three examples are control over one's emotions, working toward one's goals, and diet and exercise. The tone used to describe power-to contrasted with descriptions of power-over, such as

manipulation, the influence of the media, and role models, which were described in negative

terms.

Experimental Studies

The results of the present study are consistent with the findings of previous experimental

research on women and power. Specifically, the preference for power-to as opposed to power-

over is reflected in the literature. Miller and Cummins (1992) studied whether there is a

difference between how women believe society defines power and how they define power for

themselves. They found that women define power with an emphasis on *personal authority*

whereas they see society's definition as focusing on control over others. At the same time, the

women did not see power as related to *empowerment* in the feminist sense but as being more

about autonomy and self control. These results are highly consistent with the findings of the

present study. Though participants in this study were not asked how they feel society views

power, they showed a clear preference for power-to. Power-to, power over one's thoughts,

feelings, and behaviors, encompasses Miller and Cummins' concept of personal authority. Miller

and Cummins' finding that women see power-over as society's definition of power but not their

own can explain why participants in the present study described power-over but did not claim to

want it.

Miller and Cummins (1992) also found that women report they feel powerful when they

lose weight and powerless when they gain weight. The researchers note that society equates

weight with self-control, which fits with the participants' focus on  personal authority. The

researchers questioned whether there is something inherent in women's lower social status that

fosters the emphasis on personal authority. Again, results of the present study support Miller and

Cummins' work. The participants in this study described dieting and exercise as forms of self-

control and described them in positive, even admiring, terms. The speculation that such emphasis

on personal authority (power-to) may relate to women's lower social status is an interesting one. Neither this study nor the Miller and Cummins study, though, can make any claims regarding the origins of women's emphasis on power-to. Further research is needed to establish such a relationship.

Bonucchi (1985) found that women with high self-esteem do not speak of power over others but of "the power that comes from within; the power that comes from being oneself and expressing one's perceptions of the world. They do not use their power to control and restrict others; rather, they use their power in the interest of their own development in an assertive manner" (p. 121). Again, this suggests that women identify with power-to more than power-over, which is consistent with the findings of the present study.

Much of the previous research has focused on gender differences related to power. Though the present study focuses only on women and makes no statements about gender differences, the results support some of the findings about women in previous research. Lips (1985) found that though women do not define power differently, men were more likely to list physical strength and possessions as sources of power. Indeed, the women in this study hardly mentioned physical strength or possessions. They talked about money as a form of power, but they did not discuss strength or possessions specifically.

Maccoby and Jacklin (1974) reported that males described themselves as more powerful and stronger than females did. Indeed, the participants in this study did not describe themselves as powerful. Several described themselves as submissive or passive and much of the behavior in the group displayed passivity. The tendency toward passivity among the participants is consistent with the preference for power-to, since it is a more passive form of power than power-over.

When taken with the findings of previous research, the results of the present study suggest not a different understanding of power by women and men, but a different preference. Women and men may have similar definitions of power, both recognizing power-over as well as

power-to, but women may distance themselves more from power-over and demonstrate a preference for power-to. Lips and Colwill (1978) and Miller and Cummins (1992) have suggested that women's lower social status may contribute to their internalization of different ideas about power than men. Lips and Colwill (1978) proposed that women have internalized associations between femininity and weakness, and between masculinity and strength and competence.

Summary

The present study was conducted using Foucauldian discourse analysis as the primary methodology. The study was based on three hypotheses. The hypotheses were that participants would 1) describe both dominant and competing discourses on power, 2) report, in individual interviews, an increased awareness of issues of power in their own lives, and 3) experience no effect on their sense of self-efficacy, mood, and/or attitudes toward women as evidenced through scores on questionnaires measuring these factors. For the first hypothesis, the discourse analysis of the group discussions did reveal dominant and competing discourses on power. For the second hypothesis, during the individual interviews, participants did report increased awareness of power in their lives. For the third hypothesis, participants displayed no statistically significant change in self-efficacy, depression, or attitudes toward women as measured by the three questionnaires.

In comparing the results of the present study to the literature on women and power, several observations were made. First, the distinction was made between power-over and power-to, as established in the literature. The participants in the present study showed a preference for and identification with power-to, while demonstrating a disdain of and avoidance of power-over. This preference for power-to is supported by previous research on women and power which have found that women tend to favor personal authority and self-control as forms of power. Researchers have speculated that the preference may reflect gender role expectations and internalized ideas about femininity, or may relate to women's lower social status.

Chapter VI

Conclusions

This chapter addresses the implications of the current study for feminism and psychology. First, the results are discussed in the context of feminist theory. Second, implications of the study for the practice of psychology are discussed. Third, recommendations for future research on the topic are offered.

Implications for Feminism

As a feminist research endeavor, this project sought to provide information about young women to help guide future research and feminist theory. Ideally, it would contribute to a better understanding of women and would further the efforts to help them fulfill their potentials. This endeavor was undertaken from the perspective of Foucault's definition of power. From a Foucauldian perspective, the most important aspects of social control are found in the production of knowledge. Knowledge is produced and disseminated through discourses on what is *truth* or *fact*. These discourses are absorbed into the psychological fabric of those who hear and repeat them. This project studied the discourses on power that young women have internalized. The goal was to illuminate how the production of knowledge about power may relate to the status of women in society. For example, women's behavior may be related to certain internalized discourses on power. As a result of those behaviors, women's status in society may be affected.

The most significant finding of the present study is that the participants demonstrated internalized discourses on power that distinguished, in their statements and behaviors, power-over from power-to. Power-over refers to control of one group or individual over another group or individual; power-to refers to the control of an individual over his or her thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. The participants consistently avoided identification with the concept of power-over.

They stated clearly that they did not want to use it, and that they felt many who used it did so unjustly or without adequate right to do so. They identified  with and praised the exercise of power-to, primarily self-control. Specifically, they described exercising emotional control and working to meet one's goals as admirable activities. These findings have several implications for feminism.

Feminists seek to empower women, to foster and encourage the growth of power-to among women individually and as a group. The use of power-to is reflected in many of the accomplishments women have made. For example, women have attained remarkable heights in education in recent years. Women now outnumber men in colleges across the US, earning 57% of all bachelor's degrees and 58% of all master's degrees (Conlin, 2003). Women are rapidly catching up to men in numbers of PhD, MD, and JD degrees earned, though they still lag behind with only 28% of MBA degrees (Conlin, 2003). Overall, women are succeeding in education in rates that are keeping pace with the feminist movement.

Attaining one's educational goals is an exercise of power-to more than power-over. To succeed in education, one must have opportunity, dedication, and a certain amount of self-control. Most women have been afforded adequate educational opportunity largely as a result of the feminist movement. Though women of color and women with low socio-economic status may still want for opportunities, the numbers bear out the progress made in providing education to women. Historically, discourses on women obtaining education included the notions that education was wasted on women or that women were incapable of learning beyond a certain level. Today, the dominant discourse on the education of women says that women are able to learn and have a right to do so. Women have internalized this discourse and in large numbers women are pursuing education and succeeding.

Attempts by feminists to gain entry for women into law, politics, and industry began at the same time as efforts to gain higher education. Yet women's successes in these arenas have not

been as numerous as their successes in education. Some feminists (e.g., Estrich, 2000) have asked why women's success has not increased at similar rates in all areas of public life. It is at the upper echelons of government, law firms, and corporations that women's absence is most visible, and most important. The findings of the present study offer a possible explanation. A certain acceptance of, or admittance to, power-over may be necessary for women to succeed in these arenas. One cannot reasonably occupy a public office without seeking, acknowledging, and embracing the goal of having power over groups and individuals. For example, it is difficult to rise to high levels in business law without a willingness to actively approach and influence others and a to self-promote. Serving as role models was the one form of power-over that the participants openly embraced; however, few people have likely obtained positions of social or political power by simply being good role models.

Perhaps the current systems in which social and political figures are promoted are based on a more male-centered approach, that is, one that requires a willingness to use power-over. Of course, power-over would ideally be used in a manner that is beneficial to others as well as to oneself. Women, by contrast, learn that the use of power-over is undesirable and only power-to is acceptable. Therefore, women's styles tend not to fit the traditional (male) mold. The question, then, is raised as to whether women need to adapt their approaches and become more comfortable with power-over, or whether the system needs to change to accommodate women's styles. Many feminists seek to change the system of government and the behavior of politicians. If they cannot become members of government or corporations, though, it will be difficult, if not impossible, to effect that change.

Implications for Psychology

The preference of women for power-to rather than power-over presents several implications for psychology. First, it presents an opportunity to reexamine assumptions made

about women's behavior in light of this discourse on power. Second, it has implications for the individual and promotes a series of potential problems as well as some potential benefits.

First, the findings may impact conceptualizations of the psychology of women. Feminist psychologists view women's behavior in the context of their gender role expectations. They encourage their clients to see their own behavior in that context as well. Feminist therapy may involve renaming behaviors as adaptive that were previously labeled pathological. Though the behaviors still may not be desirable, their origin is reinterpreted as a consequence of environment rather than an individual flaw. Given the results of this study, behavior that avoids power-over and emphasizes power-to represents adaptation to gender role expectations and internalization of dominant discourses on power.

The second implication of the findings of this study is the impact of the emphasis on power-to on the individual. The participants demonstrated a strong tendency to distance themselves from most aspects of power-over. One exception was where power-over was used to help others, such as by serving as a good role model for others. The women embraced the concept of self-control, the central aspect of power-to. The focus on power-to and self control may have both positive and negative consequences for women. The differences in how individual women are affected would relate to other aspects of their experiences and mental health. A healthy woman with a strong sense of self may capitalize on the merits of power-to. She may emphasize the degree to which she can better herself and help others. She may endeavor to be a good role model or choose to work in a helping profession.

However, a woman who has fewer resources, psychological and/or material, may suffer negative consequences from her limits to power-to. She may develop an exaggerated need to exert self-control because the only way she thinks she may exercise power is to exercise it over herself. She may have the sense that her feelings or behaviors are not in control, or even that nothing is in control. A strong sense for a need for control is often described by researchers and

therapists in relation to women with eating disorders or other compulsive behaviors. An intensified need for self-control may produce perfectionistic thinking or excessive self-criticism. Women with such traits may represent the negative consequences of the discourse on power described by the participants. These consequences may be most dire for women for whom the need for a sense of control is exaggerated by other factors. However, these discourses are part of the psychological fabric of society, and all women are impacted by them. Women's magazines are filled with articles about diet, exercise, and improving one's appearance. Many women are apparently eager to learn how to better exercise power-to in these ways. Articles on how to be an effective leader or how to seek a promotion are not so prevalent. Psychologists are concerned about the causes of disordered thinking and behaviors in women, such as disordered eating, but they must also be mindful of the psychological impact that discourses on power are having on women as a whole. The emphasis on power-to may be impacting women's minds, bodies, careers, and their futures.

Recommendations for Future Research

Future research on the experiences of power by young adult women should further explore how ideas about power are internalized and how they affect behavior. Conducting discussion groups with young women from different educational and social and economic backgrounds could be especially informative. Research on the effects of participation in such discussion groups should use larger sample sizes and utilize control groups. Given that scores on the depression inventory approached a significant change over the course of the study, research on effects of participation on depression are warranted.

Future research may investigate differences between the current findings and notions of power held by other groups. In particular, men, young girls, older women, and members of minority groups may have different experiences and different internalized ideas about power. A

study similar to the current one using men from the same age group would be especially useful in understanding how young men and women internalize discourses on power. Comparisons could also be made among women from different cultures, different socio-economic backgrounds, or different countries.

Summary

The findings of the present study have considerable implications for feminism and the field of psychology. The avoidance by women of the concept of power-over and the identification with power-to presents a series of dilemmas for feminists and psychologists. Power-to has been the backbone of the feminist movement; feminists seek to empower women, to foster and encourage the growth of power-to among women. Certainly this has contributed to many of the accomplishments women have made. The best example of wide acceptance of power-to has been the success of women in education. Women now outnumber and outscore men in many areas of education. Attaining one's educational goals is an exercise of power-to rather than power-over because it does not require control over others, but requires self-control and commitment. It is uncertain whether power-to alone can propel women into positions of power in society such that equality may be attained. A certain acceptance of, or admittance to, power-over may be necessary for women to succeed in some arenas. The contrast between women's progress in the field of education and their progress in politics and corporate business reflects the difference between power-to and power-over. Some feminists argue that society overemphasizes power-over and that those in power misuse their authority. Many feminists seek to change the system of government and the behavior of politicians. If they cannot become members of government or corporations, though, it will be difficult, if not impossible, to effect that change.

According to Foucault, the seeds of resistance and social change are sewn in the production of competing discourses. The introduction of new discourses that compete with the

dominant discourses can lead to a change in what people think about an issue. To further the goals of feminism and to promote the psychological well-being of women, a new discourse on power is needed. The present discourse on power presents only power-to and not power-over as acceptable forms of power for women. This discourse must be challenged. A competing discourse on power should say that a woman can exercise power-over and still be seen as behaving appropriately for a woman. Women have won the rights under the law to seek power-over in the forms of running for political office, heading up corporations, and serving on the bench. Estrich (2000) and other feminists have asked why the movement of women into such positions is a trickle and not a flow. If it were more socially acceptable for women to seek such power, the flood gates would open, and women would flow into top positions in government and business. If a competing discourse on power is introduced and disseminated, women in the future may feel more options are available to them. Though a participant in this study said a woman could never be President of the United States, her granddaughter may feel differently. She may even put her hat in the ring.

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Appendices

# Appendix A

## Informed Consent Statement

Group Discussion of Power among College Women

### What is the study about?

This purpose of this study is to investigate the nature of the group discussion of power among female undergraduate students. Participants will take questionnaires to determine what effect the discussion may have had on their attitudes and feelings. Some participants will be asked to give individual interviews about their experience of participating in the groups.

### What will the participants do?

Participation consists of five parts.

First, participants will be asked to complete three questionnaires, the Beck Depression Inventory (21 items), the General Self-Efficacy Scale (23 items), and the Attitude Toward Women Scale (25 items). The first questionnaire measures feelings of depression, the second measures self-efficacy, or the sense that one is able to do things, and the third measures attitudes toward women. Each questionnaire is expected to take two to three minutes to complete.

Second, participants will take part in a discussion group which will meet three times for ninety minutes each time, one meeting per week. Each group will have two co-leaders who are advanced students in counseling psychology experienced in leading groups. Half of the participants in the study will be assigned to a group that will discuss power and half will be assigned to a group that will discuss another contemporary social concern of their choosing. Subjects will be randomly assigned to discussion groups. The group meetings will be video taped. The only person who will view these tapes will be the primary researcher. She will review the tapes and write a general summary of the discussion, omitting any identifying information about the participants. The purpose of video taping is to aid the researcher in describing accurately what transpired in the group because an audio tape of a group discussion can be difficult to understand. After she has reviewed the tapes, the tapes will be erased. The primary researcher will review the tapes within one month of the date the group takes place.

Third, after the last group meeting, participants will be asked to complete the same questionnaires again, namely the Beck Depression Inventory, the General Self-Efficacy Scale, and the Attitude Toward Women Scale.

Fourth, some participants will be asked to meet with the primary researcher for an individual interview; the interviews are expected to last 30-60 minutes, but the participants may talk as long as they like. The interviews will be audio taped and the content later transcribed, with all identifying information replaced with pseudonyms or blanks. Once the tapes are transcribed, the tapes will be erased. Upon request, participants may review the audio tape or the transcript of the audio tape of their individual interview during the two month period between the interview and when the tapes are erased. Every precaution will be made to insure confidentiality of records and identifying information.

Fifth, three months after the conclusion of the groups, participants will be mailed another copy of each of the questionnaires to be completed and returned to the primary researcher. A stamped, addressed envelope will be enclosed so that no cost will be incurred by the participant.

**What risks does this involve?**

In the course of group discussion, participants may talk about their personal experiences. Some participants may be reminded of upsetting experiences in their lives or in the lives of people they have known as a result of the discussion. Participants will all be told of the free counseling services available to students at the Student Counseling Services Center. Since all participants will be full-time students, all will be eligible for free services. Participants who express concern or who become upset by the groups or the questionnaires may contact the Student Counseling Center at 865-974-2196, the UT Psychological Clinic at 865-974-2161, or if in crisis, call the 24-hour Contact Helpline at 865-523-9124.

**What benefits may participants gain?**

It is anticipated that participants will find the group discussions interesting, and will enjoy the experience of participating. Participants in the power discussion group may gain increased awareness of issues of power in their lives, particularly as they pertain to being a woman. The discussion may be educational, but it may also be personally enriching. The experience of talking with other women their age may itself be a positive experience of sharing and learning from others.

**Is everything confidential?**

All video and audio tapes will be kept by the primary researcher in a locked file cabinet on the University of Tennessee campus until they are erased. Video tapes will be erased within one month of when they are made; audio tapes will be erased within two months of when they are made. This informed consent statement and all questionnaires will be kept in the same locked file cabinet on the University of Tennessee campus for three years and then destroyed. The primary researcher and the group leaders will keep all group discussion confidential and not to talk about the group with others. The primary researcher will keep all information from the individual interview confidential as well. All group members will be asked not to talk about the group with non-group members; however, it is not possible to guarantee that they will not reveal what is said in the group with non-group members. Confidentiality cannot be guaranteed in a group setting, but every effort will be taken to encourage group members to maintain it.

**Whom may I contact if I have a question?**

If you have questions at any time about the study or the procedures, or you experience adverse effects as a result of participating in this study, you may contact:

Tiffany Kelsey
102A Claxton Addition
University of Tennessee
Knoxville, TN 37996
Telephone (865) 974-5131
Email tkelsey@utk.edu

If you have questions about your rights as a participant, contact the Research Compliance Services section of the Office of Research at (865) 974-3466.

**PARTICIPATION**

Your participation in this study is voluntary; you may decline to participate without penalty. If you decide to participate, you may withdraw from the study at anytime without penalty and without loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. If you withdraw from the study before data collection is completed, your data will be returned to you or destroyed.

**CONSENT**

I have read the above statement and agree to participate in the research and to audio taping. I have received a copy of this form. I am aware that:
1. The audio tapes will remain secure and will be erased within two months of when they are made, after transcripts and summaries are prepared.
2. While all group members will be asked to maintain confidentiality, there is no guarantee that other group members will do so.
3. The transcripts of the audio tapes will be reviewed by the primary researcher and other researchers.
4. Participation is voluntary and I may withdraw my consent and discontinue my participation at any time and for any reason without penalty.

Participant's Name (print): _____

Participant's Signature: _____      Date: _____

**CONSENT TO VIDEO TAPE**

Additionally, I consent to video taping of my participation in the discussion group. I understand the video tapes will remain secure and will be erased within one month of when they are made.

Participant's Signature: _____      Date: _____

[Note: When given to participants, Informed Consent Statement was formatted to fit onto a single sheet of paper, printed on the front and back.]

Appendix B

Group Discussion Question Guide

<u>Session 1</u>

What is power?

Who has power?

Are there different types of power?

Do groups have power?

How important is power?

<u>Session 2</u>

Is there power in the workplace?

Is there power in social situations?

Is there power in personal relationships?

<u>Session 3</u>

Can you think of a time you used power?

Can you think of a time you felt powerless?

Has your definition of power changed since our first meeting?

Has our discussion affected you in any way?

Appendix C

Tables

Table 1

Self-Efficacy Scale - General Subscale

Means and Standard Deviations

| Administration | N | Mean | SD |
|---|---|---|---|
| Pre-test | 16 | 68.8 | 10.3 |
| Post-test (last group) | 12 | 70.3 | 10.8 |
| Delayed Post-test (3 months) | 14 | 68.7 | 10.0 |

Pair-wise Comparisons (One-way ANOVAs)

| Source | df* | F |
|---|---|---|
| **Pre-test and Post-test** | | |
| Test Administration | 1 | .76 |
| Between Subjects | 11 | |
| Error | 11 | (15.769) |
| **Pre-test and Delayed Post-test** | | |
| Test Administration | 1 | .58 |
| Between Subjects | 11 | |
| Error | 11 | (12) |
| **Post-test and Delayed Post-test** | | |
| Test Administration | 1 | .70 |
| Between Subjects | 10 | |
| Error | 10 | (9.35) |

* Note that not all participants completed all surveys; those with missing data were thrown out of pair-wise comparisons. Degrees of freedom way differ for each pair and may not match N listed above.

Table 2

Self-Efficacy Scale - Social Subscale

Means and Standard Deviations

| Administration | N | Mean | SD |
|---|---|---|---|
| Pre-test | 16 | 21.4 | 4.4 |
| Post-test (last group) | 12 | 22.8 | 4.2 |
| Delayed Post-test (3 months) | 14 | 23.2 | 3.9 |

Pair-wise Comparisons (One-way ANOVAs)

| Source | df* | F |
|---|---|---|
| Pre-test and Post-test | | |
| Test Administration | 1 | 3.52 |
| Between Subjects | 11 | |
| Error | 11 | (3.03) |
| Pre-test and Delayed Post-test | | |
| Test Administration | 1 | 1.8 |
| Between Subjects | 13 | |
| Error | 13 | (2.4) |
| Post-test and Delayed Post-test | | |
| Test Administration | 1 | .01 |
| Between Subjects | 10 | |
| Error | 10 | (3.45) |

* Note that not all participants completed all surveys; those with missing data were thrown out of pair-wise comparisons. Degrees of freedom way differ for each pair and may not match N listed above.

Table 3

<u>Beck Depression Inventory-II</u>

<u>Means and Standard Deviations</u>

| *Administration* | *N* | *Mean* | *SD* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Pre-test | 15 | 9.9 | 8.9 |
| Post-test (last group) | 12 | 5.9 | 7.1 |
| Delayed Post-test (3 months) | 14 | 7.9 | 9.3 |

<u>Pair-wise Comparisons (One-way ANOVAs)</u>

| *Source* | *df\** | *F* |
|---|---|---|
| <u>Pre-test and Post-test</u> | | |
| Test Administration | 1 | 6.32 |
| Subjects | 11 | |
| Error | 11 | (7.62) |
| <u>Pre-test and Delayed Post-test</u> | | |
| Test Administration | 1 | .01 |
| Subjects | 13 | |
| Error | 13 | (39.32) |
| <u>Post-test and Delayed Post-test</u> | | |
| Test Administration | 1 | .75 |
| Subjects | 10 | |
| Error | 10 | (29.2) |

\* Note that not all participants completed all surveys; those with missing data were thrown out of pair-wise comparisons. Degrees of freedom way differ for each pair and may not match N listed above.

Table 4

Attitudes toward Women Scale

Means and Standard Deviations

| Administration | N | Mean | SD |
|---|---|---|---|
| Pre-test | 16 | 36.8 | 5.5 |
| Post-test (last group) | 12 | 35.1 | 9.0 |
| Delayed Post-test (3 months) | 14 | 36.5 | 8.9 |

Pair-wise Comparisons (One-way ANOVAs)

| Source | df* | F |
|---|---|---|
| Pre-test and Post-test | | |
| Test Administration | 1 | 1.91 |
| Between Subjects | 11 | |
| Error | 11 | (7.86) |
| | | |
| Pre-test and Delayed Post-test | | |
| Test Administration | 1 | .02 |
| Between Subjects | 13 | |
| Error | 13 | (15.94) |
| | | |
| Post-test and Delayed Post-test | | |
| Test Administration | 1 | .98 |
| Between Subjects | 10 | |
| Error | 10 | (16.71) |

* Note that not all participants completed all surveys; those with missing data were thrown out of pair-wise comparisons. Degrees of freedom way differ for each pair and may not match N listed above.

# Vita

Tiffany Elizabeth Kelsey was born July 18, 1975 in Culpeper, Virginia. She was a full-time student from Kindergarten through receipt of her doctorate, a period of twenty-three years. She attended public school through second grade and private schools from third through twelfth grades. She received her high school diploma from Wakefield School in Marshall, Virginia in June, 1993. For her undergraduate work, she attended Oglethorpe University in Atlanta, Georgia, majoring in psychology and sociology. She earned her Bachelor of Arts degree, magna cum laude, in May, 1997. She entered the doctoral program in Counseling Psychology at the University of Tennessee in August, 1997. She completed her pre-doctoral internship at the George Washington University Counseling Center between August, 2002 and July, 2003. She received her Ph.D. in Psychology in August, 2003.