

AN EXPLORATION OF ACCOUNTS  
OF LESBIAN IDENTITIES;  
USING Q METHODOLOGY

by

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## ABSTRACT

Most of what little research has been done on South African lesbians has been based on a clinical perspective. This study is based on Kitzinger's (1987) British research on the social construction of lesbianism, which includes an analysis of seven accounts of lesbian identities elicited using Q methodology.

The major aim of this research was to find the accounts of lesbian identities presented by some South African lesbians, as the first stage in examining the ways in which these identities are constructed. Auxiliary aims were to examine the accounts of the natures and roles of women and men in society (rather than having the women identify their feminist and non-feminist orientations) and to attempt to link these two sets of accounts.

One hundred and six self-identified lesbians, located largely in the major urban areas, volunteered, and sixty participated fully in the research. The participants ranged in age from 17 to 58, with a mean of 30.4 years. The majority were in managerial and professional positions (50%) or students (23.3%); and most had completed a minimum of Standard 10. Fifty-five are classified "white", three "black African", one "Asian" and one "coloured".

A Q-sample (1) of 65 statements, using Kitzinger's broad definition of lesbianism as a guideline, was developed from various sources including correspondence with participants. A second Q-sample (2) was developed from feminist and non-feminist perspectives on women, men and society presented in this thesis.

Volunteers were sent a demographic questionnaire, and all those who returned this were sent the Q-samples and a standard set of instructions for completing the Q-sorts. The principal components factor analytic technique, with varimax rotation, was used to analyse the completed Q-sorts.

Fourteen factors were extracted for Q-sample 1, and accounts were developed from the resulting factor Q-sorts. Two accounts were discarded. The following twelve accounts of lesbian identities are presented: "born lesbian; and happy"; "feminist and happy"; "woman-loving-woman"; woman-choosing-woman"; "definitely lesbian, but no different from heterosexuals"; "no strong sense of lesbian identity"; "certainly lesbian, but not really happy"; "lesbian as fairly happy gay person"; "wanting to be a man"; "bisexuality: lesbianism as sexual identity"; "lesbianism as sexual rejection of men"; and "sinful and sorry".

Thirteen factors were extracted from the analysis of Q-sample 2, and one of the resulting accounts was discarded. These accounts can generally be characterised as moderate, with some support for feminist propositions and a strong rejection of both conservative views about women and controversial feminist propositions.

Attempts to link the two sets of accounts were unsuccessful for a number of reasons which are discussed.

The research fulfils one criterion for feminist research in that many participants found the process of completing the Q-sorts valuable. The need for a post Q-sort interview to clarify accounts is stressed. Suggestions are made for research into the way these identities are constructed; and for investigations into the experiences of "black" lesbians.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

The aims of this chapter are, firstly, to provide a context for the research by discussing the situation of women in South Africa, and, secondly, to present the rationale for, and aims of, the research.

In addition, Kitzinger's (1987) work on lesbian identities (which was the starting point for this thesis) will be introduced, and a brief overview of South African research on lesbianism will be provided.

#### 1. TERMINOLOGY

As society changes, so words which were taken for granted (e.g. "native") become problematic, old words change in meaning, and new words emerge. It becomes necessary, therefore, to select and clarify one's terminology (particularly when discussing issues such as "race" and sexual identity).

The racial categories used in South Africa, despite their wide usage, are not accepted as valid or reasonable by the researcher.

Wilson & Ramphela point out that:

Quite apart from the unscientific basis of such discussions, and the breathtaking oversimplification of the country's history which they assert, the very words used to identify each group are contentious. The divisions are essentially political and, at this stage, are perhaps best seen as 'colour castes'.  
(1989, p. 22-23)

These 'colour castes' are, nonetheless, very real for the people who are thus categorised, and have enormous impact on South Africans' lives: thus, they cannot be ignored. Following both Wilson & Ramphele (1989) and official State terminology, the terms "white", "coloured" and "Asian" will be used. The largest proportion of the population will be referred to as "black African" or, as the three "black African" women who participated in the study are Xhosa-speaking, as "Xhosa". (Wilson & Ramphele used "African" but this is felt to be misleading, as everyone born in Africa is, in some sense, African.) Everyone who is not classified as "white" will be referred to as "black". Inverted commas are used as a continual reminder of the Apartheid System.

A number of different terms are used to refer to homosexual women, e.g. gay, lesbian, dyke. The term "homosexual" is rejected because of its clinical history, its equation of homosexuality with sexual activities only, and its inaccuracy (the terms should mean "of one sex") (Boswell, 1980). In general, the term "gay" was used in correspondence with participants, as this was felt to be the term least likely to cause offence or discomfort. However, the term "lesbian" is used throughout the thesis itself, as it refers unambiguously to women. ("Dyke" is also unambiguous, but is not yet accepted as standard terminology.)

The term "patriarchy" has "become part of the standard vocabulary of feminist writing" (Eisenstein, 1984, p. 5), but frequently remains undefined. Because it is used in this thesis (particularly in the following section and in Chapter IV) it

seems appropriate to provide a definition here. Patriarchy - literally, the rule of the father - is defined by Ruth Bleier as follows:

By patriarchy I mean the historic system of male dominance, a system committed to the maintenance and reinforcement of male hegemony in all aspects of life - personal and private privilege and power as well as public privilege and power. Its institutions direct and protect the distribution of power and privilege to those who are male, apportioned, however, according to social and economic class and race. Patriarchy takes different forms and develops specific supporting institutions and ideologies during different historical periods and political economies (1984, p. 162).

## 2. CONTEXTUALISING THIS RESEARCH: WOMEN IN SOUTH AFRICA

This section does not attempt, or pretend, to be a comprehensive analysis of women in South Africa, but looks at some central issues largely as they relate to "white" and "black African" women.

South Africa is a complex society, with different groups - particularly so-called different "racial" groups - to a large extent isolated from, yet dependent on, each other. The situation of women differs in all of these groups, and sub-groups within them, and at different socio-economic levels in society.

The Apartheid system and the systematic oppression of "black" people often obscures male domination and the oppression of women that is found in all areas of South African society, although the levels and forms of the domination and oppression differ.

Although South Africa has been described as an extremely

patriarchal and authoritarian society, "white" women tend to deny that they are oppressed as women (Lemmer, 1989) and attempts to expose incidences of male domination within the mass democratic movement are sometimes labelled "reactionary" (UDF member, personal communication).

As members of the hegemony, "white" women enjoy a privileged status in South Africa. Although, as we shall see, they are oppressed as women in similar ways to women in Western countries, their position as oppressors often obscures, especially for outsiders, the gender oppression within "white" groups. On the other hand, the fact that they are not oppressed in other ways means that their oppression as women is potentially more visible.

Indeed, Cock (1980) argues that "sexist definitions of femininity are more coercive and restricting for women of the dominant class" (p. 263), who are expected to be more "feminine" (passive, dependent, helpless) than are women of the working class.

On the whole, "white" South Africa - both English- and Afrikaans-speaking - remains staunchly conservative and patriarchal. Both traditional Boer and colonial British societies were male dominated and patriarchal (Lemmer, 1989). The Calvinist Dutch Reformed Church, which continues to exert an enormous influence on both the Afrikaans-speaking "white" community and on South Africa as a whole (via the predominantly Afrikaner ruling Nationalist Party), emphasises the importance of the patriarchal family unit with its strongly authoritarian father-figure (Lemmer). It has been suggested that an extreme view of women in

the Dutch Reformed tradition equates motherhood unconditionally with the female role, and sees motherhood as almost holy (Augustyn, 1981, in Lemmer). On the other hand, the English-speaking community has been influenced more by humanism and liberalism, (Badenhorst, 1985, in Lemmer), leading to a slightly more flexible attitude towards women than in the orthodox Afrikaans-speaking community.

Increasing numbers of "white" women are becoming economically active, and in 1986 Van der Walt (in Lemmer, 1989) estimated that forty-four percent of "white" women would be economically active by 1987. However, discrimination against women in terms of hiring, pay and promotion remains entrenched, and there is no legislation prohibiting gender discrimination (Lemmer, 1989).

In most Western countries the increasing numbers of women entering the public work force has had an impact on roles in the family; but this is not true to any great extent in South Africa (Lemmer, 1989). The traditional sex-role divisions (male as breadwinner, woman as home-maker) and authority vested in the husband has remained the social norm (Lemmer). This norm is supported by gender-differentiated legislation, by salary differences (where men are paid a "breadwinner wage") (Kroetze, 1987, in Lemmer), and media images of women (Lemmer).

An additional factor in the maintenance of traditional family structures is related to the existence of a vast pool of cheap "black" domestic labour. The availability of domestic help has meant that even when "white" women work, their husbands do not

feel the need to participate in housework, and wives are not forced to demand that help (Cock, 1980). Thus, the division of labour differs from that found in most Western countries, in that the wife manages the home rather than actually does the house work.

The media also plays a role in maintaining traditional structures. Although a cursory glance through some South African magazines, such as *Fair Lady* and *Cosmopolitan*, reveals liberal feminist tendencies (particularly in their recognition of women as economically active), research has shown that the media is more concerned with maintaining the status quo than with facilitating real change (Laxton, 1983, in Lemmer, 1989). Laxton (in Lemmer) found that women are portrayed as "housewives, sex objects or masculinized career women" (Lemmer, p. 34), and Oberholzer, Puth & Myburgh (1982, in Lemmer) found that television advertisements portrayed women predominantly as wives and mothers.

Although feminism in the West has spread far beyond its early boundaries, it began with "white" middle-class women. Likewise, most liberal and radical feminists in South Africa are "white", middle-class, English-speaking, and well educated (Bernard, 1987, in Lemmer, 1989). But very few "white" women would call themselves feminists (Bernard, in Lemmer); and few would be prepared to demand much more than equal pay. Various feminist and non-feminist perspectives will be discussed in Chapter IV.

The paucity of feminist consciousness could be related to the strength of South African patriarchal ideology; the maintenance of the traditional family unit by social and economic structures; and the unwillingness of "white" women to threaten their privileged and comparatively comfortable position by challenging social norms.

The position of "black" women in South Africa is even more complex, with many groups and sub-groups; women living very traditional rural lives and professional, Westernized women living in cities; women who are desperately poor and women who are relatively privileged. But all "black" women in South Africa, including "coloured" and "Asian" women, are doubly oppressed; as women and as "black" people, while most are also oppressed as workers within a capitalist social system (Lapchick & Urdang, 1982).

Traditional "black African" societies were strongly patriarchal, with the chief of a tribe as the controlling patriarch (Bozzoli, 1983), and the patriarchal ideology remains in force today (Smuts, 1987, in Lemmer, 1989). According to Robert Mugabe:

The general principle governing men and women has, in our traditional society, always been that of superiors and inferiors. Our society has consistently stood on the principle of masculine dominance - the principle that man is the ruler and woman his dependent and subject (quoted in Urdang, 1984, p. 159).

The superiority of men is, as in the West, attributed to tradition, biology/nature, or Christian principles (Hirschmann, 1983, in Baltzersen, 1984).

The demands of urbanization and so-called modernization have complicated the position of "black African" women even further. Gay's (1980) anthropological research among rural Basotho women highlights the contradictions with which "black African" women live. She found, for example, that marriage is seen as both desirable and undesirable. On the one hand, it is the way for a woman to break from the dependency of childhood, become respected as a woman, and receive the right to a house and a homestead. This enables her to "gain access to the productive resources and cash flows which are essential" for her and her dependents (Gay, p. 229). On the other hand, many younger Basotho women want to work in urban areas and need to advance their education in order to do so; and they are thus loath to marry "on the terms of traditional male authority" (Gay, p. 309).

Whether a woman marries or not - and she generally does - heterosexual relationships remain the norm. It is the birth of a woman's first child that marks one of the most important transitions of her life - among the Basotho, for example, she becomes a masali: a woman (Gay, 1980).

The Apartheid system adds more complications and stresses to many "black African" women's lives. The migrant labour system and the "homelands" policy forces women and their dependents to remain in specified, usually rural, areas and to attempt to survive there by subsistence farming, while the men work far away in the cities for most of the year (Wilson & Ramphele, 1989). This has meant that most "black African" women "do not have what are considered basic rights throughout the world: that is, the right to live

with their husbands and lead a normal family life" (Cock, 1980, facing p. 180).

Those women remaining in rural areas often become functional heads of households (White, 1984). The men react to their situation, the threat against their power, and to their loneliness in different ways, sometimes finding an additional wife in the city and sometimes divorcing or deserting their "homeland" wives (Lemmer, 1989).

Urdang (1984) summarizes the oppression which "black African" women (as well as, to a large extent, other "black" women) experience, and identifies four main areas of oppression: "the lack of political rights, traditional attitudes, detrimental customs, and the sexual division of labour" (p. 159).

Despite - or because of - these multiple oppressions, "black" women have long been active participants in the struggle against Apartheid (Lapchick & Urdang, 1982). Although a lack of time and energy, resulting from their double burden of work as home-makers and workers, has handicapped women more than men in terms of active participation in all levels of the liberation struggle (Friedman, Metelerkamp & Posel, 1987) women have played and continue to play an important part in the struggle.

Moreover, this participation has changed their lives as women:

The integration of women in areas of responsibility, authority, and status has afforded them the opportunity to become active outside the home and begin to step out of their traditional roles (Urdang, 1984, p. 166).

But this participation has still generally been on the basis of their roles as wives and mothers - supporting their husbands and protecting their children (United Women's Congress member, personal communication). Until recently, gender issues have been missing in the ongoing debate about South Africa's transition to a post-apartheid society; although recent speeches given at Mass Democratic Movement meetings and rallies suggest an increasing awareness of gender issues and sexism.

The position taken by the Mass Democratic Movement (MDM), as the broad spectrum of extra-parliamentary anti-Apartheid groups have collectively come to be called, is that women's struggles are subordinate to the struggle for national liberation (Hassim, Metelerkamp & Todes, 1987). "Indeed, women's causes are eclipsed by the larger racial issue" (Lemmer, 1989, p. 35).

For example, Mhlopo (secretary of women's affairs in the ANC) said in 1980 that "with our position ... defined and determined by apartheid policies, equality for the women of South Africa cannot be thought of even in the wildest of imagination" (quoted in Lapchick & Urdang, 1982, p. 119).

Moreover, a recent report in the Weekly Mail (11 - 17 Aug, 1989) on the July congress of Cosatu (Congress of South African Trade Unions) illustrates that sexist attitudes are still prevalent in progressive organizations. It was reported that a group of male delegates left the congress during the discussion of women's issues because "they preferred supper to such 'time wasting'"

(p. 12); an action which has angered even some of the most conservative women within progressive organizations (United Women's Congress member, private communication).

Hassim et al. (1987) identify two basic positions in the debate around women's oppression: "those who see the emancipation of women as secondary to and contingent upon national liberation, and those who separate women's emancipation from broader concerns" (p. 3).

Those who support the first position maintain that feminism is a bourgeois institution created by Western women and therefore irrelevant for "black" women, who share with "black" men a common enemy - the Apartheid system (Hassim et al., 1987). Hirschmann (1983, in Baltzersen, 1984) also identified this attitude among male Malawian bureaucrats, who believed that the West is trying to foist feminism onto Africa. They also believed that the "developing world" had too many problems to deal with without worrying about women's issues (Baltzersen). Indeed, fighting for women's liberation is seen as a divisive (Hassim et al., 1984): feminism is supposedly used by the ruling class to try and divide the working class. Cock (1987) has even found evidence of "black" women being physically dominated by "black" men within the mass democratic movement; although this is certainly becoming less acceptable.

Those who support the second position have taken two different paths (Hassim et al., 1987). One is based to some extent on the radical feminist perspective, and has resulted in organizations

(such as Rape Crisis) which are oriented towards women only, and, although often part of the MDM, do not necessarily take the same position as the MDM does on women's issues. The other aims to allow women to overcome the problems of male domination, to gain support from each other, and to put pressure on both the Mass Democratic Movement and the State for women's issues. This has resulted in the formation of women's organizations (such as the United Women's Congress and the Federation of Transvaal Women) which are autonomous from, but accountable to, the male-dominated liberation organizations, while remaining active in the liberation struggle.

Tucker (1986) suggests that women's groups among (predominantly) "white" women have generally been concerned both with women's issues and broader political issues, and that "a women's movement focussing on women's issues alone has not materialized" (p. 14). There are a number of gay and lesbian organizations in South Africa (see Appendix E for a list of some of them), but the majority cater primarily for gay men. Lesbian organizations tend to be social groups (such as LILACS, which no longer exists, and GATEWAYS). There have been attempts to set up organizations which are both feminist and anti-Apartheid (such as Lesbians and Gays Against Oppression, now defunct, and the Organisation of Lesbian and Gay Activists) but the membership of these organizations has generally been very small. (The preceding overview is based on the researcher's own experiences in a number of these groups.) Thus, the broad spectrum of feminist and lesbian organizations open to women and lesbians in countries

such as the U.S.A. and England are simply not available to South African women.

It has not been possible to deal with all of the numerous "groups" of women in South Africa. In general, however, South African society tends to be patriarchal and to hold conservative views about women, and offers few alternatives for women.

### 3. RATIONALE

Lesbianism is an issue which has not been researched to any great extent by South African social scientists. In particular, lesbian identities have not - to the best of the researcher's knowledge - been specifically examined in South Africa. Moreover, very little is known about the lives of "black" South African lesbians.

Given the extent of South Africa's isolation from the U.S.A. and Britain (where most of the research on lesbianism to date has been carried out, and where most books on, by and/or for lesbians are written and published) and the differences (some of which have been mentioned in the previous section) which may exist for lesbians and other women between South Africa and these countries, research done there cannot simply be assumed to be applicable here.

There thus exists a broad arena for psychological research - the experiences of South African lesbians of all language and colour groups.

This research is grounded in the social constructionist perspective. There are two different, but complementary, aspects to this perspective. One is that the notion of "a lesbian", who has a sense of herself as such, is socially and historically specific; in that same-sex emotional-sexual relationships have not always involved and do not everywhere involve the recognition of "an identity" as a lesbian (or gay man), or even the exclusion of opposite-sex emotional-sexual relationships (McIntosh, 1988). Thus both the notion of, and contents of, a "lesbian identity" are socially constructed. But this does not imply that lesbians and gay men are passive "victims" of this process. Instead, they "construct, negotiate and interpret their experience" (Kitzinger, 1987, quoted in McIntosh, p. 115). The second aspect involves an attempt to understand how - and why - they do this, rather than an attempt to "get at their 'real' histories, motives or life events" (McIntosh, p. 115).

This research intends to be part of a process whereby an attempt is made to understand how lesbian identities are constructed within society in general, and how lesbians construct, negotiate and interpret their identities.

If an attempt is to be made to uncover some of the complex social processes through which lesbian identities are constructed, it would seem logical to suggest that it is first necessary to

discover the contents of these identities. That discovery is the major aim of this research - to explore the contents of accounts of lesbian identities within the South African context. The research looks at accounts rather than "real" identities because to put it simply, the accounts that people give about themselves are all we have access to. While some tentative suggestions will be made about the process whereby these identities are constructed, this is not the major focus of the research.

This research is therefore fundamentally exploratory in nature; it does not attempt to confirm or refute any specific hypotheses.

#### 4. AIMS

- 1) The major aim of this research is to explore the contents of accounts of lesbian identity presented by South African lesbians.

There are two auxiliary aims to this research:

- 2) To examine the relationships between the accounts of identity and the accounts presented by the participants of how they understand the natures and roles of men and women in society.
- 3) To begin to examine whether the commonly accepted feminist theoretical frameworks reflect women's "real-world" understanding of the natures and roles of men and women in society.

## 5. EXPLANATION OF AUXILIARY AIMS

While this research does not intend to explain how the types of accounts elicited from the participants are constructed, it is felt that there is potentially a link between the participants' understanding of feminism and the accounts they present of themselves as lesbians. At the same time, the term "feminism" (as well as what this stands for) is frequently rejected by South African women (van Zyl, 1987) and those who call themselves feminists often do not agree on what this means. It was thus decided to explore the types of accounts of the natures and roles of women and men in society presented by participants (Aim 3), and to relate these to the accounts of lesbian identities which these women present (Aim 2).

## 6. AN INTRODUCTION TO CELIA KITZINGER'S RESEARCH ON THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF LESBIAN IDENTITIES

This thesis is based explicitly on Celia Kitzinger's (1987) research into accounts of lesbian identity presented by ordinary lesbians in Britain. The research was originally carried out for her doctoral thesis (Kitzinger, 1984), but the book which she wrote - based on her thesis - was used as the original groundwork for the present research.

Kitzinger uses Q methodology to examine types of accounts of lesbian identity which emerge from the Q-sorts completed by her participants. (She also examines lesbian politics and non-

lesbians' attitudes to lesbianism; but these aspects of her research are not relevant to this thesis). The actual types of accounts which she found will be discussed in depth later.

Her research is overtly political, with a radical lesbian feminist agenda. The main aim of her book is to present a critique of gay-affirmative research, in which "lesbianism is constructed in liberal humanistic terms as an alternative lifestyle, a way of loving, a sexual preference, a route to personal fulfilment or a form of self-actualization" (Kitzinger, 1987, p. vii). McNaron (1982) calls "sexual preference" a "term of diminution coined by liberals in their continuing efforts to accept various so-called life-styles" (p. 14).

Kitzinger argues that while there has been a shift in research from a deviant/sick to a gay-affirmative model, the latter model fulfils the same function as the former: to depoliticize lesbianism. Moreover, it undermines radical feminist theories of lesbianism, which see lesbianism as "women's refusal to collaborate in our own betrayal" (Kitzinger, 1987, p. viii) - a refusal to participate in "compulsory heterosexuality" (Rich, 1981). She argues that "liberal humanistic ideology ... prevents women from recognizing male power and identifying our oppression" (Kitzinger, p. viii).

Thus, having identified types of accounts of lesbian identity, Kitzinger then evaluates them politically in terms of liberal and radical lesbian feminist politics, rather than exploring how they arise and how they are used (McIntosh, 1988).

The present research differs from Kitzinger's in that, while it was carried out by a radical/socialist lesbian feminist with a feminist agenda (e.g. doing the research for lesbians, as well as about them), it does not have as overtly a political aim as Kitzinger's. No attempt is made to assign a political value to the accounts presented - which Kitzinger clearly does in valuing "radical" accounts over "liberal" ones.

Kitzinger (1987) equates the terms "ideology" and "politics", defining them as "belief systems" or "theoretically articulated propositions about reality" (Berger, Berger & Kellner, 1973, in Kitzinger, P. 125). The term "politics" however, is usually used to refer to the theory and practice of government, and "politics" would perhaps be better understood as theoretically articulated propositions about relations of power. Feminist theorists perceive "gender relations and sexuality ... to be about power, and therefore about politics" (Caplan, 1987, pp 8 - 9). Feminist theories are thus seen as political theories; feminist aims (for example, the redistribution of gendered power) as political aims; and feminist activism as political practice. Kitzinger therefore evaluated the accounts presented by her participants in terms of the extent to which they would contribute to the achievement of radical lesbian feminist aims (the overthrow of patriarchy).

## 7. RESEARCH ON LESBIANISM IN SOUTH AFRICA

Although some psychological and sociological research on homosexuality in South Africa has been done, this still remains an under-researched area. Much of the research is based on a variety of models of homosexuality as pathology, and has focussed on "white" gay men. To the best of this researcher's knowledge, only Gay's (1986) anthropological field research on Basotho women (discussed in Ch II) has dealt with homosexuality among "black" women; and the issue of identity has been addressed only peripherally (e.g. Kotze, 1974 and Miller, 1981). With a few exceptions, such as Liddicoat (1956) and Woolfson (1976) the research has involved fairly small and limited samples.

Research which has concentrated on gay men has generally been based on the perspective that homosexuality is a pathology or a sin, or both. For example Botha (1975) looks at the treatment of homosexuality from a Christian perspective (and argues for a "compassionate" and "patient" attitude towards homosexuals); Jacobs (1975) recommends "conditioned aversion therapy" in the treatment of homosexuality; Kotze (1974) looks at aetiological factors and deals with treatment issues; Loedolff's (1951) sociological study, warns of the "danger" of homosexuality and supports the treatment and cure of homosexuals; Prinsloo's (1973) research concentrates on the aetiology and diagnosis of "homosexualism" (p. vii), for which the Rorschach was argued to be helpful; and Rabinowitz (1972) concentrates on personality characteristics.

Much of this research includes extremely negative views about homosexuality. Loedolff (1951), for example, identifies the "danger" of homosexuality as their attraction to children, and believes that homosexuals can be identified by their body build, their tendency to choose careers in music and the arts, and their choice of hobbies appropriate to the opposite sex. More recently, Prinsloo (1973) argues that

Homosexuals experience particularly strong guilt feelings accompanied by feelings of self rejection and an extraordinary sensitivity and suspicion. Depressive and even suicidal reactions occur frequently (p. ii, emphasis his).

Research on lesbianism, on the other hand, has tended to be less negative, although this involves only a small number of studies. The view presented by Redelinghuys (1978) on the basis of research on two lesbian women and their heterosexual sisters is generally very negative; and locates the aetiology of lesbianism in disturbed family relationships. Cronje (1979), working within a psychoanalytic model, found that lesbians cannot be distinguished from heterosexually oriented women on the basis of personality characteristics, but also identified "disturbed" relationships and roles within the family.

Liddicoat (1956) presents a balanced view of homosexuality, which is fairly surprising given the date of the research. Although she looked at aetiological factors, personality differences, interests and IQ levels (and thus was not working within a gay-affirmative model), she identifies the basis of neurotic behaviour in gay men and lesbians in social attitudes towards them. Her research, which is one of the most wide-ranging to

date in South Africa, involved a sample of fifty gay men and fifty lesbians from various socio-economic backgrounds; urban and rural environments, and differing educational achievements. She found no data to support negative views of homosexuals, and some of her findings directly contradicted popular beliefs. She seems to hold an essentialist understanding of homosexuality (she refers to a homosexual's "natural instincts" and "his own nature" on pp. 9 and 10).

An essentialist understanding of homosexuality rests on the belief that such identities are pervasive and fixed (i.e. essential).

"Essential identities ... are commonly perceived as going beyond an embodiment of mere roles or attributes, referring to the state of *being* of an individual rather than mere *doing* of an individual" (Ponse, 1978, p. 6, italics hers).

Nonetheless, her understanding of the role society plays in the development of heterosexuality predates some of Rich's (1981) ideas (about heterosexuality as compulsory rather than simply natural) by over two decades (although Rich takes these ideas a great deal further):

In societies such as our own, which forbid all homosexual behaviour and classify it as unnatural, the social forces which impinge on the developing personality from earliest childhood tend to inhibit, discourage and restrict such behaviour and to condition the individual to heterosexual stimuli (Liddicoat, 1956, p. 9).

Woolfson (1976) worked, to some extent, within the gay-affirmative model. Although the research focuses on aetiological factors and personality characteristics in order to examine any differences, and she did find differences between her samples of

fifty homosexual and fifty heterosexual women in terms of family relationships, heterosexual experiences and relations with opposite sex peers, she found no differences in personality characteristics or personal and social adjustment, and concludes that

Present findings suggest that Lesbianism is not a clinical syndrome, but a variation of sexual orientation within the normal range of functioning ... (Woolfson, 1976, n.p.).

Schurink (1981), in his sociological research on the life-styles of twenty-four "white" lesbians (based on biographical sketches) found that the participants were generally well-adjusted and accepted their lesbianism. He rejects, to some extent, aetiological formulations based on notions of broken homes or seduction by an older woman; and did not find a great deal of evidence of butch-femme role playing. Although this research cannot be said to be gay-affirmative, it is, at least, accepting of lesbianism as a life-style.

Tucker (1986) examined medico-legal issues in relation to lesbian mothers and their children, and concluded that the concerns of the court about the unsuitability of awarding custody to a lesbian mother are unsupported, and that difficulties experienced by the mothers and problems in these relationships are largely related to social pressures.

It is clear from this brief overview that research which focuses predominantly on gay men (lesbians are sometimes briefly mentioned in these studies) has tended to be negative and to rely on pathological models. On the other hand, research on

lesbianism, while often not affirming lesbianism, has sometimes tended to be less condemnatory and to present fewer negative images of lesbianism. This includes one study carried out as long ago as 1956, when psychiatric images of lesbians were largely negative.

An additional investigation carried out in South Africa is interesting for this research in that it indicates clearly that lesbians in South Africa have to contend with attitudes which are predominantly negative. Glanz (1988) made use of a broad HSRC postal survey carried out in 1986 to examine the attitudes of "white" South Africans towards the legalization of homosexuality, and the adoption of children by, and granting of custody of their own children to, homosexual couples. She found that 70.9% of a sample of approximately 1068 South Africans (the number varies slightly on different questions) were against the legalization of homosexuality between consenting adults. A comparison with the results of Gallup surveys in the U.S.A. suggests that "white" South Africans are considerably less tolerant of this idea than North Americans. However, support for legalization in the U.S.A. is decreasing, possibly partly in relation to the AIDS issue (Glanz, 1988), and partly in relation to the rise of the New Right, which is gaining momentum in the U.S.A. (Ruth, 1983) as well as in Britain (Dixon, 1988). She also found that the respondents were overwhelmingly opposed to allowing both male gay couples (92.0%) and lesbian couples (89.4%) to adopt children. They were also opposed to the granting of custody, although the percentages are smaller (64.5% for male couples and 57.9% for female couples) and more respondents were unsure (just over 13%).

She found that, although variables such as age and educational levels were important factors, the most important factor associated with attitudes towards the legalization of homosexuality was language group. While 54.0% of the English-speaking respondents opposed legalization, 84.7% of the Afrikaans-speaking population opposed legalization (Glanz, 1988).

In conclusion, although research on lesbianism has not presented particularly negative images of lesbians, the majority of South Africans oppose the legalization of homosexual relationships between consenting adults, and thus, presumably, hold negative attitudes towards lesbianism. These negative attitudes, rather than the views of psychological and sociological researchers, are the ones with which lesbians are faced in their everyday lives, and in relation to which they develop their identities as lesbians.

## CHAPTER II

### IDENTITY

#### 1. DEFINING IDENTITY

The concept of identity is a fairly recent one in social psychology and sociology, and the beginning of its usage can be traced to the work of Erik Erikson and his colleagues during the 1940's (Weigert, Teitge & Teitge, 1986). Since the 1970's it has increased in popularity and has become a "stock technical term" (Weigert et al., p. 5).

In essence, one's identity is the answer to the question "Who am I?" (Weigert et al., 1986); and in the same way that most people know the answer to that question without being able to articulate it clearly (cf. Yardley, 1987b), so most theorists know what identity is without being able to provide a clear definition of it (Strauss, 1959). Indeed, many social scientists avoid the problem of definition by not providing one; by assuming a shared understanding of the concept (Weigert et al.). The definitions and explanations provided seem to require, at some level, an intuitive grasp of the concept.

The major problem with defining identity is that it does not exist as an entity (Harré, 1987); identity is a construct. Theodorson & Theodorson define constructs as

concepts devised to aid in scientific analysis and generalization. ... they are abstractions from reality, selecting and focusing on certain aspects of reality and ignoring others. They are heuristic assumptions designed to guide and suggest fruitful areas of investigation; they are not intended as a direct description of concrete phenomena (1969, p. 74, quoted in Troiden, 1984, pp 97 - 98).

Despite its lack of clarity, identity has become popular because it suggests areas of valuable research, and theorizing, and because it is useful as an explanatory tool (Breakwell, 1983).

Weigert et al. point out that "the widespread acceptance of the concept of identity does not imply agreement on or even a clear understanding of its various meanings" (1986, p. 29). It is therefore necessary to attempt to provide an understanding of the meaning of identity, and of lesbian identity, which guided this research. This is particularly necessary in order to explain how the statements for the "Lesbian Identity Q-sample" were selected.

There are a number of terms closely related to identity, viz. self-concept, personality, and self. Some theorists distinguish between these concepts: Troiden (1984), for example, argues that self-concept is broader and more general than identity, and that self-concept is one of the components that make up the "objective self" (self as Known). Others, such as Stryker (1987), use terms such as self-concept and personality, yet seem to be referring to identity (Breakwell, 1983). This issue will not be examined here - the discussion will be restricted to "identity" whether or not some theorists would use the terms "self" or "self-concept" in the same place.

Some theorists have provided an overall definition of identity. For example, Troiden (1984) says that identity

refers to organized sets of characteristics an individual perceives as definitely representing the self in relation to a social situation (imagined or real). Characteristics perceived as definitely representing the self assume the form of attitudes, potentials for action toward self, that are mobilized in relation to a social situation (p. 102).

Such a definition is obviously far from clear, and thus not particularly useful. In their attempts to explain and define identity, social theorists have generally found it valuable to distinguish broadly between "personal identity" and "social identity" although definitions of even these components differ.

Personal identity seems to be understood in two different, although related, ways.

Some theorists see it as individuals' awareness of themselves as individual subjects, continuous over time (Reber, 1985). That is, individuals' inner awareness of themselves as "selves" who are bounded and differentiated from others. Goffman (1963) refers to this "sense of existential continuity" as "ego-identity".

The second meaning of personal identity has been defined in numerous ways, some including the first meaning of personal identity described above.

Turner (1984) says personal identity "refers to self-descriptions that are more personal in nature, reflecting personality traits

and other individual differences, specific attributes of the individual . . . ." (pp 526 - 526, quoted in Taylor & Dube, 1986, p. 82). Taylor & Dube take the notion of "specific attributes" further, saying that personal identity "refers to components unique to the individual" (p. 88). They seem to be suggesting that while social identities can be shared, personal identities are what make people unique.

Babad, Birnbaum & Benne (1983), while not specifically using the term "personal identity", distinguish between what they call "socio-identities" and "personality attributes, unique experiences, personal choices, and the individual sense of 'self'" (p. 37, quoted in Garza and Herringer, 1987, p. 299). The last-mentioned would be much the same as Goffman's (1963) "ego identity".

There is a greater consensus about definitions of social identity. It is understood to be related to formal and informal memberships of social groups (Babad, Birnbaum & Benne, 1983, in Garza & Herringer, 1987; Taylor & Dube, 1986; Turner, 1984, in Taylor & Dube).

Tajfel (quoted in Garza & Herringer, 1987, p. 300), a respected researcher in the field of social identity, defines social identity as "that part of an individual's self concept which derives from [her or] his knowledge of [her or] his membership of a social group (or groups) together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership".

The problem with the definitions provided above is that, although all these components (an inner awareness of self as individual, continuous subject; personality characteristic, values, behaviour patterns and memories; and characteristics related to group memberships) are part of a person's identity, they are treated as if they were distinguishable. For example, the inclusion of 'values' as part of personal identity suggests that some of an individual's personal values are developed unrelated to that person's group memberships. This does not make sense, in that unless the individual is born with inherent values - and a few might argue that this is so - then these values are learnt from social groups (such as the family). The notion that "personal identities" are social seems to be as much true for the "existential self" (ego identity) as for "personal identities".

Indeed, the concept that the West has of identity, or "the self", can be understood to be socially constructed: both the concept and the related internal experiences are products of history and society, not inherent or essential. Geertz (1974) maintains that

the Western conception of the person as a bounded, unique, more or less integrated and cognitive universe ... is ... a rather peculiar idea within the context of the world's cultures (p. 31, quoted in Logan, 1987, p. 14).

There is evidence to support Geertz's conviction. Logan (1987) shows convincingly that the sense of self experienced by individuals has changed over time, and that these different perceptions are related to the prevailing world view at that time. On the basis of his research he describes five different "senses of self": the "newly autonomous subject" of the later

Middle Ages (p. 16); the "self as assertive subject" of the Renaissance and Reformation (p. 17); the "self as competent subject" of the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries (p. 18); the "self as observed object" in the "modern" world (p. 20); and the "self as existential/alienated object" in "post-modern" culture (p. 23). He says "I submit that the 'I' of the medieval individual was not the same as the asserted valuing of the subjective 'I' in humanistic psychology today" (p. 24).

Logan (1987) thus argues that the 'sense of self' has changed over time, while Heelas and Lock (in Yardley & Honess, 1987) argue that it is different within different cultures. This provides evidence for the contention that the "self" which includes or is synonymous with the concept of "identity", is socially constructed rather than essential.

It would seem valuable at this point to digress in order to briefly discuss social constructionism.

## 2. SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIONISM

Social constructionism is best understood as a perspective rather than as a theory: it is a way of looking at the world (including social science research) which takes nothing for granted. In particular, it criticizes the "objective" nature of social science research and theorizing, and the ethnocentric, a-contextual and a-historical nature of this work.

Although the beginnings of a social constructionist perspective grew out of the "endogenic perspective regarding the origins of knowledge" (Gergen, 1985, p. 269) of philosophers such as Kant and Nietzsche, it was Berger & Luckmann's (1966) The Social Construction of Reality which provided the impetus for (and named) the perspective as it has developed to date (Gergen, 1985).

Three basic propositions of social constructionism are based on the work of Berger & Luckmann:

Social reality is a human production; social reality is an emergent reality ...; and humans themselves are societal productions ... (Weigert et al., 1986, p. 2)

Social constructionism is thus interested in the ways in which humans produce social realities; the ways in which social realities produce humans; and the ways in which social realities continually change. The focus is on processes rather than on entities or "things".

Gergen (1985) says the "social constructionist inquiry is principally concerned with explicating the processes by which people come to describe, explain, or otherwise account for the world (including themselves) in which they live" (p. 266).

He maintains that research on theoretical work done from the social constructionist perspective is based on one or more of the following four assumptions (Gergen, 1985):

- 1) "What we take to be experience of the world does not in itself dictate the terms by which the world is understood" (p. 266). There is no one-to-one correspondence between what people experience and how they understand this experience. For example, the taken-for-granted categories of "man" and "woman" have been shown to vary across cultures, and are not as directly related to biology as most Westerners assume.
  
- 2) "The terms in which the world is understood are social artifacts, products of historically situated interchanges among people" (p. 267). It is possible to begin to explain the different ways that the world is understood by contextualizing those ways (cf. the work of Logan, 1987, mentioned earlier in this chapter).
  
- 3) "The degree to which a given form of understanding prevails or is sustained across time is not fundamentally dependent on the empirical validity of the perspective in question, but on the vicissitudes of social processes" (p. 268). Understandings which prevail over time are related to common agreement among people, rather than on their inherent "truth"; and these can change if the people who agree on the understandings agree to change them. Of course, these "agreements" are not generally negotiated openly.

- 4) "Forms of negotiated understanding are of crucial significance in social life, as they are integrally connected with many other activities in which people engage" (p. 268). The "shared understandings" have direct impacts on the way people relate to each other, and society functions. For example, homosexuals would be treated differently in a society that had a shared understanding of homosexuality as a sin than they would be in a society which understood it to be an illness.

Social constructionism therefore has implications not only for the way the world and people are understood, but also for the ways in which social science is carried out.

It implies that social science needs to be aware of the historical, cultural, social etc. contexts of a particular piece of research or theory; that the ways in which processes are interpreted, understood or categorized are contextually specific; that social science theories are based on shared, negotiated understandings rather than "The Truth"; and that social scientists need to consider the implications of their research and theorizing.

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### 3. LESBIANISM AS SOCIALLY CONSTRUCTED

There is a good deal of evidence to suggest that lesbianism as we know it today in Westernized contexts, is not simply transcultural and transhistorical, but is itself socially

constructed. This is also true for sexuality in general (Gagnon & Simon, 1973).

Boswell's (1980) careful and insightful analysis of homosexuality in Western Europe during the first fourteen centuries of the Common Era, for which purpose he re-viewed (and re-translated) original sources, shows convincingly the "the categories 'homosexual' and 'heterosexual' simply did not intrude on the consciousness of most [ancient] Greeks or ... Romans" (p. 59). He found that terms for "homosexuals" and "heterosexuals" are extremely rare in ancient Greek and Roman literature, despite numerous accounts of both homosexual and heterosexual activities (which were more usually categorized in terms of the activities themselves, e.g. "active" or "passive" ). Moreover, writers frequently did not bother to identify the gender of an individual's sexual partner (even when the partner was the same gender): in the West today, this would be because heterosexuality is assumed; then, it seems to be because the gender of the partners was of little relevance.

The research of Faderman (1985; 1986) and Everard (1986) also demonstrates the ways in which lesbianism had been socially constructed.

Faderman (1985) looked at novels written by men and women, as well as published diaries and letters written by women, and found that women's relationships with other women have changed over time. She found that the idea of "romantic friendships" between women (also called "the love of kindred spirits", "Boston

marriages" and "sentimental friends" during the 19th century, p. 16) can be traced back to the Renaissance. These relationships were passionate and intense and sometimes (but not always) replaced marriage; but they were understood to be "spiritual" and very seldom involved genital sexuality. These relationships were generally condoned and even "considered noble and virtuous in every way" (Faderman, p. 16). Indeed, it was considered normal during the 19th Century for a husband to give his place in the marriage bed to his wife's "sentimental friend" when she came visiting. On the other hand, sexual relationships between women during these times (particularly in the 18th and 19th Centuries) were not condoned; but the existence of an intense friendship between women was considered proof that the relationship could not possibly be sexual.

Faderman (1985) points out that at other times and places women's relationships with each other were both sexual and condoned; though this sexuality was considered inferior to heterosexual sexuality.

Despite these differences, it seems that women who cross-dressed or demanded male privileges - whether or not this also involved genital sexual activity with other women - were always persecuted and sometimes executed (Faderman, 1985).

Faderman (1985) suggests that behaviours which did not threaten the heterosexual basis of society or male dominance were condoned. However, the rise of feminism in the late nineteenth and early twentieth Centuries, and the increasing opportunities

for women to be economically independent of men, gave women the motivation, courage and opportunity to remain independent of heterosexual relations. This posed a real threat to (heterosexual) social structures (a contention supported by Jackson, 1987 and Everard, 1986). Faderman (1985; 1986) and Kitzinger (1987) argue that the early sexologists responded to this threat in two ways: they "discovered" that women were sexual and glorified heterosexuality as the path to female fulfillment, and they pathologized relationships between women. Krafft-Ebing (1882, in Kitzinger, 1987), for example, clearly suggested links between lesbianism and feminism. Early in the twentieth Century then, romantic relationships between women became pathological relationships between lesbians.

Everard (1986) examined the history of lesbianism in the Netherlands, in order to establish whether it followed the same process as that suggested by Faderman (1985; 1986): homosocial romantic friendships transmuted into female homosexuality through medical science.

Everard's (1986) research indicates the possibility of a process affected by class differences. From novels, poetry and published letters she found clear evidence of zielvriendschap (soul friendships) between women of the middle and upper classes during the eighteenth and nineteenth Centuries. These "soul friendships" were common and, to a large extent, accepted; and were characterized by "love without passion" (Everard, p. 125), a "spiritual bond", and friendship, rather than by sexual passion.

Evidence from court cases, medical literature and research on prostitutes during these centuries, however, suggests that sexual relationships were to be found among women of "the lowest social strata - street vendors, prostitutes, women with no sure means of support " (Everard, 1986, p. 127).

During the early decades of the twentieth Century there were, within the medical profession in Holland, two different views of homosexuality: homosexuality as a biological phenomenon, "an inherent sexual variant which could be found among a small but fixed number of people and which no medic could alter" (Everard, 1986, pp. 132 - 133); and homosexuality "as a largely psychological phenomenon with the implication that everyone could, under certain circumstances, develop into a homosexual, but that such a development could be reversed" (Everard, p. 132).

Everard (1986) suggests that these different views were related to the different groups of women known to the proponents of the views. She argues that researchers such as Hirschfield (who was homosexual himself) developed the concept of homosexuality and tried to show that it was a genetic variety in order to decriminalize homosexual acts. In order to do this "the research was conducted where it was likely to produce results; that is, not among romantic friends but among women who maintained sexual relationships with other women" (Everard, p. 136). The private psychoanalytic practitioner, on the other hand, was a more likely consultant for middle and upper class women, and it was their "romantic friendships" which provided the basis for the second view described in the previous paragraph.

Gay (1986), who worked as an anthropologist in a rural Lesotho village during 1976 - 7, found that institutionalized relationships exist between adolescent Basotho girls.

These relationships, called "mummy-baby" papali (games), are generally dyadic friendships between an older and a younger girl, in which one girl approaches another girl to whom she is attracted. The older girl (or woman) than initiates meetings which involve the giving of gifts, protection and advice; and the relationship thus fulfils several functions which are particularly important for the younger of the two. However "the most important part of mummy-baby relations is the exchange of affection and sensual satisfaction" (Gay, 1986, p. 105). Gay wrote in her field notes that, according to informants,

Friends may visit, love each other, even give gifts now and then. But between mummies and babies it is like an affair, a romance, and being alone together to hug and kiss each other is always a part of it (1986, p. 105).

Although some younger, unmarried informants indicated that "love making" could be a part of the relationship, most disagreed and felt that it was wrong or unknown. In general, then, these relationships exist prior to, or side-by-side with, heterosexual relationships, and they are not considered a threat to heterosexual relationships or to marriage.

It is interesting to compare the "mummy-baby" game as reported by Gay (1986) with Faderman's (1985) analysis of pre-twentieth century "romantic friendships", as there seem to be a number of similarities, particularly the lack of genital sexual activity, and the fact that the relationships are condoned and not seen as

a threat to heterosexual norms. Of course, as rural Basotho women find opportunities for becoming more independent, relationships between women may come to be seen as a threat.

The three analyses of relationships between women discussed above show clearly that lesbianism has changed over time and is affected by class and culture. It would seem, then, that lesbianism as we understand it today from a Western perspective is a socially constructed phenomenon.

However, to argue that lesbianism is socially constructed is not to argue that sexual and emotional relationships have not always existed between women - there is sufficient evidence to suggest that they have. Instead, it is argued that the way these relationships have been perceived and experienced by women, and perceived by outsiders, has changed (and continues to change). Most importantly, the understanding of lesbianism as involving a category of persons called lesbians, and the experience of "being a lesbian" are socially constructed. Eighteenth and nineteenth Century European women involved in "romantic friendships", and Basotho girls playing the "mummy-baby" game did and do not have an "identity" as a lesbian.

#### 4. DEFINING "LESBIAN" AND "LESBIAN IDENTITIES"

Although homo-erotic activities and homo-affectional relationships have always existed, the notion of a category of persons who could be classified as homosexual is clearly historically and culturally specific.

Numerous attempts have been made to define "the homosexual person" or "the lesbian" (definitions which were necessary in the West in this century because homosexuality was understood to be a clinical entity, and homosexuals therefore had to be identified). Traditional definitions of this kind are of two types: those which refer exclusively to overt sexual relationships (e.g. Armon, 1960; Loney, 1973) and those which include desires, intentions and emotions. For example:

A clinical homosexual is one who is motivated, in adult life, by a definite preferential erotic attraction to members of the same sex, and who usually (but not necessarily) engages in overt sexual relations with them (Marmor, 1965, p. 4).

The essential feature [of a lesbian] is a definite preferential erotic attraction to another female. This usually, but not inevitably also involves some physical expression of that attraction (Kenyon, 1970, p. 183, quoted in Woolfson, 1976, p. 5).

While it may be useful to define homosexuality or lesbianism in terms of emotional/erotic relationships between people of the same sex, to define "a lesbian" (or "a homosexual") as a person who indulges in same-sex erotic activity or desires without including the notion of identity is to assume that there is "something" within a lesbian which "makes" her a lesbian even if she is not aware of it. This is to assume an essentialist notion

of "the lesbian" as well as to accept the understanding of lesbianism as a clinical entity.

Weeks (1987) points out that some people identify themselves as gay or lesbian and participate in the gay or lesbian communities, and yet do not indulge in homosexual erotic activity. For some women, this is a political rather than sexual choice. Others are sexually active with persons of the same gender, but do not define themselves as gay or lesbian.

Matza (1969) points out the "doing" (e.g. making love with a woman) is not necessarily the same as "being" (e.g. being "a lesbian"). Thus being a lesbian and having a lesbian identity are notions which are interwoven, and the subjective sense of "being" can only be ignored if a lesbian is understood in biological, clinical or other essentialist terms (Richardson, 1981) to "be a lesbian" irrelevant of her subjective experience.

The essentialist versus social constructionist debate had been an important one in social psychology; particularly in areas of gender and sexuality. Franklin & Stacey (1988) assert that:

'Essentialism' generally refers to arguments about either gender or sexuality which appeal to biological or genetic determinism, universalism or explanations based on the idea of 'nature' or 'human nature' ... (pp. 137 - 138).

There are, in fact, numerous "essentialist" perspectives about lesbianism; which appear to "vary in different social and historical contexts" (Franklin & Stacey, 1988, p. 139), and to fulfil different needs of society at different times.

If a lesbian is a woman who identifies herself as such and who thus has a lesbian identity, what then is a lesbian identity?

Ponse (1978) defines sexual identity as referring "to one's social and/or personal identity in terms of preference for sexual activity with a particular gender" (p. 27). But to define lesbian identities as sexual identities is to assume that lesbian identities are related to sexuality, and this pre-empts the accounts of lesbian identities which this research attempts to examine.

Moreover, as Weeks (1987) points out, there is a tension between lesbians who focus on the centrality of sexual/erotic activity and those who argue that a lesbian identity is a political one. In the latter view, a lesbian relationship is one "in which two women's strongest emotions and affection are directed towards one another" (p. 44).

Caplan (1987), for example, suggests that holding a lesbian or gay identity may have different meanings for women and men: for many women, identifying as a lesbian may be related more to a resistance to the oppression of women than to erotic attraction; whereas many gay men resist victimization as gay rather than as men.

Others have argued, however, that the latter understanding denies the importance of sexual relationships between women, which are seen to be a central part of lesbianism, even as a political

choice (because it is same-sex erotic activity which most threatens heterosexual patriarchal power) (Ferguson, 1981).

The issue remains unresolved. By defining "the lesbian" or lesbian identities in some particular way, the question asked by this research will already have been answered. Setting limits about what a lesbian identity is or is not - a sexual identity, or, as Rich (1981) would have it, a sense of bonding with women and being independent from men - involves setting limits on how women can answer the question: "What do I mean when I say 'I am a lesbian'?"

Kitzinger's (1987) definition, on the other hand, while so broad that it could be considered by some to be valueless, does not set such limits. It allows the women themselves to set the parameters of the concept.

The term 'lesbian identity' is intended to characterize the set of meanings ascribed by a woman to whatever social, emotional, sexual, political or personal configuration she intends when she describes herself as a 'lesbian'. A lesbian identity is a woman's subjective experience or intrasubjective account of her own lesbianism" (Kitzinger, 1987, p. 91).

This identity is constructed by the individual, in interaction with others, using culturally available meanings which are limited by numerous factors, such as rules of language and public laws (Weigert et al., 1986).

For many lesbians, the culturally available images of lesbianism are those found in medical, psychiatric and popular literature (frequently written by men).

The pervert and the sinner, the guilt-ridden androgyne and the indiscriminating sexual opportunist, the man-hating castrating feminist and the victim of male lust seeking solace in another woman's arms - all are images of the lesbian familiar to most of us today. ...these images create a context within which we construct our own accounts of lesbianism (Kitzinger, 1986, p. 151).

By only presenting images like these, which do exist, Kitzinger fails to mention that there are also positive images available for lesbians, even within medical and psychiatric literature.

A social constructionist understanding of lesbian identities, however, suffers from a number of problems. One of these is that it has failed to account adequately for lesbian sexuality.

Perhaps a more important criticism - one that does not invalidate the social constructionist perspective, but which needs to be considered - is that it does not meet the needs of many lesbians. What emerged from lesbian delegates at a 1987 conference on homosexuality, was that

The appeal of essentialism seemed particularly strong in relation to the need to construct personal narratives in order to make sense of our 'deviant' sexual histories. Not only were social constructionist accounts perceived as somehow invalidating the intensity of deep feelings about their lesbianism ... but it also became evident that these accounts failed to fulfil emotional needs met by various forms of essentialism (Franklin & Stacey, 1988, p. 144).

## 5. ACCOUNTS OF LESBIAN IDENTITIES

In discussing identities, Wiegert et al. (1986) make two points which are important for this research:

1. Whatever else identity is, it is always a socially intelligible definition of a uniquely individual reality (p. 33, emphasis mine).
2. Nor do all the identities have to make sense or be integrated into a neat totality (p. 53).

Gilbert & Mulkey (1983) point out that although sociologists [and, by extension, social psychologists] who do qualitative research draw conclusions about behaviours, beliefs and the like, they in fact only have access to the accounts presented by participants or informants, or the accounts of those things which are constructed by the researchers on the basis of what they have seen, heard and understood. Thus, the researcher attempting to understand identities only has access to the account of that identity presented by the individual, and not to the individual's inner "reality".

The truth or falsity of an account is not relevant, because the fact that the account could be a true account - it would not be presented if it were not socially intelligible and thus potentially true - is what is important (Brown, 1983). A false account is of no value to the speaker unless it was a potentially true and therefore believable account.

Moreover, the researcher only has access to some of the accounts that individuals present. In her research on discourse/conversation analysis, Kottler (1988) shows that the audience has an effect on the discourses used [and, by extension, the accounts presented] by speakers: and a researcher is a particular

audience. It would be quite reasonable to assume that many lesbians present different accounts to different audiences - a fairly biological, conservative ("It's really not your fault") account to her mother; a liberal account to colleagues at work; and a radical account to her lesbian friends. Thus, the best one can assume about the responses to this research is that the Q sort represents the account which the participant has chosen to present to the researcher. For some, this may be the only account they ever present; for others, it may be one of many. Moreover, there is "empirical evidence demonstrating that accounts are often revised ..." (Gilbert, 1983, p. 183); so the Q sort also represents accounts which the participants have chosen to present at this particular point in their lives.

## CHAPTER III

### LESBIAN IDENTITIES

#### 1. INTRODUCTION

Rather than presenting an overview of the various images of lesbians with which to compare the accounts, it was decided to present accounts developed from theory or research by other social scientists.

This was done for three reasons: because these images have frequently been presented before (see, for example, Ponse, 1978; and Woolfson, 1976); because no research or analyses have been done to establish which images are available to South African lesbians; and, thirdly, because it would be valuable to compare South African accounts with those found elsewhere.

Kitzinger's (1987) accounts were selected because of the importance of her research in the development of this study. Ettore's (1980) accounts were chosen because they are widely known and used by other researchers. Faderman's (1984) accounts are presented because of the value of her work on the changing nature of relationships between women. An overview of stage theories of the development of homosexual identities (Sophie, 1985/86) is presented because the accounts of identity may be best explained in terms of developmental sequences.

Tajfel's theory of the way in which individuals cope with negative identities (Brown, 1980) was carefully considered, as it

may have provided a valuable tool for understanding the accounts presented by the participants in this research. However, the "Lesbian Identity Q-sample" was devised to examine accounts of lesbian identities, rather than ways in which individuals cope with such identities. Tajfel's theory, though valuable in itself, was therefore not considered an appropriate explanatory tool for this research.

In addition, Ponse (1978) examines lesbian identities from a social constructionist perspective. Her work is considered valuable (Kitzinger, 1978; Weigert et al., 1986), but is unfortunately not presented here.\*

## 2. KITZINGER'S ACCOUNTS OF LESBIAN IDENTITIES

As this research is based on Kitzinger's (1987) study, it was felt that the accounts which emerged from her research should be discussed in some depth (refer to Kitzinger, pp. 95 - 122).

The aim of her study of lesbian identities was to describe "some of the different accounts of lesbian identity currently available" as presented by her participants, and to speculate on "the political interests and ideologies underlying each" (Kitzinger, 1987, p. 93).

Kitzinger's participant sample consisted of forty-one women who defined themselves as lesbians. They were aged between seventeen

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\* A copy of her book could not be obtained in time for this thesis.

and fifty-eight years. Unfortunately, this is the only description she provides of the participants in her research on lesbian identities. However, thirty-nine of the forty-one women also participated in the first stage of her research, which consisted of in-depth interviews. She does provide an overview of the interview sample, which consisted of 120 women.

The larger sample of 120 women was found using "snowball sampling", and many women were specifically chosen because of "particular interests or involvements not yet represented" (Kitzinger, 1987, p. 87). This is in line with the principles of Q methodology participant sampling (discussed in Chapter VI).

Approximately half the participants lived in or near London, the rest in urban, rural or semi-rural areas in the North of England. Most were English, although a number of other nationalities were represented (she lists twelve, including Chinese, Indian, Israeli, Dutch, French, Belgian and South African). Of the seventeen paid jobs done by participants which she lists twelve would fit into occupational category 1 in South Africa, one into category 2, two into category 3, and one each into categories 4 and 5 (Schlemmer & Stopforth, 1979; see Chapter VI in this thesis). Other participants were unemployed, retired, full-time mothers and/or wives, students or scholars. They ranged in age from fifteen to seventy-three, with a mean age of thirty-five. Two-thirds were aged between twenty and fifty years.

She found this sample to be clearly biased towards white, middle-class women. Four of the 120 women were "Black", twenty defined

themselves as "working-class", and two were Jewish. None of these women were prepared to discuss any oppression they experienced other than that based on their being women or lesbian - and often denied experiencing any other oppression.

She found that "politically conscious Black lesbians ... refused to be interviewed by a white woman, and radical working-class women declined to cooperate with the work of an hierarchical academic system from whose benefits they are systematically excluded" (Kitzinger, 1987, p. 88).

She points out that while the biases of her sample do not invalidate the identity constructions of the white, middle-class, gentile women, these constructions (or accounts) "are revealed as a limited and partial selection of the many different visions of the world and of themselves that lesbians as a whole have constructed" (Kitzinger, 1987, p. 88).

Although Kitzinger does not clearly describe the characteristics of her participant sample, it would be reasonable to assume that the participants were predominantly white, middle-class, gentile, English-speaking, between the ages of twenty and fifty, and holding professional or managerial paid jobs.

The research was carried out using a Q-sample, which Kitzinger (1987) developed from the interviews mentioned above, with sixty-one statements which were typed onto individual cards. The cards were shuffled, and posted to the participants with a standard set of instructions. The completed Q-sorts were factor analyzed

using principal components, and seven factors were rotated to simple structure according to the varimax criterion. (See Chapter VI for a discussion of how single Q-sorts - accounts - are developed from a factor.)

Seven significant accounts emerged from her research, but the last two, which were defined by only one woman each, were unclear to Kitzinger and were thus not dealt with in any depth in her book.

Kitzinger's (1987) explanation and analysis of each account are briefly summarized and the first five summaries are prefixed by the statements selected by participants which characterize that account.

#### Account 1

Statements with which the five women who defined this account agree:

Being a lesbian gives me a sense of freedom.  
 Being a lesbian has enabled me to grow up.  
 I feel most relaxed and comfortable with just women around me.  
 Whatever happens, I will never change my mind about being a lesbian.

Statements with which these women disagree:

If I had a choice I would never have chosen to be a lesbian.  
 I think I would have a happier life if I were not a lesbian.  
 Sometimes I wonder whether I really am a lesbian.  
 However hard I try not to, there are times when I feel ashamed that I am a lesbian.  
 There are times when I feel that my lesbianism is unnatural.  
 There are things I don't like about my sexuality.

This account emphasizes the personal fulfillment resulting from lesbianism. All the women defining this account had been married (or were married at the time of the research) and they felt that rejecting heterosexuality had been a positive step.

The account emphasizes a certainty about being a lesbian, and a lack of shame about or dislike of their sexuality. The account does not agree that lesbianism is unnatural, and presents an unwillingness to return to heterosexuality.

This account ... depicts lesbianism in very positive terms as a route through which happiness, personal growth and fulfilment can be attained: through lesbianism a woman 'discovers her true self', 'gets in touch with her own feelings', and becomes a more fulfilled and emotionally healthy human being (Kitzinger, 1987, p. 100).

This account is well-represented in lesbian literature, for example, Faye (1980) and Toll (1980); and reflects the "self-fulfilment" humanistic writings of psychologists such as Maslow (1968) and Rogers (1967). It is also reflected in psychological research in the 1970's which found lesbians to be psychologically "healthier" (more independent, well-adjusted, fulfilled etc.) than heterosexual women: for example, the work of Siegelman (1972) and Freedman (1975).

While pointing out that this account "explicitly challenges the traditional image of the lesbian as a shadowy creature haunting the seedy twilight world and enduring a life of unmitigated misery ..." (Kitzinger, 1987, p. 100), she also argues that this account depoliticizes and personalizes lesbianism - removing it from the political order and making lesbianism acceptable.

## Account 2

The two women who defined account 2, agreed with the following statements:

I get on well with men.  
 I have been deeply in love with a man.  
 I have enjoyed sex with men.  
 I don't like my sexuality being categorized and labelled.  
 Being a lesbian is not one of the most important things about me.  
 My underlying sexual orientation is bisexual.

They disagreed with the following statements:

Basically I dislike men.  
 I feel uncomfortable in the company of men.  
 I find masculinity ... somewhat repulsive.

This account presents a more positive attitude to men than any of the other accounts. The basis for this account is the belief that the gender of a person is largely irrelevant - that "women respond to 'the person, not the gender' and 'it all depends who you fall in love with'" (Kitzinger, 1987, p. 102).

The possibility of again having a sexual relationship with a man is not excluded, and the account presents a reluctance "to label themselves, or to invest too much energy in a lesbian identity" (Kitzinger, 1987, p. 103).

This account is therefore essentially based in the idea - or ideal - of romantic love, rather than in any notion of lesbianism as part of the self.

Kitzinger (1987) points out that this account is "widely documented by lesbians" (p. 104) in fiction and non-fiction works (e.g. Baetz, 1980b; Rule, 1975; Schwartz, 1978). Cartledge & Hemmings (1982) refer to this account as "the romantic conversion" (p. 331). De Monteflores & Schultz (1978, in Kitzinger) found that this type of account is typically presented by lesbians in relation to their first relationship with a woman.

She points out that

the irony of this account ... is that the lesbian deviates from the dominant order but then achieves assimilation (in some measure) into it, by articulating its morality and, paradoxically, providing evidence of its wide scope and applicability: the idiom of romantic love is seen to explain the experience even of those who are, theoretically, least committed to upholding the dominant ideology of which it [romantic love] forms a part (Kitzinger, 1987, p. 109).

### Account 3

The two women who define this account agree with the following statements:

Being a lesbian is not one of the most important things about me.  
 I don't like my sexuality being labelled and categorized.  
 Whatever happens I will never change my mind about being lesbian.  
 I believe I was born a lesbian.  
 You cannot choose to be a lesbian; if you are, you are.

This account presents a view in which lesbians clearly see themselves as lesbian and believe that they were born lesbian, but dislike being defined in terms of what they see as a small part of themselves. They emphasize the similarities between

lesbians and heterosexuals, and consider sexual preference to be a minor part of their lives.

This account draws on

socially sedimented themes concerning the privatization of sex, the concept of 'sexual orientation' as a fixed and given entity, and the liberal reluctance to identify ('label') 'people' as members of oppressed groups, ... [and] justifies, for the lesbian, the need to think and act in accordance with the recommendations of the dominant culture (Kitzinger, 1987, p. 112).

#### Account 4

Four women defined this account: they agreed with the following statements:

I came to lesbianism through feminism.  
 There was nothing in my childhood that predisposed me to be a lesbian.  
 Being a woman is very important to me.  
 Basically I dislike men.  
 I feel uncomfortable in the company of men.  
 Being a lesbian is much more than having sex with women.  
 Even if I never had sex with a woman I would still be a lesbian.

They disagreed with the following statements:

You cannot choose to be a lesbian; if you are, you are.  
 If I had a choice I would never have chosen to be lesbian.  
 I believe I was born lesbian.  
 Being a lesbian is not one of the most important things about me.  
 I feel an affinity with gay men.  
 I get on well with men.

This account presents lesbianism "within the political context of radical feminism" (Kitzinger, 1987, p. 113) and is the only account which does so. It presents lesbians as active

participants in becoming lesbian, and it is therefore basically constructionist [in one sense of the word].

Being both a lesbian and a woman is said to be central to their identities. There is no affinity with gay men, and the attitude towards men is generally negative.

The role of sex in being a lesbian is also de-emphasized. Ferguson (1981) argues that this image of lesbianism, which stresses bonding between women and a rejection of men above sexuality, "undervalues the important historical development of an explicit lesbian identity connected to genital sexuality" (p. 160). She maintains that the possibility of genital sexual activity between women directly challenges patriarchy by providing an alternative to heterosexuality.

Kitzinger views this account very positively. She says that

the great achievement of the radical lesbian feminist account of lesbian identities is to alienate and disturb proponents of all other lesbian identities. This hostility is derived from the fact that this account ... fails to explain and justify lesbianism in terms familiar and acceptable to the dominant order; instead it attacks that order, presenting lesbianism as an explicit threat to society. (Kitzinger, 1987, pp. 118 - 119).

#### Account 5

Both women who define this account agree with the following statements:

I think I would have a happier life if I were not a lesbian.

If I had a choice I would never have chosen to be a lesbian.

I don't think it's necessary for me to tell everyone that I'm a lesbian.

You cannot choose to be a lesbian; if you are, you are.

My relationship with my father helps to explain why I am a lesbian.

My relationship with my mother helps to explain why I am a lesbian.

They disagreed with the following statements:

I feel good about being "different".

Part of my pleasure in being lesbian is the way it shocks people and makes them disagree.

Being a lesbian has enabled me to grow up.

Being a lesbian has enabled me to feel at home in my body.

Being lesbian gives me a sense of freedom.

There was nothing in my childhood that predisposed me to be a lesbian.

I believe I was born lesbian.

I came to lesbianism through feminism.

This account presents "lesbianism as a 'sorry state', a personal inadequacy or a failing" (Kitzinger, 1987, p. 119) - as a sin and a pathology. Lesbianism is not presented as personally fulfilling, and it is not seen as important to be open about one's lesbianism.

One of the most influential of all lesbian novels, Radclyffe Hall's (1928) The Well of Loneliness, presented lesbians as "flawed" outcasts; and, although it pleaded for society's tolerance, it offered lesbians a miserable image of themselves.

Lesbianism is explained as a result of childhood experiences and upbringing, and explanations in terms of nature or biology and political choice are rejected. Feminism is seen as irrelevant.

A great deal of psychiatric, psychological, and, especially, psychoanalytic literature locates the "cause" of lesbianism in early childhood years (e.g. Deutsch, 1932; Green, 1974; Klein, 1932; McDougall, 1979; McGuire, Carlisle & Young, 1965; Wilbur, 1965).

This is not to suggest that all psychoanalytic literature presents lesbianism as a pathology. It has, particularly in recent years, come to be linked more closely with feminism, and is now used by a number of feminists. This is particularly true for discussions about the development of sexuality, because psychoanalysis is one of the few theories which does not assume that heterosexuality is a natural given, but rather examines how all forms of sexuality develop (Sayers, 1986).

Kitzinger views this account negatively, pointing out that it removes personal responsibility for lesbianism from the lesbian, thus resulting in some level of social acceptance ("tolerance", "pity"). Kitzinger argues that

in employing this account, a woman herself undermines any suggestion that she is a threat to society or to the heterosexual hegemony. She depoliticizes her lesbianism in a bid for acceptance. (1987, p. 122).

#### Accounts 6 and 7

Each of these two accounts was defined by only one woman, and Kitzinger did not feel that she understood them adequately; nor were they predicted theoretically. She deals with both in half a page, although she does discuss Account 7 in a little more detail in the following Chapter on accounts of "Lesbian Politics".

Account 6, defined by a nineteen year old woman, is similar to Account 2 ("romantic love") in its bisexual component, but differs in that sexual attraction rather than romantic love is emphasized. The participant indicated in her interview that her account is "uncertain and fluid" and "subject to change" (Kitzinger, 1987, p. 122).

Account 7, defined by a woman in her fifties, contains two distinct strands: one which presents lesbianism as a pathology; the other, a radical feminist account. The participant had identified herself as a lesbian in her teens, and had maintained the first strand of the account alone until in her forties, at which time she came into contact with feminist ideas. The participant indicated her own awareness of these two strands in her interview: "I think what you do all the time is to hold two things at the same time, in a way, concurrently almost" (quoted in Kitzinger, 1987, p. 145). Kitzinger says that she had known this participant for eight years, during which time she "maintained this bifurcated account" (p. 122).

In dismissing these two accounts, as she does by not analyzing them in the same depth as the others (and this is particularly true for Account 6), Kitzinger seems to be implying that accounts which are "uncertain and fluid" or "bifurcated" are less valid than those which are (relatively) fixed and uncontradictory. In doing so, she negates or ignores the potentially transitory nature of socially constructed identity accounts, and the contradictions between (or within) the accounts from which, or through contact with which, women construct their own accounts.

She seems to assume some level of coherence and unitariness in identity accounts which can be taken seriously - assumptions which are made neither by Q methodology, nor by social constructionism.

### Overview

The five accounts which Kitzinger found through her application of Q methodology are not in any way unexpected.

The account (Account 5) which presents lesbianism as pathological ("sick, and sorry") is one which has been (and is still) common in medical, social science and theological literature. Accounts 1, 2 and 3 (the "personal fulfilment" account, the "romantic love" account, and the "private sexual orientation" account) all fit into the liberal or "gay-affirmative" perspective on lesbianism. They all "draw on certain aspects of the official morality as justification for the infringement of other aspects of this same morality" (Kitzinger, 1987, p. 123). Account 4 (the "radical lesbian" account) is becoming increasingly well-documented in feminist literature.

While Kitzinger's accounts are valuable in that they are developed from real accounts presented by ordinary women, other "types" of lesbians have been suggested by some researchers and theoreticians. The following section documents a few of these.

### 3. OTHER DESCRIPTIONS OF LESBIAN IDENTITIES

#### a) Ettore's Social Lesbians

An important sociological work on lesbians which appeared in England in 1980 was that of Ettore, who looked in general at the development of lesbian consciousness (or changing constructions of lesbianism presented by lesbians) and, in particular, at what she called "social lesbians".

The three main stages or constructions of lesbianism in general which she identifies are traditionalist, social and ideological. The following descriptions are fairly broad generalizations.

The "traditionalist lesbian" accepts the view of herself as in some way "sick". She remains isolated in and closeted from society. She is seen and sees herself as suffering from "a personal problem or disease" (Ettore, 1980, p. 72) and in need of help, which society should provide. Ettore argues that these lesbians are "apolitical (politically impotent)" (p. 160).

The "social view" involves a fledgling lesbian consciousness developed through contact with other lesbians. The breakdown of the isolation, and of the individualized view of lesbianism, and lesbians' emergence from the closet results in its being seen as a "social problem" (Ettore, 1980, p. 160). However, this group awareness occurs only within the boundaries of the sub-culture of deviance to which the groups of social lesbians belong, and thus lesbianism is again privatized, although no longer

individualized. Ettore sees social lesbianism as "pre-political (potentially political)" (p. 160).

The "ideological view", which is linked to the rise of the Gay Liberation Front and the Women's Liberation Movement, has begun to present lesbianism as a "threat to society" (Ettore, 1980, p. 160) and a "force to be reckoned with" (p. 73) in the struggle against oppression. This is basically a lesbian feminist perspective, which Ettore describes as "political" (p. 160). She suggests that there is a conflict within this stage between those who emphasize class relations and those who emphasize sex relations (between what one might call "Marxist lesbian feminists" and "radical lesbian feminists" in terms of the categories presented in Chapter V).

Ettore's (1980) study focuses on "social lesbians" and involved four years of research on lesbians in London. Participants were selected from two groups: an organization called "Sappho" and what she terms the "Conference lesbians".

"Sappho" tended towards a traditionalist view of lesbianism, but grew out of a disenchantment "with society's view of lesbianism as well as its treatment of them as psychiatric scapegoats" (Ettore, 1980, p. 97). The "Conference lesbians" were some of the lesbians who attended a 1976 Lesbian National Conference, which was organized around the desire to challenge social structures and which, although short, resulted in an expansion of ideas and the development of "networks of communication" (p. 97).

Her selection of two specific groups of lesbians means that she was unable to - and presumably did not intend to - examine a large variety of constructions of lesbianism. Nor did she test the validity of the "traditionalist" and "ideological" views of lesbianism. Instead, she focussed specifically and intentionally on "social lesbians", examining their views in detail.

"Social lesbians" are those who have some kind of group awareness, who organize "socially as lesbians and in group settings" (Ettore, 1980, p. 72), resulting in a group identity. Social lesbianism implies "a certain level of group consciousness as well as social responsiveness" (p. 75). Ettore maintains that "social lesbians" emerged from a liberal society, and are a middle group between traditional and ideological lesbians.

Within social lesbianism, Ettore identifies a conflict or contradiction between two perspectives (which seems to approximate the differences between "Sappho" and the "Conference lesbians"): "sick, but not sorry" lesbians (where sorry implies regret) and "sorry, but not sick" lesbians (where sorry means "I beg your pardon").

#### The "sick, but not sorry" lesbians

These lesbians accept the traditional image of lesbians as "sick" to varying degrees, but they do not regret being lesbian and many seem to enjoy it. In accepting traditional images, they tend to see themselves as "born lesbians", thus accepting an essentialist notion of lesbianism.

They want social tolerance, and this desire gradually becomes a demand. There is an interesting contradiction within this group: on the one hand, their lives are separate from mainstream society (by virtue of their lesbianism and their membership of groups within the deviant sub-culture) and they tend not to be interested in any discussion of lesbian politics; on the other hand, by becoming visible to some extent (by forming groups) they challenge and question society and social norms. So, they are political, or potentially political, despite themselves.

#### The "sorry, but not sick" lesbians

These lesbians take the former's unintended challenge to society further, by not seeing themselves as sick, by not regretting their lesbianism, and by perceiving and presenting themselves as an oppressed minority.

They see lesbianism as "a choice which is grounded in a variety of factors, social, psychological, emotional and political" (Ettore, 1980, p. 99), and as "a commitment to women in a male-dominated society" (p. 28) rather than as an essential and sexual "thing". Unlike the previous group, who only reject society's treatment of lesbians, these lesbians challenge and attack society's attitudes as well as the structures of society. They perceive some links between feminism and lesbianism.

Both groups have an awareness of themselves as women as well as lesbians, and "attempt to bridge the gap which society has created between lesbians, who are women" and women in general "who are oppressed in a male dominated society" (Ettore, 1980,

p. 124). Ettore unfortunately implies here a one-way process - society acting on women to create this gap - and ignores the way in which women themselves participate in this process.

Ettore looked for differences in demographic characteristics between the two groups. She found that those lesbians who had a greater "stake in the system" and who were therefore less likely to want to upset social structures i.e. those in professional and managerial occupational categories, as well as those few who indicated a religious affiliation, were more likely to belong in the "sick, but not sorry group". However, the most radical or outspoken social lesbians were also generally found in the professional and managerial occupations.

An additional set of groups which Ettore differentiates within social lesbians is related to what she calls "social lesbian practice" (1980) - i.e. how social lesbians live out their lives as lesbians. She describes four groups; straight lesbians, status quo (conformist) lesbians, reformist (liberal) lesbians and marginal (fringe) lesbians.

### Straight Lesbians

These tend to look at the straight world for models, cling to traditional lesbian images, and uphold masculine (butch) and feminine (femme) roles. They tend to be closeted, see themselves as "born lesbians" and see lesbianism predominantly in sexual terms.

An interviewee in another piece of research describes "butch-femme" roles:

You have to look at butch and femme this way: there weren't exactly any manuals out on how to be a lesbian. You had basically three sources of information. First was what you learned from your parents. What you were looking for was a long-term marriage, so you looked at the marriages you saw - and you saw roles .... Then you had The Well of Loneliness [Hall, 1928] - that was the only real book on being gay you could find at the time. Okay, after that you had the other books - the dirty novels and the studies of abnormal psychology. And then you had what you found in the bars. So what were you going to do but play the game? There weren't any other role models around (Bev, quoted in Lewis, 1979, p. 37).

On the other hand, it must be remembered that by taking butch/femme roles and appearing together in public, these women were confronting society with the existence of lesbianism; a confrontation which must have taken a great deal of courage (Joan Nestle, interviewed by Hunt, 1988).

#### Status Quo Lesbians

While remaining closeted, they do not use the heterosexual world as a model for their lives, and thus reject role-playing. They also reject a purely sexual definition of lesbianism. However, they take pains to maintain the status quo, and "lead what any unknowing bystander would term normal lives" (Ettore, 1980, p. 133).

#### Reformist Lesbians

These lesbians challenge traditional views of lesbianism, and tend to form pressure groups demanding "gay rights" or "women's rights" (Ettore, 1980, p. 133). However, they only challenge

some parts of the existing social order - those related to their demands - and are thus demanding reform rather than substantial change.

### Marginal Lesbians

These lesbians - bisexuals, celibate (chaste) lesbians, and lesbian mothers - not only challenge "society's image of a lesbian, but often a lesbian's image of herself" (Ettore, 1980, p. 134) and are thus often marginalized by other lesbians. By being bisexual, they challenge the either-or concept of sexuality; by being chaste, they challenge the sexual definition of lesbianism; and by being mothers, they challenge ideas about motherhood.

#### b) Faderman's "New Gay" lesbians

Faderman (1984) uses autobiographical testimonies of lesbian-feminists and lesbian-feminist theory published since 1971 in order to test the validity of a developmental sequence of homosexual identities proposed by Minton and McDonald (1983/1984) for women; and in doing so, she draws a distinction between what she calls "new gay" and "old gay" lesbians.

The "new gay" lesbians are those who came to lesbianism through feminism; usually through radical feminism, unlike the "old gay" lesbians who discovered feminism after identifying as lesbian.

Faderman (1984) found that lesbian-feminist autobiographies frequently describe a process whereby a heterosexual woman

discovers radical feminism and then becomes a lesbian, or, rather, chooses a lesbian life-style. This "new gay" lesbian understands lesbianism primarily in terms of a commitment to women, rather than seeing it as a sexual identity or preference. Sexual expression is not absent from their lives, but is generally "only one aspect, and perhaps a relatively unimportant aspect, of their commitment to a lesbian life-style" (Faderman, p. 86).

For the "new gay" lesbian, lesbianism is seen as a logical and politically appropriate choice for a radical feminist. Because of this, and because they become lesbian in an environment which allows them to "internalize the good will towards love between women rather than society's homophobia" (Faderman, 1984, p. 89), and to criticize society, Faderman believes that the "new gay" lesbian is less likely to suffer guilt, shame or fear than the "old gay" lesbian. The "old gay" lesbian came to lesbianism outside of (or before) the new wave of feminism; and thus she struggled more with society's homophobia.

However, Faderman argues that, in fact, the "old gay" lesbian may also have come to lesbianism through feminism - through an unarticulated rejection of the roles demanded of women and of the oppression of heterosexuality - but "without the support of a political movement" (MacCowan, 1987, p. 176).

Faderman (1984) thus believes, on the basis of her analysis of lesbian-feminist literature, that the only real differences between the "old gay" lesbian and the "new gay" lesbian is not

their commitment to women, but the amount of difficulty they had coping with society's homophobia, and the amount of internalized guilt, shame and fear with which they have to cope.

What she fails to remember, as MacCowan (1987) points out, is the tendency to "reconstruct our autobiographies in an effort to bring them into greater congruence with our present identities, roles, situations, and available vocabularies" (Simon and Gagnon, quoted in Faderman, 1984, p. 88). Faderman argues that lesbians probably reconstruct their autobiographies in line with their lesbianism; but forgets to point out that feminists are equally likely to reconstruct their autobiographies. Thus, while her description of "new gay" lesbians - on the basis of whose experience lesbian-feminist theory was, to a great extent, developed (MacCowan, 1987) - is valuable and well-supported, her description of "old gay" lesbians is unconvincing.

Moreover, her decision to use only lesbian-feminist literature means that her analysis ignored non-feminist lesbians, and those who see their feminist development as unrelated to their lesbianism (MacCowan, 1987). In the end, despite being of some value, "it simply left out too many lesbians to be of use" "as an analysis that could illuminate the complexity of lesbian sexual identity during the last 100 years" (MacCowan, p. 178).

### c) Stage Theories of Lesbian Identity Development

A large number of theorists and researchers have proposed models of developmental stages through which lesbians (and gay men) are

presumed to move. Although the earlier stages are of little relevance here, as they are said to occur prior to self-labelling (Sophie, 1985/86) (and all the participants in this research are self-identified lesbians), it may be that some of the accounts which emerge from this research can best be understood as stages; and a brief discussion of these models is thus warranted.

However, it must be remembered that these models tend to be a historical and decontextualized, and to assume a linear development (e.g. from "first awareness" to "identity integration"). They ignore the impact of historical changes, such as feminism [as well as socio-economic and cultural factors], on the process of lesbian identity development (Sophie, 1985/86); and they generally ignore the possibility of contradictions, flexibility and non-linear movement in development.

Rather than examining some of the numerous stage theories individually, Sophie's (1985/86) critical overview of six theories will be utilized. All six were based on research and are as follows: Cass (1979), a clinical sample of lesbians and gay men in Australia; Coleman (1982), a clinical sample of lesbians and gay men in the U.S.A.; McDonald (1982), a non-clinical sample of gay men in Canada; Plummer (1975), a non-clinical sample of gay men in the U.K.; Raphael (1974), a non-clinical lesbian sample in the U.S.A.; and Spaulding (1982), a non-clinical sample of lesbians in the U.S.A. Other stage theories include those of Chapman & Brannock (1987), Fein & Nuehring (1981), and Minton & McDonald (1983/84).

Sophie (1985/86) integrates the six models into a four-stage model of lesbian identity development. The four stages are: 1) first awareness; 2) testing and exploration; 3) identity acceptance; and 4) identity integration. Only the last two are relevant here, as self-labelling is said to occur during the third stage (or at the end of the second stage).

#### Identity Acceptance (Stage 3)

This stage is generally characterized by the acceptance of a lesbian identity, and McDonald (1982) and Plummer (1975) suggest, by self-labelling. The lesbian begins to socialize with other lesbians, and enters the gay or lesbian communities. There is little or no disclosure of her identity to heterosexuals, although Sophie (1985/86) argues that disclosure may begin during this stage. Spaulding (1982) suggests that a negative identity precedes a positive one, though Sophie disagrees, arguing that her participants (college students or graduates in the U.S.A.) avoided identifying themselves as lesbians until they could adopt a positive identity.

#### Identity Integration (Stage 4)

This stage is characterized not only by identity acceptance, but by the integration of a positive lesbian identity into the lesbian's overall sense of identity. At the beginning of this stage, there is a tendency to dichotomize the world into "gay" and "straight"; and many lesbians experience anger at the "straight" world and exhibit great pride in their lesbianism (what Cass, 1979, calls "gay pride"). The beginning of this

stage is therefore sometimes characterized by gay/lesbian activism. Even if disclosure to others (particularly heterosexuals) has already begun, it becomes more important as a part of self-acceptance (i.e. acceptance by others). A lesbian identity begins to stabilize, which the individual is unable to change (according to Plummer, 1975) or, as is more likely (Sophie, 1985/86), unwilling to change (though many lesbians do, of course, do so).

#### 4. SUMMARY

This section attempts to draw together the discussions presented above, and to relate them to each other.

The various accounts, "types" and stages presented in this chapter cannot simply be mapped onto each other. This can be related to the different aims the researchers had in mind, the different groups of women they researched, and the different methodologies they used. There are, however, a number of similarities across the accounts, "types" and stages.

The clearest is the pathological account of lesbianism presented by "sick and sorry" lesbians. This includes Ettore's (1980) traditionalist lesbian, who accepts the view of herself as "sick" and in need of help, and Kitzinger's (1987) Account 5, where the women present lesbianism as unfulfilling and as a sin or as a pathology. It can also be linked (tentatively) to the early Identity Acceptance stage outlined by Sophie (1985/86), as

Spaulding (1982) suggests that a negative identity precedes a positive one (although Sophie disagrees).

The other fairly clear account is the "feminist" account of lesbianism. This includes Ettore's (1980) "ideological view", which presents lesbianism as a threat to patriarchal society. Ettore's "ideological view" is very similar to Kitzinger's (1987) Account 4, which presents lesbianism "within the political context of radical feminism" (p. 113). Faderman's (1984) "new gay" and "old gay" lesbians fit here to some extent, in that both groups understand lesbianism in terms of a commitment to women and to feminism. In addition, this account would fall at the beginning of the Identity Integration stage (Sophie, 1985/86).

The stage theories of identity development suggest that lesbian/gay activism ("gay pride") falls at the beginning of Identity Integration (Sophie, 1985/86), whereas Ettore's (1980) "ideological view", which parallels "gay pride", is presented as chronologically last. This suggests that within the various theories presented above there are two differing perspectives: a feminist perspective, which values lesbian feminism most highly, and a gay-affirmative perspective, which values the "alternative lifestyle" view ("lesbians are no different from straight people") most highly.

Thus, Kitzinger's (1987) Account 1 ("personal fulfillment") would fall later in the Identity Integration stage than Account 4, as it presents lesbianism positively and there is no desire to change.

In general, Ettore's (1980) social lesbians would fall within the Identity Acceptance stage, with the "sick, but not sorry" social lesbians moving into Identity Integration.

Neither of Kitzinger's remaining two accounts (Account 2: "romantic love" and Account 3: "private sexual orientation") really fall into one of the stages, because, although they have accepted their identity to some degree, they do not wish to be labelled (and labelling is part of the process outlined by Sophie, 1985/86). These accounts are best related to Ettore's social lesbians, who reject the heterosexual world as a model for their lives, reject a purely sexual definition of lesbianism, and take pains to lead a "normal life" (Ettore, 1980, p. 133). This description is, to some extent, true of both Accounts 2 and 3.

In conclusion then, there is some overlap between the accounts, "types" and stages described in this chapter, but there are also major differences. Given a similar methodology to Kitzinger's (1987), it is likely that the accounts found in this research will be closer to Kitzinger's accounts than to any of the others.

## CHAPTER IV

### "WOMEN, MEN AND SOCIETY"

#### 1. INTRODUCTION

The second aim of this thesis is to examine the relationship between the accounts which women give of their lesbianism, and their understanding of feminism. However, many South African women have never been exposed to feminist thought, and many of those who have, have been exposed to stereotypes of feminists. Feminists themselves have different definitions of feminism, and two women who call themselves "radical feminists" may have very different ideas about what this entails. It was thus decided to use a Q-sort to tap the participant's understanding of the relationships between "women, men and society". This would allow factors (i.e. accounts) to emerge which might or might not fit into existing frameworks, without the women having to label themselves. The discussion below is provided because it formed the framework for the development of the second Q-sort, and because it will assist in the analysis of the factors and the relationship between the factors from both Q sorts.

Although a number of overviews of feminist theory have been published, this discussion leans heavily on the work of Alison Jaggar (Jaggar and Struhl, 1978, and Jaggar, 1983) because she offers the most comprehensive and in-depth overview to date (van Zyl, 1987).

The situation of women in South Africa has already been discussed briefly at the beginning of this thesis. This section chapter was offered separately in order to provide a context for the thesis and because "... feminist theorizing (like any other knowledge) is a historically specific discourse, and not simply portable to a 'third-world' situation" (van Zyl, 1987, p. 2).

This chapter details some of the theoretical and everyday perspectives which are presented about the roles of and relationships between women and men in society.

The labels used for the perspectives outlined in sections 1 and 2 are not intended to be pejorative in any way, but are used because they are the most commonly used labels, and because they clearly indicate the basis of the perspective.

Conservative is usually used to refer to a preference for the old and established in the social and political (in its broadest sense) orders; and the conservative view of men and women holds that the status quo should be maintained (or even that some recent trends should be reversed). The liberal perspective supports a certain amount of change, usually related to the rights of minorities and other civil rights, and is generally understood to be reformist. While radical is often used in a derogatory (or complimentary) way to mean "over the top" or militant, it is used here to refer to those who are dissatisfied with the status quo and who desire basic social and political changes.

## 2. NON-FEMINIST VIEWPOINTS

### a) The Conservative Viewpoint

The basis of the conservative view of women is that while men and women are unequal, this does not mean that women are oppressed. It is believed that men are ordained by God as, or destined by biological nature to be, dominant over women; while women are similarly ordained as or destined to be subordinate to men.

This view involves an essentialist understanding of human nature: human beings possess "fundamentally innate and unchangeable capacities" (Jagger & Struhl, 1978, p. 158). The traditional division of labour, "according to which the woman is responsible for domestic work and child care" (Jagger & Struhl, 1978, p. 207) is said to be biologically normal. Women exist in order to be wives and mothers.

Jean Jacques Rousseau said:

The whole education of women ought to be relative to men. To please them, to be useful to them, to make themselves loved and honoured by them, to educate them when young, to care for them when grown, to counsel them, to console them, and to make life sweet and agreeable to them - these are the duties of women at all times and what should be taught them from their infancy (quoted in Morgan, 1970, p. 35).

Marabel Morgan says in The Total Woman (1975) that the ideal woman is one who "surrenders her life to her husband, reveres and worships him" (p. 96).

Women are, however, supposedly compensated for their subordination and lack of power. Pope Pius XII spoke of "the lofty

mission of the Christian woman and wife" and said that the gospel has "elevated her" to "the summit and the throne" "within the family" (Muller, 1958, quoted in Janssen-Jurreit, 1982, p. 82).

These views "act as ideological constraints; that is, they act to justify women's relative lack of power in society" (Birke, 1986, p. 2). Moreover, any attempts (by, for example, feminists) to change the relationship between men and women - except perhaps in certain cosmetic ways, such as equality of salary - are misguided and necessarily doomed to failure.

Both the Western idea of the nuclear family (husband, wife and children) and heterosexual sex within marriage are seen as "biologically given" (Jaggar and Struhl, 1978, p. 207). Moreover the sexual expressions of men and women are biologically determined: "biology dictates a sexually active and aggressive role for the man and defines the woman as sexually passive" (p. 262). Many recent sex manuals, including some parts of Master's & Johnson's (1975) work, do however, stress more equal relationships with both partners taking active roles in sex (Jackson, 1984).

Many lesbians also participate in acting out this dualism, with one partner taking the active male (butch) role, and the other taking the passive female (femme) role (see Chapter III 3a in this thesis for a brief discussion of butch/femme roles).

Within this perspective, lesbianism needs to be explained in ways which do not undermine the conservative, biologicistic and

essentialist view of women's nature and roles. This is done in a number of ways:

- a) lesbianism is seen as a "quirk of nature", a biological mishap for which neither the individual [nor society] can be held responsible (Birke, 1986).
- b) lesbianism is related to some "pathology", such as a "bad experience" in childhood or with men, for which neither the particular lesbian nor society in general can be held responsible (e.g. Chesser, 1964; Spock, 1971).
- c) lesbianism is seen as a "crime against nature" - unnatural behaviour for which the individual (but not society) should be severely punished.

A second consequence of the biological perspective is related to the direct connections which are supposed to exist between maleness and femaleness, masculinity and femininity, and active and passive roles in sexual relations (Lewontin, Rose & Kamin, 1984). Thus "masculinity is attributed to lesbians, for example, so research often hypothesises an underlying biology having male-like qualities" (Birke, 1986, p. 23). Some psychiatric research has therefore attempted to find biological sex-related explanations for male and female homosexuality, such as hormone levels in prenatal life (e.g. Money, 1984) and genetic factors (Heston & Sheilds, 1968; Kallman, 1952). None of this research has proved particularly convincing, especially the genetic studies.

In general, then, the conservative view perceives male domination, the subordination of women, heterosexual relationships, the dichotomous personal and economic roles of

women and men, and the nuclear family, as natural, normal, and unchangeable. Any deviations from this are explained in terms of personal deviance or abnormality.

Although a great deal of psychiatric and psychological research has supported a conservative view of lesbianism and fuelled conservative attitudes, there has also been, as Kitzinger (1987) notes, a shift to a gay affirmative perspective. This shift does, however, not seem to be as strong within psychiatry as within psychology.

In a review of all literature on homosexuality as variant or deviant lifestyle cited in the Index Medicus between 1974 and 1983, Schwanberg (1985) found that psychiatrists presented homosexuality as deviant more often than any of the other health science professions, despite the fact that homosexuality has not been classified as a mental illness by psychiatry since 1974 (Marmor & Green, 1978). She found that 47% of the psychiatric literature sample (compared to 9% of the psychology literature sample) presented negative images of homosexuality.

Examples of the negative images which Schwanberg (1985) referred to included: classifying homosexuality as an illness, for example, a neurosis (Gershman, 1983) or a more severe pathology (Socarides, 1979); suggesting possible causative factors such as "a deficiency in ego structure (Socarides, 1979, p. 425), "destructive family relationships" (Bieber & Bieber, 1979,

p. 419), or "a fear of heterosexuality" (Robinson, 1980, p. 427); and offering as treatment goals a shift to heterosexuality (e.g. Smith, 1980; Robinson, 1980).

On the other hand, 31% of the psychiatric literature sample presented positive images of homosexuality. Schwanberg (1985) lists a number of these, including finding that homosexuals were no different from heterosexuals (e.g. Green, 1982; Kirkpatrick, Smith & Roy, 1981) and that psychiatrists should assist gay clients in coping with their homosexuality (e.g. Conlin & Smith, 1982; Myers, 1982; Pillard, 1982).

Psychologists tended to present more positive images of homosexuals (53% of the sample) than psychiatrists (Schwanberg, 1985). She argues that negative images reflected the psychoanalytic-psychiatric view frequently presented by psychiatrists; and found that the positive literature dealt with numerous issues, such as critiques of previous research (e.g. Gonsiorek, 1982), ethical considerations in therapy (e.g. Money, 1977) and new forms of therapy (e.g. Coleman, 1982).

Schwanberg (1985) found that while images of homosexuality presented by psychiatrists and psychologists had become progressively less negative from 1974 to 1983, psychoanalysts had hardly changed their positions at all; continuing to present homosexuality as pathological (although a minority of analysts, such as Gilberg, 1978, did express positive attitudes).

Thus, there are strands within both psychiatry and psychology which support a conservative view of lesbianism (while others

support a more "gay-affirmative" view), and these conservative views both inform and are informed by conservative attitudes towards women and lesbianism.

#### b) The Independent Viewpoint

What I have termed the "independent" viewpoint is one which straddles the conservative and liberal or reform viewpoints. This perspective is both against discrimination against women (as understood from the liberal feminist view which will be discussed in the following section) and against feminism - the basic argument is that "we don't need women's liberation any more".

Anarina Strassionopoulos represents this viewpoint in its strongest (and most virulent) form. She sees the Women's Liberation Movement (feminism) as

one that mounts an attack on practically everything that women value today and introduces the language and sentiments of political confrontation into the area of personal relationships - whether or not it is dangerous, it is certainly offensive and it needs exploding [*sic*] (1973, p. 11).

While arguing strongly against liberation, which "attacks the very nature of women" (p. 12), she supports emancipation, by which she means combatting the "prejudice and social conventions that still impose on women a purely traditional role which conflicts with the changed economic and social conditions" (p. 12). Thus she would presumably want women to retain their "essential" feminine nature, while working if they want to. Moreover, she clearly retains the Western dichotomy between "the personal" and "the political" - and ne'er the twain shall meet.

She holds conflicting views on lesbianism. On the one hand, society must "recognize and accept" the rights of those who are unable or unwilling to fit into the commonly accepted male and female patterns of behaviour" (p. 15) and "be more tolerant of homosexuals of both sexes" (p. 153). On the other hand, she describes lesbians as women whose "inner confusion is often expressed in arrogance, a conspicuous exhibitionism, in an attempt to compensate for the femininity they have denied and the masculinity they have failed to attain" (p. 52).

This perspective then, is one which both supports some conservative attitudes towards women and desires some liberal changes, but which does not support feminism.

### 3. FEMINIST PERSPECTIVES

Many people - particularly those who oppose feminism - view feminism as a unitary theory or movement. Exactly the opposite is the case, as Jaggar points out:

The most recent resurgence of feminism occurred in the late 1960's with the rise of what came to be known [in some circles] as the women's liberation movement. This movement surpassed all earlier waves of feminism in the breadth of its concerns and the depth of its critiques. It was also far less unified than previous feminist movements, offering a multitude of analyses of women's oppression and a profusion of visions of women's liberation (1983, p. 4, emphases mine).

The only belief that feminists have in common is that women are oppressed and discriminated against, and the only vision they share is that they want this changed (van Zyl, 1987).

Three feminist perspectives will be outlined here: liberal, radical and socialist; and Marxist perspectives will be dealt with briefly.

#### a) Liberal Feminism

The liberal world-view is dominant in the West today: "Assumptions that are essentially liberal ... lie buried deep in the common social, political and economic attitudes of people in the West" (Arblaster, 1984, p. 6). It is therefore not surprising that liberal feminism is as popular as it is, and that liberal feminist ideas are becoming increasingly accepted as "reasonable". Many of the things that liberal feminists fought for in the past - such as the right to vote - are no longer part of the feminist "struggle". Many women who refuse to call themselves feminists (for whatever reason) quite openly support liberal feminist demands, such as equal pay for equal work and an end to negative discriminatory laws.

Within liberal feminism the emphasis is on equality of opportunity. The argument is that until everyone has had equal opportunities to develop their full potential it will not be possible to determine whether there are innate differences between women and men: until then, they should be treated as if they were equal (Jaggar and Struhl, 1978).

Male dominance, which "is rooted in irrational prejudice" (Jaggar, 1983, p. 147), has resulted in a lack of equal civil rights, educational opportunities and the like; i.e. in sexist discrimination, and sexist discrimination is the open expression

of women's oppression. Ending sexist discrimination - a process which involves rational argument and recourse to the law (when rational argument fails) - will therefore liberate women from unjust oppression (Jaggar & Struhl, 1978).

It can thus be argued that liberal feminism is essentially a civil rights movement which uses both rational argument and legal changes to achieve its ends.

The major liberal feminist view of lesbianism (other than disgust, fear etc. as non-politically-informed responses) can be deduced from basic liberal principles. "The metaphysical and ontological core of liberalism is individualism" (Arblaster, 1984, p. 15); this concept includes "assumptions about the naturalness and rightness of human diversity, and the desirability of allowing deviance and eccentricity to flourish" (pp. 7 - 8). Other important concepts are "freedom or liberty", "tolerance and privacy", and "reason or rationality" (p. 54).

Tolerance is the duty, on the part of the State, society or the individual, of allowing and not interfering with activities and beliefs which, although they may be disliked or even disapproved of, do not in themselves make any infringement on the equal rights of others to act and believe as they choose. (Arblaster, 1984, p. 66, emphasis his).

Liberal feminism should thus be tolerant "towards lesbianism and male homosexuality as long as these practices are carried out by consenting adults in privacy" (Jaggar and Struhl, 1978, p. 263). However, official liberal feminist tolerance of lesbianism has been marked over the decades by numerous "in-house" battles. While lesbians demanded their right to participate in and be

acknowledged by the movement, non-lesbians argued that their presence served to lessen the legitimacy of the movement in the eyes of "the public"; by which they presumably mean men, who they (as heterosexuals) do not wish to alienate completely. The presence of open lesbians within feminist circles made some feel that the accusation "feminists are just man-haters" [and therefore lesbians] might appear to "the public" to be true.

The demands of lesbians within the feminist movement seem to mirror the demands made by liberal feminists: feminists have "consistently over the ages ... demanded that prevailing [liberal] ideals be applied to women" (Jaggar, 1983, p. 23); so lesbians demanded that liberal feminist ideals should also apply to them.

It could be suggested that many lesbians would find liberal feminism comfortable and appropriate. "Equality of opportunity" is valuable for the majority of lesbians who have to support themselves. "Individualism", "freedom" and "tolerance" would provide them with the rights to live their lives as they choose, without fear of prosecution etc., and without the pressure towards public self-disclosure, which is often found in radical feminism.

Liberal feminism has come under a great deal of attack, basically for being a "sell-out". Jennings, for example, says that

... a 'feminist' has become a 'woman making it in a man's world while simultaneously retaining her femininity and preferring the company of men. In this distortion of feminism the emphasis is on getting a slice of the patriarchal pie, a kind of muted form of challenging sexism" (n.d., p. 77).

The argument against liberal feminism is thus that it does not challenge patriarchy, but remains within the limits of male approval.

Moreover, liberal feminism not only makes assumptions about the value of freedom of choice, but also about the existence of freedom:

Liberal feminists have made the word choice so attractive, as though all women were capable of acting as autonomous, self-determining beings .... as though our choices were made in a vacuum .... Humanism ignores the fact that our choices, such as they are, are made in the context of heteropatriarchy (Penelope, n.d., p. 23, emphasis hers).

The basis of liberal feminist demands is the desire for equality of opportunity, in every sphere, with men; and the end of discrimination, whether legal, social or personal.

#### b) Traditional Marxism

A detailed discussion of Marxism is beyond the scope of this thesis; however, some central points relevant to the issue of lesbianism will be discussed here.

Marxist thinking rejects the liberal notion of people ever having genuine equality of opportunity in a class-based society. It locates women's oppression in a particular system of social organisation (e.g. capitalism), and sees sexism as a secondary level of oppression - a symptom of class oppression. The roots of women's oppression lie in the family where the man controls the family's wealth - and therefore "owns" his wife (and

children). While there is no problem in exclusive emotional heterosexual pair-bonding, the problem lies in the economic system (Jaggar, 1983).

Jaggar (1983) points out that Marxism is fundamentally gender blind. It offers no convincing explanation for the sexual division of labour. Nor does it deal with the common experiences which all women share (even though these experiences "may be mediated by class, race and ethnicity" [Jaggar, 1983, p.77]). This "gender-blindness" systematically obscures women's oppression.

Marxist theory does not deal with sexuality to any extent, because issues such as sexuality and personal relationships are seen as "private" and thus not particularly significant. Marxist thinking seems to view procreation and heterosexual sexual relations as "natural" (i.e. biological) and thus does not question heterosexuality. Engels assumed that "natural" sexual relations were heterosexual (Jaggar, 1983), and in an early work, for example, Marx says "the relation of man to woman is the most natural relation of human being to human being" (Marx 1964, p.134, quoted in Jaggar, 1983, p. 69, emphasis Jaggar's). Informal reports from communist countries suggest that lesbian relationships are not condoned (cf. Voznesenskaya, 1986). Marxism is thus unlikely to provide a meaningful way for lesbians to understand their place as lesbians in the world.

### c) Radical Feminism

Radical feminism is central to this thesis for three reasons. Firstly, the researcher on whose work this is based is a radical lesbian feminist and her work is rooted in her feminism. Secondly, this research was started with an overtly radical feminist agenda in mind. Thirdly, radical feminism is the only branch of feminism which includes lesbianism as a central part of its perspective.

Radical feminism was "sparked by the special experiences of a relatively small group of predominantly white, middle-class, college-educated American [United States] women in the late 1960's" (Jaggar, 1983, p. 83) - largely those who got together in consciousness-raising groups. This has resulted in its emphasis on feelings and relationships - it is the only political theory which has its roots, explicitly and overtly, in personal experiences - and has also resulted in its rejection by many as a "bourgeois institution".

Radical feminists share the "conviction that the oppression of women [is] fundamental; that is to say, it [is] causally and conceptually irreducible to the oppression of any other group" (Jaggar, 1983, p. 12). There are a number of generally accepted strands to this belief (Jaggar & Struhl, 1978):

- 1) Women were the first oppressed group;
- 2) Women's oppression is the most widespread;
- 3) Women's oppression is the hardest to eradicate.

It is important at this point to note that radical feminism was described by Jaggar and Struhl as "the least developed and systematic of the theories" (1978, p. 71) and while it has developed a great deal in the last decade it is far from systematic. The development of a systematic theory is probably not on the radical feminist agenda, and while this is possibly one of its great strengths (as well as one of its greatest weaknesses) this does make a coherent, brief discussion of radical feminism exceptionally difficult.

Unlike the other feminist theories, radical feminism does not see the "public sphere" (work, laws etc.) to be the main arena of oppression - they argue that women are primarily oppressed in the "private sphere", in "sexual and procreative relations, in the home, in the sphere of life that the male culture defines as personal rather than political" (Jaggar, 1983, p. 271). Hence the radical feminist maxim: "The personal is political".

Marriage is seen as one of the primary institutions of oppression, because it sanctions and legalizes the oppression of women as wives and mothers (Jaggar, 1983). However, while marriage is clearly a social institution, the status of heterosexuality is less clear.

Heterosexuality is seen as fundamentally oppressive, because "all heterosexual relationships are corrupted by the imbalance of power between men and women" (Kelly, 1972, p. 473, quoted in Rohrbaugh, 1981). Andrea Dworkin (1987) has taken this idea a step further and has argued that heterosexual intercourse is - in

society to date - an act of power; that the oppression of women by men is, at present, built into the act of coitus, and that the act cannot be separated from this oppressive context.

The radical feminist analysis of women's oppression exposes the destructive quality of women's relations with men and shows how that destructiveness is rooted in the systematic coercive power that men have over women (Jaggar, 1983, p. 285).

Radical feminism sees male dominance as grounded in the control that men have over women's bodies - over "their sexual and procreative capacities" and this dominance can only be overcome by women reclaiming the right to "self-determination" (Jaggar, 1983, p. 147).

Unlike liberal feminism, which sees lesbianism as a "personal preference" or an "alternative, but to-be-tolerated lifestyle", radical feminism argues that "how we choose to define and explore our sexuality is a matter of extreme personal and political importance" (Jaggar & Struhl, 1978, p. 264). Given the view that marriage, the family and heterosexuality are all institutions for the oppression of women, there are a limited number of options open to radical feminists in terms of personal relationships: they can choose to live with the contradictions involved in being a radical heterosexual feminist; they can relate only to non-sexist men; they can choose to be celibate; or they can relate to women sexually as well as politically and emotionally.

Because lesbianism denies by its very nature that women need men, lesbianism is seen, not as an "alternative lifestyle", but as a fundamental and personal revolutionary act against patriarchy.

Charlotte Bunch writes:

Being a Lesbian means ending identification with, allegiance to, dependence on, and support of heterosexuality. It means ending your personal stake in the male world so that you join women, individually and collectively, in the struggle to end your oppression (1975, p. 36, quoted in Jaggar, 1983, p. 272).

Within this argument there are two major strands:

- 1) radical feminists, such as Adrienne Rich (1981), who define lesbianism as the whole continuum of bonding between women;
- 2) those who argue that this understates and obscures the sexual component of lesbian relations. "A purely 'political' definition of lesbianism [such as Rich's] obscures the fact, deeply threatening to male dominant society, that women are often interested in each other in a sexual way" (Jaggar, 1983, p. 273). In this sense, the very act of being a lesbian - whether or not one has a political consciousness about it - is a revolutionary act.

"Lesbianism is a threat to the ideological, political, personal and economic basis of male supremacy" (Bunch, 1975, p. 33, quoted in Jaggar, 1983, p. 273).

Not all radical feminists, however, are lesbians. There are a number of additional strands to radical feminism, which make heterosexual radical feminism possible (although not always fully acceptable to radical lesbian feminists). Many radical feminists describe it as "women-centered feminism" - such that their

primary political focus is on women. This is "characterized by a general celebration of womanhood" (Jaggar, 1983, p. 95).

In fact, much of radical feminism involves a form of inverted sexism, so that women are seen as innately better than and superior to men (Ruether, 1983). For example, some radical feminists stress "women's special closeness with nature [which] is believed to give women special ways of knowing and conceiving the world" (Jaggar, 1983, p. 95). Some believe that these ways contrast with "patriarchal ways of knowing" (p. 96).

Without necessarily accepting women's "special closeness with nature", many radical feminists (such as Dale Spender) have questioned institutions such as "Science", "Learning" and "Language", arguing that as they have been rooted in patriarchy and thus serve the interests of patriarchy, they are necessarily constructed through the eyes of male dominance (e.g. Spender, 1982, 1983). Male culture (i.e. the dominant culture) is associated with practices such as hierarchy, dominance and exploitation, and radical feminists (such as Mary Daly) are trying to define a new "womenculture" which is free of these practices (e.g. Daly, 1984). One could argue, of course, that they have set themselves an impossible task.

Rather than attempting to seize power from men, radical feminism is attempting to redefine and change power from something which is used to coerce, manipulate and exploit others, to something which is used to empower individuals and groups.

Radical feminism suffers from two major problems:

- 1) the lack of a coherent theory that explains why patriarchy, rape, war etc. exist. Radical feminism is involved in a process of consciousness raising and exploration rather than the development of coherent explanations and a clear political agenda. This provides it both with the possibility of success and the certainty of failure.
- 2) Radical feminism is fundamentally classist and racist. Firstly, does it make sense for South African radical feminists to be fighting for the abolition of marriage and the family as fundamentally oppressive institutions while "black" women fight for the basic right to live with their families? Moreover, radical feminism taken to its extreme involves separatism, and this means that working class and black (and white, middle-class heterosexual) women are excluded by their material and emotional connections with men. Working class and black women share bonds of oppression with men which many are not prepared to ignore. In reality, separatism is a practical possibility for very few women, except in the sense of limiting their contact with and support for men as much as possible (e.g. working in a women's cooperative).

Separatism can be understood as part of a process - as a political tactic - rather than as an end product. In this sense, it fulfils much the same function as Black Consciousness has: allowing oppressed people to develop power and pride as a group, before attempting to integrate with their oppressors as equals.

Radical feminism, then, is grounded in an understanding of women as sexual beings in society; and its aims are basic social and political changes.

#### d) Socialist Feminism

Like radical feminism, socialist feminism is neither unitary nor well-developed, although socialist feminist theory is becoming increasingly important (particularly in analyses of non-Western countries - see, for example, Hassim, Metelerkamp & Todes, 1987). There are a number of strands of socialist feminism, some of which would be better known as feminist socialism.

The socialist feminism discussed in this section is based on the analysis offered by Jaggar (1983) and Jaggar & Struhl (1978).

Western socialist feminists are developing a theory which attempts to incorporate the best values and insights of both radical feminism and Marxism, while overcoming their problems (Jaggar, 1983). So, while leaning heavily on the insights of radical feminism, it also considers "the effects of racism, classism, and imperialism on women's lives" (Jaggar, p. 388). Because socialist feminism involves a historical materialist analysis and thus deals with class issues, it rejects the notion that all women are (and have been) oppressed in the same ways (Jaggar & Struhl, 1978). For example, it is quite obvious that "white" women in South Africa experience their oppression (if they do) very differently from the way "black" women do.

Some socialist feminists argue (like radical feminists) that sexist oppression arose before and independently of class society, but they all agree that "sexism is at least as fundamental as economic [class] oppression" (Jaggar & Struhl, 1978, p. 93). Capitalism and sexism are seen to be mutually reinforcing.

One of the influences of radical feminism has been the stress that socialist feminism - unlike traditional Marxism - places on the family and "personal life" or the private domain (Jaggar & Struhl, 1978).

The contemporary nuclear family is seen to support capitalism in a number of ways: for example, women provide wage labourers (men) with sufficient time and support so that they can produce surplus value, and women remain at home as an army of cheap reserve labour (Jaggar, 1983).

Moreover, the family teaches and reinforces capitalist values like individualism and competitiveness, as well as being the place where individuals learn the gender roles and where the basis for women's oppression is laid (Jaggar & Struhl, 1978). (This is as much true for the extended family in many areas as it is for the nuclear family). Some socialist feminists thus urge "the elimination of the nuclear family ... as a social and sexual unit" (Jaggar & Struhl, p. 213), while others support changing the present family system.

Unlike radical feminists, who often perceive men as "the enemy" and say that they should be kept away from children, the socialist feminist agenda calls for men's equal participation in child rearing - both as a redistribution of labour and to change the way children are gendered through early socialization. This would also be affected by the abolition of compulsory heterosexuality, which is one of the assumptions under which children are socialized (Jaggar, 1983).

Taking its lead from radical feminism, socialist feminist theory considers sexuality to be a central issue. It argues, however, that an understanding of sexuality must consider the context of that sexuality - a male-dominated class society (Jaggar & Struhl, 1978). Full reproductive freedom - by which is meant freedom from compulsory heterosexuality, freedom from sexual slavery, and the freedom to be lesbian - is seen to require a transformation of the (capitalist) economic system (Jaggar, 1983). Unlike liberal feminists, who believe that we are free to choose the form that our sexuality takes, socialist feminists argue that sexual freedom is an illusion:

The problem of women's sexual alienation is not just that women are not free to express their sexual preferences; more fundamentally it is that women cannot discover what are their sexual preferences (Jaggar, 1983, p. 309).

To take these notions even further, some socialist feminists believe that male domination is so entrenched and pervasive that "loving sexual relationships with men are difficult, if not impossible" (Jaggar & Struhl, 1978, p. 265). Thus lesbianism is seen by some as a realistic and powerful choice.

However, socialist feminism asserts that neither men nor capitalism are the enemy, but sees "the various systems of oppression as connected inseparably with each other" (Jaggar, 1983, p. 331), so that ending male dominance requires a transformation of the material basis of society - though that alone will not necessarily end male dominance.

Both liberal and radical feminism tend towards an essentialist understanding of human nature, as something which is, at a fundamental level, rooted in biology. One of socialist feminism's distinctive contributions to feminist thought is the "recognition that the differences between women and men are not pre-social givens, but rather are socially constructed and therefore socially alterable" (Jaggar, 1983, pp. 303-304), and that sexuality is historically determined and changing (Jaggar).

Unlike some radical feminists who see separatism as an end in itself, socialist feminists see the need for separate women's organizations as a tactic to allow women to fight male privilege and power and to empower themselves. As a tactic, it is temporary, and does not necessarily involve complete separation from men (Jaggar, 1983).

Socialist and radical feminists (cf. Griffin, 1982) share a concern for ecology and conservation. However, radical feminists' concern is more "spiritual" and "communal" than socialist feminists' pragmatic belief in the necessary interdependence of humans and non-human nature (Jaggar, 1983).

The end result of the socialist feminist struggle would be a total transformation of society:

Socialist feminism shows that to reconstruct reality from the standpoint of women requires a far more total transformation of our society and of ourselves than is dreamt of by a masculinist philosophy [e.g. Marxism] (Jaggar, 1983, p. 389).

Socialist feminism is the most wide-ranging of the feminist perspectives, including the insights of radical feminism and traditional Marxism and socialism. Its particular contribution is the belief that humans (including their personalities and identities) and society are socially constructed. Its interests are as diverse as language, sexuality and ecology, and its demands involve a complete reconstruction of society.

It is clear from this chapter that there are numerous perspectives which the participants in this research could have about "women, men and society", were they to hold theoretically coherent views. As this research does not assume that they do, they are in fact free to hold any number of views which may or may not be explicable in terms of the perspectives presented here. However, it is fair to assume that on the basis of their own experiences, they are unlikely to hold extremely conservative views about women.

## CHAPTER V

### METHOD

#### 1. A BRIEF INTRODUCTION TO Q METHODOLOGY

Thomson (1935, in Brown, 1980) suggested using "q" to refer to his new idea about correlations between persons, as opposed to "r" which referred to the more conventional (then, as now) correlations between traits and the like. He did not pursue this; but William Stephenson, who arrived at the idea independently, developed Q methodology into a rigorous method for investigating human subjectivity (e.g. Stephenson, 1935, 1936). Unlike R methodology, which usually attempts to remove the subject from its investigation, Q methodology actively involves the subject and her/his personal perspective on some issue. Using the Q-sample, the individual provides a "picture" of her/his point of view, and factor analysis is then used to establish the groups of "persons bearing family resemblances in terms of subjectively shared viewpoints" (Brown, 1980, p. 6).

While discussions in the rest of this chapter will provide a clearer understanding of the principles and process of Q methodology, a brief description of the Q-sorting technique may clarify Q a little.

Typically, Q involves the development of a sample of statements of opinion, pictures or some other items (known as the Q-sample) which in some way fully represents the topic under consideration. The development of the Q-sample is a fairly complex process,

requiring information, understanding and intuition. Subjects are then asked to rank order these items according to an appropriate criterion (e.g. from "most like me" to "least like me" or "I agree with these opinions" to "I disagree with these opinions"). In rank-ordering the items, subjects are usually asked to force the ranking into a quasi-normal distribution, in order to facilitate statistical analysis (Kerlinger, 1973). This rank-ordering is known as the Q-sort. The Q-sorts of all the subjects are then factor analysed, with the items/statements being treated as the sample, while the subjects are dealt with as variables. Factors are drawn out and factor scores for each item within each factor are calculated. The factors indicate groups (or what Brown, 1980, would call "types") of people whose Q-sorts are similar and who therefore share "attitudes, perspectives, identities, or whatever" (Kitzinger, 1986, p. 155). The factor scores indicate the relative importance of the items within each factor; and the interpretation and explanation of the factors involves referring to the subjects' original Q-sort and the relevant factor scores for each item. Reference is then made to theoretical perspectives and previous research in order to analyze the subjective perspectives represented by the Q-sorts.

The following section will explain the reason for the selection of Q for this research; and simultaneously explain the basic principles underlying Q (e.g. subjectivity) in more depth.

## 2. RATIONALE FOR AND ADVANTAGES OF SELECTING Q METHODOLOGY

There were a number of requirements which the methodology chosen for this research had to be able to fulfil.

Firstly, and most importantly, the methodology had to enable the researcher to explore the contents of lesbian identities i.e. it had to allow the participants to express their own subjective accounts of their identities as lesbian women. As has already been mentioned, Q is specifically suited for research into human subjectivity - this is its primary aim.

Within, Q, subjectivity is taken to mean - fairly simply - an individual's "own point of view" (Brown, 1980, p. 46) on some issue or another. This subjectivity is therefore "always anchored in self-reference, that is, the person's 'internal' frame of reference" (McKeown & Thomas, 1988, p. 12).

Moreover, it was necessary that the methodology should not require the assumption of "essential" rather than constructed subjectivities (in this case, identities). The Q understanding of subjectivity "does not serve to reify the self in any metaphysical or phenomenological sense" (McKeown & Thomas, 1988, p. 12). On the contrary, the subjectivity which Q explores is "pure behaviour" (Brown, 1980, p. 46). McKeown and Thomas explain it as follows:

Self-referent subjectivity ... is at issue anytime an individual remarks, 'It seems to me ...' or 'In my opinion ...'. In speaking thus, an individual is saying something meaningful about personal experience, and what Q methodology provides is a systematic means to examine and reach understandings about such experience (1988, p. 12).

Q methodology allows the individual to speak for herself or himself; to present her or his "own point of view" (Brown, 1980, p. 46). Q is thus particularly appropriate for research which is attempting to understand what women mean when they say "I am a lesbian"; to explore the women's subjective accounts about the meaning of their sense of themselves as lesbians.

Secondly, the methodology needed to be appropriate for exploratory research which does not have a priori expectations about what is to be found, while also permitting the testing of theoretical speculation about "types" of lesbian identities; it must thus allow for the free emergence of both expected and totally unexpected results.

Kerlinger (1973) argues that Q methodology is particularly useful as a heuristic device in that new ideas and hypotheses can be generated in areas such as attitudinal studies. This method could also facilitate a range of hermeneutic studies, e.g. analyses of discourses (Levett, 1989).

Brown (1980) points out that one of the most important advantages of Q is that it "permits the emergence of unanticipated behaviour" (p. 31). Traditional methodologies are based largely on "operational definitions". A concept is developed, and an

operational definition is used to define the concept. One of the disadvantages of methodological procedures that measure psychological constructs is that the researcher has to return to the original concepts to explain the results. There is thus little room to find new and unexpected information. An operant approach (e.g. Q) "proceeds in the reverse order; a phenomenon is observed and a concept is attached to it" (Brown, 1980, p. 5); the phenomenon is then the operational definition of the concept. In the particular case of Q methodology, no definition of the factors or groupings to be found is decided upon beforehand - the operational definition (and even the name) of each factor is dependent upon the actual Q-sorts completed by the participants whose Q-sorts group together to form and define the factor (McKeown & Thomas, 1988).

At the same time, it is possible that these factors may match existing theoretical categories (e.g. "radical feminist"), which would then validate these categories.

In addition, unlike traditional scales which usually presuppose some form of linearity or opposition between concepts ("sick, but not sorry" lesbian versus "Sorry, but not sick" lesbian, or "radical feminist" versus "conservative woman") thus limiting the individual's possible responses, Q allows the subject to be contradictory, confused, or anything she or he chooses to be. Unlike most methodologies which cannot tolerate ambiguities and contradictions or which then mask these (e.g. when response scores are totalled), Q not only tolerates ambiguity, contradiction and confusion, but retains them. The statistical

analysis used in Q utilizes the full range of the individual's scores, and the individual's whole point of view is dealt with when the Q-sorts are used to interpret and analyse the factors which emerge from the data. Thus it is not necessary to assume - perhaps falsely - that individuals hold unitary, unambiguous and uncontradictory identities. This means that factors or types of identity which are not predicted by theories based on linearity or opposition (as many are) are free to emerge. This is particularly valuable for the exploration of identities or understandings of "women, men and society" (feminism) held by ordinary women rather than by theoreticians.

There are of course methodologies which are even more open-ended than Q: e.g. the interview, or the open-ended questionnaire. The major problem with methodologies of this kind is that it is very difficult to cope with the resulting data. Q, on the other hand, enables the researcher to carry out an orderly, efficient and comparatively painless analysis (compare the resorting of Q-sort results from forty participants with the transcription and content analysis of forty interviews). In this particular piece of research it was decided to include as wide a range of lesbians from far-reaching locations (within South Africa) as possible. Lack of funds precluded the possibility of face-to-face interviews with subjects; and it appears that subjects frequently find long questionnaires tedious and boring, often leading to a very low response rate. Kerlinger (1973) reports that in his experience most subjects found completing Q-sort to be interesting and challenging. Q methodology was thus also chosen

in the hopes that the response rate for the Q-sorts would be higher than that usually found for postal surveys.

Thirdly, the methodology needed to fulfil the criteria for feminist research: in which the participants are the "subjects" rather than the "objects" of the research; and in which the participant's own perspectives and opinions are taken seriously (Bart, 1984; Currie & Kazi, 1987). Kitzinger states that:

The theoretical basis on which Q methodology is founded relies on the axiom that researchers should acknowledge and present the reality constructions of different women and men without prejudging or discrediting them, and without insisting on the superior (more 'objective') status of the researcher's own construction of reality (1986, p. 153).

Q is thus clearly particularly suited for research within a feminist framework.

In addition, one of the suggested foundations of feminist research is that it is carried out not only on, but for women (Currie & Kazi, 1987), by contributing "to women's liberation through producing knowledge that can be used by women themselves" (Acker, Barry & Esseveld, 1983, p. 425).

The process of completing a Q-sort is one which involves careful introspection and which is, if properly done, thought-provoking and therefore partially consciousness-raising. Thus, not only does the researcher learn something about the participants, but the participants learn something about themselves. The individuals taking part in the research are thus truly "participants" rather than just "subjects".

Fourthly, the principle of contextuality is of importance within Q, and is relevant to this research. The contextual principle means that items within the Q-sort are not seen in isolation: "The meaning of any detail depends upon its relation to the whole context of which it is part" (Lasswell, 1948, p 218, quoted in Brown, 1980, p. 46). As is discussed elsewhere in this thesis, certain feminist theories, for example, share statements, the full meaning of which is dependent upon the context of these statements. For example, both radical feminist and conservative theories hold that women are more nurturant and closer to nature than men. The meaning and implications of this belief are related to the rest of the relevant theories. Similarly, two woman may agree with the same statement; yet mean different things by it. Because the full Q-sort is analysed in the last stages of Q methodology, the context of these statements is preserved; and the different meanings are thus not confounded.

Finally, Q methodology is particularly appropriate for research on the lesbian/gay communities. As will be discussed later, the sample size for Q need not be large - this is important in a situation where the population is not easily accessible, as is the case with lesbian women. Moreover, because the statements used in a Q-sort are frequently taken from those made by ordinary individuals (Brown, 1980), "Q methodology provides the means for incorporating the community's own conceptualizations, language and expression into the research project" (Kitzinger & Stainton Rogers, 1985, p. 169); thus validating the lives and experiences of lesbian women by allowing them to speak for themselves.

In conclusion, Q methodology was selected because it allowed for the clear and orderly, yet open-ended, exploration of subjective accounts of lesbian identities; within a framework appropriate for feminist research into the lesbian community; and without oversimplifying, decontextualizing, or invalidating the participants' responses and opinions. It is also potentially valuable for both the researcher and the participants.

### 3. THE Q-SAMPLES

Prior to discussing the selection of the Q-samples for this research, it is necessary to deal with the general principles which underly Q-sample development.

#### a) Theoretical Issues

"The selection of statements or other stimuli for inclusion in the Q-sample is of utmost importance but remains more an art than a science ..." (Brown, 1980, p. 186). The Q-sample is selected from a population of stimuli - the "concourse" (Stephenson, 1974, in Brown) or the Q population - relevant to the topic under research.

Brown (1980) points out that it is difficult or even impossible to establish the boundaries of a population of statements:

"Persons are in (hence contained by boundaries), whereas comments are about (hence unbounded)" (p. 187). The selection of the Q population will differ according to the topic under research and theoretical considerations about the topic (some topics will have

clearer boundaries than others, such as identity); and the basis of the selection will rest ultimately on the researcher's familiarity with the topic and her/his particular interests and biases.

It is the researcher's responsibility to indicate the rationale and theoretical base of her/his Q population. The boundaries of the Q population will determine the boundaries (and limitations) of the possible findings (factors).

McKeown and Thomas (1988) distinguish between samples based on 'naturalistic' and 'ready-made' sources. Naturalistic samples are based on actual, "real-world" communications from the research participants. For example, items can be taken from interviews, written records (e.g. from questionnaires), or public material such as letters to the editor. Ready-made Q-samples are developed from sources unrelated to the participants; e.g. a series of cartoons, or a published theory. Quasi-naturalistic Q-samples are based on "real-word" communications external to the study; for example, interviews with American lesbians used to develop a Q-sample to be used with South African lesbians. The hybrid type of Q-sample is one which uses a combination of the above types of sample sources.

Brown (1980) points out that "it would be unhandy, and hardly necessary, to administer an entire Q population which might consist of several hundred statements, or even thousands" (p. 187). It is thus necessary to select a sample of statements which reflects the main concerns/issues of the population. The

major issue in the selection of the Q-sample is to ensure that the sample chosen is representative of the Q population. Representativeness in Q is achieved by applying the principles of variance design "in which the statement population is modelled or conceptualised theoretically" (Brown, 1988, p. 188).

McKeown and Owen (1988) distinguish between "structured" and "unstructured" Q-sample designs (or ways of modelling/ conceptualizing the population).

Structured Q-samples are composed systematically: deductive designs are "based on a priori hypothetical or theoretical considerations" (McKeown and Thomas, 1988, p. 28) while inductive designs are based on categories which are emergent from the Q population. In general, structured Q-samples "promote theory testing by incorporating hypothetical considerations into the sample" (p. 28). Factorial design principles - clearly discussed by McKeown and Thomas (1988, pp. 28 - 29) - are usually used to select Q-sample items for a structured sample.

In an unstructured Q-sample, "items presumed to be relevant to the topic at hand are chosen without undue effort made to ensure coverage of all possible sub-issues" (McKeown and Thomas, 1988, p. 28). While this - if well done - will provide a "reasonably accurate 'survey' of positions taken or likely to be taken on a given issue" (p. 28), there is the possibility of biased and unrepresentative sampling which will obviously affect the final Q-sample and, therefore, the factors found. However, some issues or topics do not easily lend themselves to structured sampling

and, in these cases, it is necessary to utilize the unstructured method - with care.

Whichever of the approaches described above are used, they will bring "to light different aspects of the same items" (Brown, 1980, p. 189).

The structuring of Q-samples . . . , permits the investigator to compose a set of stimuli which is theoretically important . . . . The structure of a Q-sample is useful primarily as a way to be explicit about one's theoretical position and as a way to ensure comprehensiveness in the final collection of statements - i.e., to ensure a stimulus situation that is as representative as possible of the main effects at issue (Brown, 1980, pp. 54 - 55).

It must be remembered that while the researcher may structure the way in which the sample of statements is chosen, the methodology of Q and factor analysis is such that the results may produce findings entirely different from that which the researcher expected. In addition, it has been found that different ways of selecting the sample do not make a great deal of difference to the factors drawn from the data (Brown, 1980), as long as the researcher has tried to select as representative a sample as possible.

Moreover, Brown points out that the structure behind statement selection "in no way obtrudes on a person's rendering of [her or] his viewpoint, any more than the theory of relativity influences the speed of light" (1980, p. 39). The participant's responses do not have to conform to the same logic as that used for sample selection.

In summary, the process of selecting a Q-sample from the Q population or "concourse" should result in a heterogeneous selection of statements which are as broadly representative as possible of the issue or topic under research, and which does not reduce or oversimplify the issue/topic, but which attempts to approach "the complexity of the phenomenon under investigation" (Brown, 1980).

In terms of individual items, Brown (1980) suggests that no attempt should be made to remove everyday ambiguities or informal language usage. He also suggests that each item should not contain two or more ideas which are very different or obviously contradictory. For example, McKeown and Thomas (1988) used fairly lengthy statements when illustrating Q-samples. This may become problematic when the statements contain more than one idea. One such statement was:

Homosexuality is a sin and homosexual teachers will destroy the American family. The American way of life will disappear if they continue to teach our young (p. 19).

All radical gay activists would probably disagree that homosexuality is a sin, and some would whole-heartedly support the end of "the American way of life". Such individuals would then have difficulty placing the above statement in a Q-sort. It is thus usually more effective to include a single idea in each item, and to allow the participant to draw the ideas together herself when sorting the Q-sample.

## b) Selecting the Q-samples

The way in which the two Q-samples used in this research (Q-sample 1: Lesbian Identities and Q-sample 2: Women, Men and Society) were selected, is described in this section.

### Q Sample 1: Lesbian Identities

The Q population for this sample was selected from the following sources:

- a) statements taken from letters sent to me by participants in response to requests for participants;
- b) statements taken from answers to the last question on the questionnaire they were asked to complete: "How would you describe yourself?" and "Beskryf kortliks hoe jy jouself sien".
- c) Kitzinger's lesbian identity Q-sample (1987, pp. 94-95);
- d) non-fictional accounts of lesbianism (Baetz, 1980a; Lewis, 1979);
- e) fictional accounts of lesbianism (Brown, 1973; Covina & Galana, 1975);
- f) my own knowledge of lesbian literature and theory.

The Q population for Q-sample 1 consisted of approximately 310 statements, from which 65 were selected for the Q-sample. Because of the lack of boundaries for the concept of lesbian identities (as discussed in Chapter II), and the very broad definition of "lesbian identity" chosen for this research, devising this first Q-sample was particularly difficult. It illustrates even more clearly than the second Q-sample does that

"the selection of statements ... remains more an art than a science" (Brown, 1980, p. 186). This Q-sample could be categorized as "hybrid", "unstructured", according to McKeown & Thomas's (1988) categories.

The first step was to select statements from all the sources mentioned above (and particularly from participants' letters and questionnaires) which were considered potentially related to a broad understanding of lesbian identities.

All these statements were then sorted into emergent categories (see below), and duplicate statements were discarded. What followed was a lengthy process over several weeks of sorting, resorting and careful consideration.

Although both lesbianism and lesbian identities are understood by this researcher to be socially constructed categories, it was obviously not assumed that participants would hold the same view. Statements were thus selected to represent a broad spectrum of "culturally available meanings" (Weigert et al., 1986), including various common theories about the "causes" of lesbianism (biological, familial, etc.).

Certain categories were selected as obviously important (e.g. "origins": ideas about causes; and "sexuality": the place and importance of sexual relationships), and a selection of statements were chosen from these. Questions about social identity were asked: e.g. does the participant perceive herself as belonging primarily to the groups "women", "gay people", or

"lesbians"? Issues of sexual and social relationships with others were examined, as well as her perception of her place in society and society's view of her. The question of "value" was addressed: does she see being a lesbian as a positive or negative experience? Questions were asked about "personal identity": does she have an "inner awareness" of "self-as-lesbian"? Other issues were also addressed, e.g. religion, role-playing and feminism.

Within each emergent category, duplicate statements were discarded or the two combined, and the most significant statements selected (obviously a subjective decision). Some statements which should perhaps have been retained were discarded because the number of items for Q-sorting should not be many more than sixty.

The emergent categories which were retained are listed below:

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**TABLE 1 : Q-SAMPLE 1: EMERGENT CATEGORIES**

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Men - relationships with and attitudes towards  
 Heterosexual women - attitudes towards  
 Gender identity - importance  
 Role-playing  
 Bonds - with different groups  
 Discrimination - perception and experience of in society  
 Origins  
 Sexuality - importance and enjoyment of  
 Lesbianism - value and salience and fixedness  
 Self-esteem  
 Looks - importance  
 Religion.

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Finally, the Q-sample was carefully checked to see whether all the accounts presented in Chapter III could potentially emerge

from the Q-sorts. Five additional statements were selected to ensure that this would be possible.

Three lesbian friends then completed the Q-sorts (as described in section b below) and on the basis of their comments, ambiguous, badly worded or obscure statements were revised so that each statement should be as clear and straight-forward as possible. The final Q-sample is listed in TABLE 2 below.

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TABLE 2 : Q-SAMPLE 1: LESBIAN IDENTITIES

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1. I would like to be a man
2. I'm not comfortable with myself as a sexual person
3. In my experience, society generally does not discriminate against gay women
4. I enjoy the masculine sides of myself
5. Something in my childhood caused me to become gay
6. I believe I was born gay
7. I will never change my mind about being gay
8. I feel that it's important to be open about being gay
9. I am happy being gay
10. I don't like being labelled as gay
11. I chose to become gay
12. For me, being gay is no different from leading a straight life
13. Being gay gives me a sense of freedom
14. I usually get on well with men
15. It feels totally natural to love women
16. Being gay is not one of the most important things about me
17. I feel much more secure about my sexuality when I'm involved with someone
18. My god accepts me the way I am
19. I find masculine bodies rather repulsive
20. Trying to look attractive is important to me
21. Sex with a man just never felt right
22. Gay men and women have nothing in common except that they choose same-sex partners
23. Being gay makes me feel strong
24. Being gay is about committing myself to women
25. Being a woman is very important to me
26. I often feel that I am leading a double life
27. In my experience, men are generally sexually boring
28. As far as I'm concerned, relationships with men aren't emotionally satisfying

29. On the whole, I have been treated fairly by people who know that I'm gay
  30. On the whole, I like myself
  31. Even if I never had sex with a woman, I would still be gay.
  32. Even if I had enjoyable sex with a man now, I would still be gay
  33. My family and friends are more important to me than gay women as a group
  34. Being gay has helped me to grow as a person
  35. Emotional relationships with women are more important to me than sexual relationships
  36. My relationship with my father helps explain why I am gay
  37. My relationship with my mother helps explain why I am gay
  38. I feel as if I don't really belong to the rest of society
  39. Being religious is important to me
  40. I am bisexual rather than gay
  41. Feminism played an important part in my becoming gay
  42. I don't think that I look gay
  43. Heterosexual women can't become gay
  44. In my community, being a gay woman is totally taboo
  45. I could be heterosexual if I wanted to
  46. I find being gay difficult to come to terms with
  47. I would like to be heterosexual
  48. There are times when I feel that being gay is unnatural
  49. I became gay because men treat women so unfairly
  50. The word "lesbian" makes me feel uncomfortable
  51. I feel uncomfortable in the company of most men
  52. Being gay is something that one does, rather than something one is
  53. Basically, I dislike men
  54. I feel that it's important to know whether one is butch or femme
  55. I became gay when I fell in love with a woman
  56. The sexual part of being gay is very important to me
  57. I have enjoyed sex with men
  58. On the whole, I feel closer to gay men than to straight women
  59. I have felt better about my body since I became gay
  60. I think I would have been happier if I were not gay
  61. Somewhere deep inside me, I know that I am gay
  62. I feel most relaxed and comfortable with just women around me
  63. When I meet a new gay woman, I immediately feel that she is one of "us"
  64. When I realised that I was gay, it was as if I had "found myself"
  65. I really enjoy making love with a woman
-

### Q-sample 2 : Women, men and society

The second Q-sample was designed to tap participants' understanding of the roles of, and relationships within, "women, men and society", and where they saw themselves fitting into the world as (lesbian) women. It was therefore not assumed that participants' beliefs would fit into existing, generally-accepted categories. This Q-sample also offered the opportunity to test these categories against the beliefs held by ordinary women: do feminist theories represent real belief-systems or are they only theoretical formulations?

The population of statements were selected from the feminist theories and non-feminist perspectives discussed in Chapter IV. These theories then formed the "theoretically based categories" used for final selection of the Q-sample. They are listed below:

---

**TABLE 3 : Q-SAMPLE 2: THEORETICALLY-BASED CATEGORIES**

---

Traditional  
 Independent  
 Liberal feminism  
 Marxist feminism  
 Socialist feminism  
 Radical feminism  
 Lesbian feminism

---

The statements which were selected were those which were felt to be particularly representative of, and important in, each theoretical category. The Q population selected from these categories consisted of 268 statements.

On the basis of the Q population, 23 emergent categories were selected as representative of the broad spectrum of important ideas. These are listed below:

---

**TABLE 4 : CATEGORIES EMERGENT FROM THE POPULATION**

---

Women's roles  
 Women's nature  
 Children  
 Men and women  
 Men's nature  
 Gender differences  
 Marriage and the family  
 Men and children  
 Feminism  
 Equality of the sexes  
 Sexuality  
 Women and society  
 Men and sexism  
 Organising  
 Division of labour  
 Racism  
 Ecology  
 Women's oppression  
 Society  
 Economics  
 Men: the "enemy"  
 Violence  
 South Africa's liberation struggle.

---

A cell-structure was then used to select the final Q-sample. Theoretical categories formed the rows, and emergent categories the columns; and statements were placed in the appropriate cells. For example "A women's most important roles are as wife and mother" would be placed in 'conservative' row and 'women's roles' column.

In most cases, one statement was selected from each cell. There were, however, exceptions: in many instances the theory had nothing significant to say about a particular issue; in some

instances different theories shared the same idea about an issue (in which case only one statement would be selected); and a small number of cells included statements which were significantly different from each other (in which case more than one statement was selected from the cell).

After a great deal of revision, thought and resorting, 61 statements were selected for the final Q-sample. The statements are listed in TABLE 5 below.

---

TABLE 5 : Q-SAMPLE 2: WOMEN, MEN AND SOCIETY

---

1. A woman's most important roles are as wife and mother
2. It's important for a woman to be feminine
3. Women are naturally warm and caring
4. Men are naturally dominant
5. We need to get rid of the differences between women and men
6. The family as we know it needs to be changed
7. Men should share equally in the work of bringing up children
8. Feminists are afraid of men
9. Women need to strengthen and empower themselves
10. Women should be equal to men
11. There should be laws prohibiting discrimination against women
12. Our sexual desires are biologically natural
13. A woman can't really be fulfilled without children
14. Heterosexuality is forced upon women
15. Heterosexual relationships always involve power struggles
16. We need more women politicians
17. Although we see sexual relationships as private, they are also public issues
18. Men who struggle actively against sexism deserve a place in the women's movement
19. Women should form their own organisations, from which men are excluded
20. Women need to organise around women's rights
21. We must eliminate the divisions between "women's work" and "men's work"
22. Racism is basically to do with male dominance
23. All women share common experiences ~~because~~ they are women

24. Men are our enemy
  25. Women should have as little to do with men as possible
  26. Feminism is essentially a "white" movement
  27. No-one will be truly free until women are free
  28. Men are destroying the world
  29. A commitment to feminine values (e.g warmth and caring) is needed to save the world
  30. The whole of society needs to be transformed
  31. Women are naturally passive
  32. Women are closer to nature than men are
  33. Women must be free to choose whether or not to have children
  34. Men and women are meant to be partners in life
  35. Men are naturally aggressive
  36. The differences between men and women have very little to do with biology
  37. Men and women are very different from each other
  38. Marriage encourages commitment and stability in relationships
  39. The family should be abolished
  40. Feminists really want to be men
  41. We don't need women's liberation or feminism any more
  42. Any woman who wants to be equal to man can be equal
  43. We should not have any laws that discriminate against women
  44. Women have a right to equal pay for equal work
  45. Women have been discriminated against differently at different times
  46. Women are usually seen in terms of their sexual relationships with men
  47. Lesbianism is a logical choice for feminists
  48. Women must become more involved in main-stream society
  49. Women's position in society supports the economic system
  50. Men are also hurt by sexism
  51. Women need to work together with other people who are discriminated against (e.g. working-class men)
  52. Every society divides work along sex lines ("women's work" and "men's work")
  53. We need to struggle actively against racism
  54. All women are oppressed, no matter who they are
  55. Men are only "the enemy" because of the way society works - not because they are men
  56. Male domination is a universal fact
  57. Women live under the continual threat of violence from men
  58. Women will manage to change society
  59. War of all kinds must be totally abolished
  60. We need to see the world as a whole, living unit
  61. Feminism takes energy away from the liberation struggle in South Africa
-

### c) Translating the Q-samples

Because of the need to expand the boundaries of research on lesbianism in South Africa, it was felt to be important not to limit the research to English-speaking lesbians. It was thus decided to provide translations of correspondence, the questionnaire, and the Q-sample.

A decision had to be made about in which languages to provide translations. Although it would obviously have been preferable to have provided correspondence etc. in a number of the major languages in South Africa (e.g. Sotho, Zulu, Xhosa, Afrikaans), it became clear that translating English into another Germanic language, such as Afrikaans, and translating into an African language would present vastly different levels of difficulty.

Jennings (1988) distinguishes between languages which are translatable and languages which are not translatable from the original language (in this case, English). He argues that these fall on a continuum, with the difficulty of translation serving as a measure of their place on that continuum.

Given the close relationship between English and Afrikaans cultures and the similarities between the two languages (both being of Germanic origin), the researcher's own familiarity with both languages, and the availability of good translators, it was decided to translate everything into Afrikaans. This proved to be fairly straightforward.

Drennan (1988), who analysed the translation of a depression inventory, found that translations - particularly of more abstract concepts - from English to Xhosa are extremely difficult. This contention is supported by Jennings (1988). For example, Drennan found that it was nearly impossible to translate the term "sex" without locating it within a social context.

A distinction can be drawn between linguistic and conceptual equivalence between terms in different languages (Drennan, 1988), and although some English concepts can be "translated" conceptually into Xhosa - by providing interpretations (Jennings, 1988) - this is not precise enough for the very close translation required for Q-samples which are to be analysed together. It was therefore decided not to attempt to provide translations into any African languages.

The translation went through two stages. The first was a direct translation into Afrikaans, done by a bilingual journalist. This translation was then discussed by the researcher, the translator and an Afrikaans-speaking friend. In the second stage, the Afrikaans statements were translated back into English by a sub-editor who had worked on an English-Afrikaans/Afrikaans-English dictionary. Because of her experience she was able to focus on a number of possible ambiguities and problems. Finally, an Afrikaans-speaking woman assisted with the remaining problems and provided colloquialisms where formal Afrikaans was not appropriate.

Back-translating is often used (Brislin, 1986, in Drennan, 1988) because it allows "a process of decentring [sic] where neither language is the authority in mediating between the two realities" (Drennan, p. 14) in that the back-translation is used to modify both the original and target translations.

Although it was intended to carry out the process of mediation in this research, the difficulties involved in finding a good back-translator meant that the English Q-samples had to be finalized before the Afrikaans back-translation was completed.

However, when the back-translation was carried out it was found that the first Afrikaans translation was fairly accurate with 58 out of 65 statements in Q-sample 1 and 54 out of 61 in Q-sample 2 translating back into statements identical with, or extremely close to, the original English (also see Appendix A).

One unavoidable problem involved the Afrikaans words "vrou" and "vroulik". "Vrou" translates into English as "woman", "female" (noun), and "wife", and "vroulik" translates as "womanly", "female" (adjective), "feminine" and "wifely". This means that differences between, for example, "female" and "feminine" are lost in Afrikaans. The same holds true for "man" and "manlik". The term "vrou" was used to refer to "woman"; and in the only instance [Q-sample 2, statement 1] where "wife" is used, "[getroude]" was placed as a qualifier before "vrou" in order to avoid any ambiguities. Other translation decisions are listed in Appendix A.

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**TABLE 6 : Q-SAMPLE 1: IDENTITEIT**


---

1. Ek wil graag 'n man wees
2. Ek is nie gemaklik met myself as 'n seksuele persoon nie
3. Volgens my ondervinding, word daar nie oor die algemeen teen gay vroue gediskrimineer nie
4. Ek geniet die manlike kant van my mens-wees
5. Iets in my kinderjare was die oorsaak dat ek gay geword het
6. Ek glo dat ek gay gebore is
7. Ek sal nooit my siening oor my "gayness" verander nie
8. Ek voel dat dit is belangrik om openlik te wees oor die feit dat ek gay is
9. Ek is gelukkig met die feit dat ek gay is
10. Ek hou nie daarvan om geklassifiseer te word as gay nie
11. Ek het gekies om gay te wees
12. Vir my is om gay te wees, glad nie anders as om 'n "straight" lewe te voer nie
13. Om gay te wees gee my 'n gevoel van vryheid
14. Ek kom gewoonlik goed klaar met mans
15. Dit voel heeltemal natuurlik om vrouens lief te hê
16. Om gay te wees is nie een van my belangrikste eienskappe nie
17. Ek voel meer seker oor my seksualiteit as ek betrokke is met iemand
18. My god aanvaar my vir dit wat ek is
19. Ek vind manlike liggame afstootlik
20. Om aantreklik te probeer lyk is belangrik vir my
21. Seks met 'n man het net nog nooit reg gevoel nie
22. Gay mans en vroue het niks in gemeen nie behalwe dat hulle seksmaats van dieselfde geslag verkies
23. Om gay te wees laat my sterk voel
24. Om gay te wees is vir my om my uitsluitlik met vrouens te bemoei
25. Die feit dat ek 'n vrou is, is vir my baie belangrik
26. Ek voel gereeld dat ek 'n dubbele lewe voer
27. Ondervinding het aan my gewys dat mans in die algemeen seksueel vervelig is
28. Sovêr dit my aangaan, is verhoudings met mans emosioneel onbevredigend
29. Ek word oor die algemeen goed behandel deur mense wat weet ek is gay
30. Ek hou oor die algemeen van myself
31. Al sou ek nog nooit seks met 'n vrou hê nie, sou ek steeds gay wees
32. Al sou ek nou genotvolle seks met 'n man hê, sou ek steeds gay wees
33. My vriende en familie is belangriker vir my as 'n groep gay vroue
34. Om gay te wees het my gehelp om, as mens te groei
35. 'n Emosionele verhouding met 'n vrou is belangriker vir my as 'n seksuele verhouding
36. My verhouding met my vader verduidelik gedeeltelik waarom ek gay is
37. My verhouding met my moeder verduidelik gedeeltelik waarom ek gay is

38. Dit voel of ek nie regtig deel uitmaak van die res van die samelewing nie
  39. Dis vir my belangrik om godsdienstig te wees
  40. Ek beskou myself eerder biseksueel as gay
  41. Feminisme het 'n belangrike rol gespeel in die feit dat ek gay geword het
  42. Ek dink nie dat ek gay lyk nie
  43. Heteroseksuele vroue kan nie gay word nie
  44. In my gemeenskap, is dit heeltemal taboo om gay te wees
  45. Ek kan heteroseksueel wees as ek wil
  46. Ek vind dit moeilik om my met myself as 'n gay vrou te vereenselwig
  47. Ek sou daarvan hou om heteroseksueel te wees
  48. Daar kom tye wanneer ek voel dat dit onnatuurlik is om gay te wees
  49. Ek het gay geword omdat mans vroue onregverdig behandel
  50. Die woord "lesbier" laat my ongemaklik voel
  51. Ek voel ongemaklik in die geselskap van die meeste mans
  52. Om gay te wees is eerder iets wat 'n mens doen, as wat 'n mens is
  53. Ek hou basies nie van mans nie
  54. Ek voel dit is belangrik om te weet of jy "butch" of "femme" is
  55. Ek het gay geword toe ek verlief geraak het op 'n vrou
  56. Die seksuale aspek van gay-wees is baie belangrik vir my
  57. Ek het seks met 'n man geniet
  58. Ek voel oor die algemeen nader aan gay mans as aan "straight" vrouens
  59. Ek voel beter oor my liggaam vandat ek gay is
  60. Ek dink ek sou gelukkiger gewees het as ek nie gay was nie
  61. Diep binne my, weet ek dat ek gay is
  62. Ek voel die meeste op my gemak wanneer daar net vrouens om my is
  63. Wanneer ek 'n gay vrou ontmoet, voel ek dadelik dat sy "een van ons" is
  64. Dit het gevoel asof ek "myself vind" toe ek besef dat ek gay is
  65. Ek geniet dit regtig om seks met 'n vrou te hê
-

---

**TABLE 7 : Q-SAMPLE 2: VROUENS, MANS EN DIE GEMEENSKAP**


---

1. 'n Vrou se belangrikste rol is om 'n [getroude] vrou en moeder te wees
2. Dit is belangrik vir 'n vrou om vroulik te wees
3. Vrouens is van nature warm en versorgend
4. Mans is van nature dominerend
5. Dit is nodig om ontslae te raak van die verskille tussen mans en vrouens
6. Die familie, soos aan ons bekend, moet verander
7. Mans moet net soveel deel hê aan die opvoeding van kinders, soos die vrou
8. Feministe is bang vir mans
9. Vrouens behoort hul meer magtig te laat voel
10. Vrouens behoort mans se gelyke te wees
11. Daar behoort wette te wees wat verbied dat daar teen vrouens gediskrimineer word
12. Ons seksuele behoeftes is biologies normaal
13. 'n Vrou kan nie werklik vervuld wees sonder kinders nie
14. Heteroseksualiteit word op vrouens afgedwing
15. Heteroseksuele verhoudings gaan altyd gepaard met 'n stryd om gesag
16. Ons het meer vroue politici nodig
17. Hoewel ons seksuele verhoudings as privaat beskou, is daar tog openbare geskilpunte
18. Mans wat aktief aan die stryd teen seksisme deel neem, behoort 'n plek in die vroue beweging te hê
19. Vrouens behoort hulle eie organisasies te stig waarvan mans uitgesluit is
20. Vrouens behoort rondom vroue-regte te organiseer
21. Die verskille tussen "vrouens se werk" en "mans se werk" moet verwyder word
22. Die basis van rasisme is manlike dominansie
23. Alle vroue deel gemeenskaplike ervarings net omdat hulle vrouens is
24. Mans is ons vyande
25. Vroue moet so min as moontlik met mans te doen hê
26. Feminisme is hoofsaaklik 'n "blanke" beweging
27. Niemand sal werklik vry wees voordat alle vroue vry is nie
28. Mans is besig om die wêreld te vernietig
29. Vroulike waardes, soos warmte en liefde, is nodig om die wêreld te red
30. Die hele samelewing moet verander
31. Vroue is van nature passief
32. Vrouens is nader aan die natuur as mans
33. Vroue behoort die keuse te hê of hulle wil kinders het of nie
34. Mans en vrouens hoort saam as lewensmate
35. Mans is van nature aggressief
36. Die verskille tussen mans en vrouens het min te doen met biologie
37. Mans en vrouens is geweldig verskillend van mekaar
38. Die huwelik moedig "commitment" en stabiliteit in 'n verhouding aan
39. Daar behoort weggedoen te word met die familie

40. Feministe wil eintlik mans wees
  41. Ons het vroue-bevryding en feminisme nie meer nodig nie
  42. Enige vroue wat 'n man se gelyke wil wees, kan dit wees
  43. Daar behoort geen wette te wees wat teen vrouens diskrimineer nie
  44. Vrouens het die reg tot gelyke vergoeding vir gelyke werk
  45. Daar is teen vrouens gediskrimineer op verskillende maniere op verskillende tye
  46. Vrouens word gewoonlik gesien teen die agtergrond van hul seksuele verhoudings met mans
  47. Lesbienisme is 'n logiese keuse vir feministe
  48. Vrouens moet meer betrokke raak in die breë samelewing
  49. Vrouens se rol in die gemeenskap, lewer 'n bydraende faktor in die ekonomie
  50. Mans word ook gegrief deur seksisme
  51. Vrouens behoort saam met ander waarteen daar gediskrimineer word, te werk (bv. mans van die arbeidersklas)
  52. Alle gemeenskappe verdeel werk volgens 'n mens se geslag (vrouens se werk, mans se werk)
  53. Ons behoort aktief te veg teen rasisme
  54. Alle vroue word onderdruk: dit maak nie saak wie hulle is nie
  55. Mans is die vyand omdat die gemeenskap dit so bewerk en nie omdat hulle mans is nie
  56. Manlike dominansie is 'n universele feit
  57. Vrouens leef onder die gedurige dreiging van gewelddadigheid van mans
  58. Vrouens sal dit reg kry om die gemeenskap te verander
  59. Oorlog, van watter aar ook, moet geheel en al afgeskaf word
  60. Ons behoort die wêreld as 'n gehele lewende eenheid te sien
  61. Feminisme neem energie van die bevrydingstryd in Suid-Afrika, weg
-

Because the rest of the items needing translation were less important, the process of translation was less stringent. The questionnaire was simply translated by the original translators and carefully discussed, and the correspondence and instructions were translated by the researcher and checked by the back-translator. The Afrikaans questionnaire is presented in Appendix E, and the Afrikaans Q-sort instructions in Appendix B.

The difficulty of translating English concepts into Xhosa have already been mentioned. How then, was it possible for Xhosa-speaking women to complete the research in English, which is, at the very least, their second language?

Jennings (1988) argues that even languages which are untranslatable can be interpreted, and the interpreted concepts understood.

The fact that the concepts of another culture do not match our own concepts does not mean that we cannot learn and understand their conceptual scheme - it can be learned ... through interpretations, or ... in the way that a child first learns its own language ...  
( p. 349).

Thus a heterosexual Xhosa-speaking woman who could speak English well but who had had little or no contact with ideas about lesbianism as it is understood in English- or Afrikaans-speaking cultures might be unable to complete a Q-sort about lesbianism. However, a lesbian woman (particularly one who answered an advertisement referring to "gay women") would possibly be able to do so; and none of the Xhosa-speaking participants who completed the research expressed any particular difficulties with the English correspondence, questionnaire, instructions or Q-samples.

d) **Completing the Q-sorts**

The process of completing a Q-sort is - intentionally - a complex one, which allows the participants to locate each statement in the context of the full Q-sort.

For this research, participants were asked to lay out the cards for the Q-sort in a quasi-normal distribution ranging from +6 ("most true for me" for Q-sort 1; and "most true [agree]" for Q-sort 2) to -6 ("most not true for me" for Q-sort 1 and "most false [disagree]" for Q-sort 2).

The layouts for the 2 Q-sorts were as follows:

Q-sort 1 : Identity

Column no.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Value	+6	+5	+4	+3	+2	+1	0	-1	-2	-3	-4	-5	-6
No. of cards	2	3	4	5	6	8	9	8	6	5	4	3	2

Q-sort 2 : Women, Men and Society

Column no.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Value	+6	+5	+4	+3	+2	+1	0	-1	-2	-3	-4	-5	-6
No. of cards	2	3	4	5	6	7	7	7	6	5	4	3	2

However, they were asked to carry out this process in a particular way. (The full instructions appear in Appendix B.)

For Q-sort 1 the participants first divided the cards into 3 piles:

- 1) Sentences which are true for me, now
- 2) Sentences which are not true for me, now
- 3) Sentences I don't understand, don't care about, don't know where to put, or which are not relevant to me.

They then selected the two cards from Pile 1 which they felt were most true, and placed these in Column 1, and the two cards from Pile 2 which they felt were most not true, and placed these in Column 13.

From the remaining cards in Pile 1, they selected 3 cards which they felt were most true, and placed them under Column 2; and from the remaining cards in Pile 2 they selected the 3 cards which they felt were most not true, and placed these under Column 12.

This back-and-forth process continues (with Pile 3 being utilized when one or both of the other piles were empty) until the distribution of cards was as described above.

On completing the layouts, the participants were asked to review the distribution of cards, and to move them around until they were satisfied with the position of each card. The numbers typed onto the back of each card were then transferred onto the diagram provided (see Appendix B).

For Q-sort 2, participants were asked to divide the cards into three piles as follows:

- 1) I believe that these are true (agree)
- 2) I believe that these are false (not true) (disagree)
- 3) Sentences I don't understand, don't care about, or don't know where to put.

The process of laying out the cards was very much the same as the first Q-sort, except that the decision involved "most true" and "most false" statements, and fewer cards were placed in the three middle columns.

It is clear from the descriptions above that the values assigned to the cards are meaningful in that the participant feels more strongly about a statement ranked at +6 or -6 than one ranked at +3 or -3. In addition, those in the middle of the distribution are of little relevance, or cannot be analysed.

It has been shown that "the shape of a Q-sort distribution is methodologically and statistically inconsequential" (McKeown & Thomas, 1988, p. 34), and it is therefore not necessary to use a forced-choice design. However, a quasi-normal distribution is recommended because it encourages the participants to consider the statements more carefully and systematically than they might otherwise do (McKeown & Thomas) and it forces them to make fine discriminations between statements which they might otherwise simply place in the same column (Brown, 1980). Brown found, moreover, that participants could make these fine discriminations when asked to do so.

The participants are asked to work in the back-and-forth manner described previously in order to "help them think anew the significance of each item in relation to the others" (McKeown & Thomas, 1988, p. 33). This allows them to compare each statement with every other statement to some degree, a process which would be lost, for example, in a questionnaire which asks participants to simply rank each statement on a scale from +6 to -6.

#### 4. THE PARTICIPANT SAMPLE (P-SET)

The selection of an adequate subject sample is central to exploratory research - a good sample means that the findings can be meaningful, while an inadequate sample can result in valueless research. As we shall see, selecting a good sample of a stigmatized population is, however, extremely difficult.

##### a) Theoretical Issues

In discussing participant samples or people sets (P-sets) for Q, McKeown & Thomas (1988) distinguish between theoretical and pragmatic considerations. Theoretical considerations refer to the deliberate choice of particular individuals for theoretical reasons, and pragmatic considerations revolve around the question of "who can we get hold of?" Both of these are relevant to this research.

In R methodology, the number of subjects is usually greater than the number of variables being researched. In Q, because the status of variables (i.e. statements) and subjects is reversed,

fewer subjects than statements are usually used. Brown argues that

... all that is required are enough subjects to establish the existence of a factor for purposes of comparing one factor with another. What proportion of the population belongs to one factor rather than another is a wholly different matter, one about which Q technique as such is not concerned (1980, p. 192).

Because generalizations in Q methodology are thought of in terms of "specimen and type" - i.e. we are prepared to say what it is that is of concern to specimen persons of the A type" (Brown, 1980, p. 67, emphasizes his) - it is unnecessary to have large numbers of each "type". It is usually sufficient to have five or six "specimens" (i.e. subjects) who load highly on each factor: this is usually enough to produce reliable factor scores, and increasing the number will have little effect on the factor scores (Brown, 1980).

The subject sample (the "P-set") is designed to be as heterogeneous as possible, and as representative as possible of the relevant population. Brown (1980) argues that individuals should be selected on the assumption that they have viewpoints which will define or add to a factor, though, in the end, they may not in fact do so. It thus appears, that, rather than randomly selecting a sample of subjects (the starting point for most sampling procedures in R methodology), subjects are carefully selected according to pre-defined criteria.

P-sets are selected in the same way as the Q-sample; categories which are felt to be appropriate (such as age, class/race/

culture, home language) are set out in cells; and one or more individuals from each cell are selected. While "multiple observations (replicated) in each cell naturally improve precision" (Brown, 1980, p. 194), it is more important that as many categories as possible be represented. The selection of P-sets should facilitate "breadth and comprehensiveness so as to maximise confidence that the major factors have been manifested using a particular set of persons and a particular set of statements" (Brown, 1980, p. 194).

This discussion refers to theoretical considerations in selecting a P-set, and points to the importance of finding a participant sample which is as broadly representative of the population of South African lesbians as possible. However, there are also a number of pragmatic considerations which need to be dealt with, as they have a large impact on research of this nature.

#### b) Lesbian samples

The major problem with the method outlined by Brown (1980) in terms of research on lesbian women is that he assumes that the characteristics of the population can be, and are, known. This is not the case with a population of lesbian women or, for that matter, any population of people labelled as deviant (Weinberg, 1970). As has been discussed, lesbianism is a stigmatized identity, particularly in South Africa. Moreover, it is an identity which can generally be hidden and, for a number of reasons, often is. Many lesbians would be rejected by family and friends and may lose their jobs if their lesbianism were known.

It is quite possible that many lesbians live out their lives without telling anyone else about their sexuality. It thus becomes impossible for anyone to establish the characteristics of any lesbian population.

Many researchers into homosexuality, such as Weinberg (1970), have discussed the difficulties involved in selecting a subject sample. Hedblom & Hartman, for example, point out that "Not the least of these problems involves the covert nature of deviant activity and the unwillingness of those defined as deviant to be subject to scientific inquiry" (1980, p. 218).

It was hoped that the Gay Survey carried out by the Human Science Research Council using a questionnaire sent out in the gay magazine, *Exit*, early in 1988 might provide some useful demographic data - even though the nature of the survey (very long, available in English only, etc.) will almost certainly greatly limit the value of their data. However, a request for information has not been answered (the data analysis has quite possibly not been completed).

Given these problems, the selection of a P-set which is known to be representative is impossible - even if sufficient women participated in the research - because the characteristics of the population to be represented are not and cannot be known.

There does not seem to be any research which has found lesbianism to actually be absent in any particular stratum of society, or even in any society. It thus seems reasonable to assume that

lesbians in South Africa are of all ages, occupations, racial/cultural/language groups etc. This is supported by the latest Hite report on "Women and Love" in the U.S.A., which indicated (indirectly), that the portion of the total sample who were lesbian (11% of 15 000 women) is represented in all the age, education, annual income, and race/ethnicity categories she used (Hite, 1989).

A second issue (discussed to some extent in Chapter II) which needed to be dealt with was the question of "who is a lesbian"? Most women's [and men's] sexual and emotional relationships are complex, and many women identify themselves differently at different times of their lives. Thus deciding who is a lesbian is not as simple as it may sound. Kitzinger (1987) points out that lesbians are usually defined on the basis of sexual relationships with other women, and that "to qualify as a 'real' ... lesbian, a woman must be able to demonstrate that her 'sexual orientation' is a stable part of her adult personality" (p. 67). This type of research generally attempts to discover the "truth" about "real" lesbians (Kitzinger).

This research makes no such assumptions. Firstly, it is irrelevant whether the accounts presented by the participants are the truth or not. They are presented by participants either because they believe the accounts, or, at least, believe them to be credible (to the researcher, or to others). Whether the accounts are "true" for the participants or not, they are the accounts presented - and this research is exploring the accounts as they are presented, because this makes them "real" (i.e. they

exist). Secondly, if the research aims to explore what women mean (or say they mean) when they say "I am a lesbian" [or whatever term they choose to use], then the only women who can participate are those who say that.

Thus, it was decided to use self-definition as the criterion for "who is a lesbian?" Any woman who identified herself as such could participate in the research.

The question of whether a man who seriously identified himself as a lesbian (for whatever reason) would be included in the research was raised (Leslie Swartz, 1987, personal communication) - fortunately, no such men volunteered for the research, as the issue was not satisfactorily resolved.

### c) Finding Participants

It was decided to use volunteers for this study, because no other method of finding subjects is possible when dealing with a "hidden population". Some potential problems with using volunteers are briefly discussed in the section on limitations of this research.

Research on homosexuality has generally made use of two main groups of subjects. Most early research used prison and psychiatric samples (Plummer, 1981). More recent research has concentrated on the gay community: Plummer lists "gay and feminist organizations", "bars and baths", "gay magazines" and "'snow-balling' friendship networks" (1981, p. 214). He points

out that while prison and psychiatric samples are clearly biased, the gay community samples are also biased in that they "only capture a particular segment of gay experience" (p. 214). In particular, lesbians who are not part of "the gay community" would be excluded from such studies.

In an attempt to obtain as broad and heterogeneous a sample as possible, a number of different ways of finding participants were used.

1. Requests for participants appeared on the letters pages of several popular magazines, viz. De Kat, Drum, Fair Lady, Thandi and You.
2. Two advertisements (one in English, one in Afrikaans) were placed in the "women's personal" section in the South African gay magazine, Exit. Various factors - including the banning of Exit at one stage - delayed their appearance, and some responses arrived too late to be used.
3. Letters were sent to twenty-one gay/lesbian organisations and groups (see Appendix C).
4. Friendship networks and the "snow-ball" technique" were also utilized; particularly to try to reach unrepresented groups. This was not very successful.

A total of 106 women originally responded to the requests, 84 returned completed questionnaires, and 60 women participated in all stages of the research (a response rate of 56.6%).

#### d) Overview of Correspondence with Participants

Correspondence with subjects did not always follow exactly the same procedure; but was dependent on the manner which they came to participate in the research.

Subjects who wrote in response to published requests were sent a letter explaining the research (Appendix D), a questionnaire (Appendix E) and a stamped self-addressed envelope. While the letter discussed the issue of confidentiality, subjects who appeared particularly anxious were also sent a more formal guarantee of confidentiality (Appendix F). These four items were sent directly to the organizations, and to some individuals who offered to distribute them.

When the questionnaire was returned, a "waiting letter" (Appendix G) was sent, thanking them, and telling them that they would receive the next part of the research in due course. All of the above (except the guarantee of confidentiality) were available in both English and Afrikaans.

Many women (and a number of men) also wrote asking for help. Where possible, they were directed to organizations which might be able to help them. If the query was insignificant, the women continued to participate in the research.

Every attempt was made to make the correspondence informal and relaxed, so that participants would feel that they were valuable subjects, rather than useful objects. It is hoped that the

researcher came across to them as sympathetic but neutral. Accepting that participants often tell the researcher what they think she/he wants to hear, this researcher wanted to allow them to project their own expectations onto the researcher, without knowing the researcher's values.

The Q-samples were then sent out to all the women who had returned a questionnaire. Each woman was sent a set of items: a covering letter; instructions for completing the Q-sorts, with a small practice Q-sample; a set of cards, a slip of paper for heading their work area, and a results sheet for each of the two Q-samples, and a stamped self-addressed envelope (see Appendix B).

Reminders were sent to women who did not return the questionnaire or Q-sorts, on the assumption that some of those women might simply have forgotten to return the items. This turned out to be the case in some instances, and the reminders greatly improved the response rate.

A personal letter of thanks was sent to each woman who returned the Q-samples, thanking her for participation, and reminding her that she would receive a summary of the research findings once the research was complete.

e) The Final P-set

A total of sixty women participated in all stages of the research and were included in the data analysis and interpretation.

Although it was not possible, given the difficulties involved in finding participants, to select a representative sample in the way recommended for Q methodology, the participants represented a broad range of South African lesbians. The only two categories which were problematic were "race" and language - these will be discussed at the end of this section. The following data is taken from the questionnaire which participants completed.

Participants ranged in age from 17 years to 58 years, with a mean age of 30,4 years. Using 5 year intervals, the only interval not covered was 50 - 54 years (see Appendix H).

Rather than using the usual socio-economic class as a referent, it was decided to use occupational class and educational level achieved (which are, of course, linked to some extent).

Occupational category was chosen rather than the more usual socio-economic class for two reasons. Firstly, some people consider income a sensitive issue. Secondly, and more importantly, it is often difficult to establish the socio-economic class of lesbians, because - to give two examples - the effects of being separated from their homes (as is often the case for different reasons), and the effects of their lover's socio-economic class have not yet been explored. Occupational

categories were based on "A guide to the coding of occupations in South Africa" (Schlemmer & Stopforth, 1979).

The five major categories are:

**TABLE 8: Rank order and explanation of broad occupational categories\***

Category	Explanation
1	Professional and managerial
2	Middle white-collar
3	Manual foreman, skilled artisan, farmers, and status equivalent
4	Routine non-manual and semi-skilled manual
5	Unskilled manual and menial

\* (based on Schlemmer & Stopforth, 1979, p. 9).

No participants fitted into category 5, presumably because most people in South Africa holding unskilled manual and menial jobs are likely to be functionally illiterate or semi-literate (and unable to afford the magazines in which requests for participants appeared).

An additional two categories were included separately - students and the unemployed.

One (1,7%) participant was unemployed and fourteen (23,3%) were students (one still at school). Thirty (50%) women fell into occupational category 1, nine (15%) into category 2, five (8,3%) into category 3, and one (1,7%) into category 4. (See Appendix H).

Seven levels of education completed were identified. These were categorized as follows:

**TABLE 9: Categories and explanations of education completed**

Category	Explanation
1	Std 6/7
2	Std 8/9/0 levels
3	Std 8/9/0 level & a diploma
4	Matric/Std 10/M level
5	Matric/Std 10/M level & a diploma
6	Matric/Std 10/M level & a degree
7	Matric/Std 10/M level & more than one degree

The levels of the categories do not imply any assumptions about the value of the education completed by participants.

Two (3,3%) fell into category 1, four (6,7%) into category 2, one (1,7%) into category 3, nineteen (31,7%) into category 4, nine (15%) into category 5, twelve (20%) into category 6, thirteen (21,7%) into category 7. (See Appendix H).

Access to media which presents a positive picture of lesbianism - or which mentions lesbianism at all - almost certainly plays a role in women's understanding of themselves as lesbians.

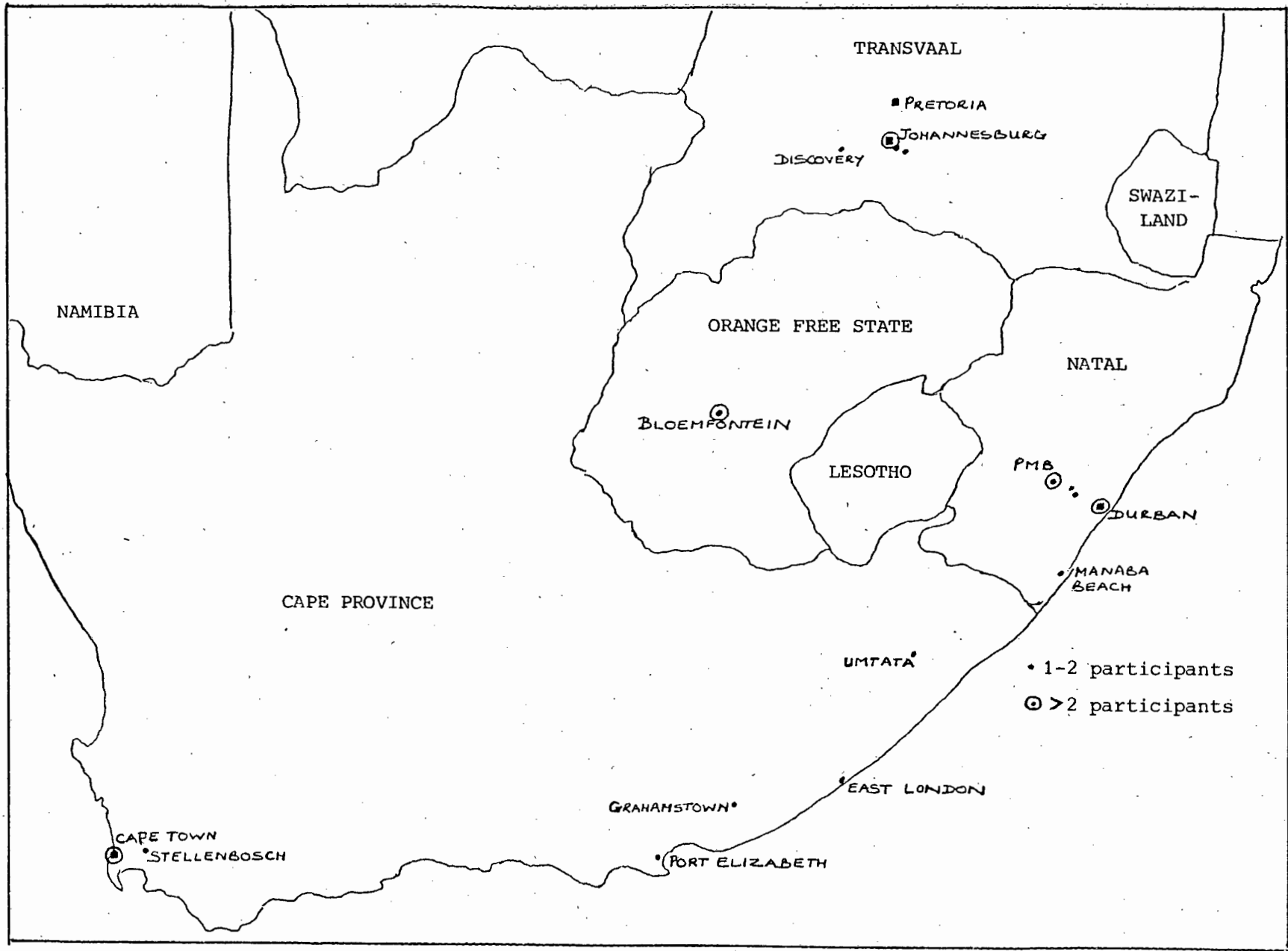
However, this research is intended to be preliminary to a detailed examination of the influences of different media images of lesbians and lesbianism. Thus the only media issue that was examined was whether the women had any access to positive media, particularly given the large-scale isolation of South Africa from "radical" literature. (Only one South African lesbian novel was

found - an Afrikaans novel by Marliese Joubert (1978) - and a number of participants indicated that they did not know that any lesbian/ gay books were available in South Africa).

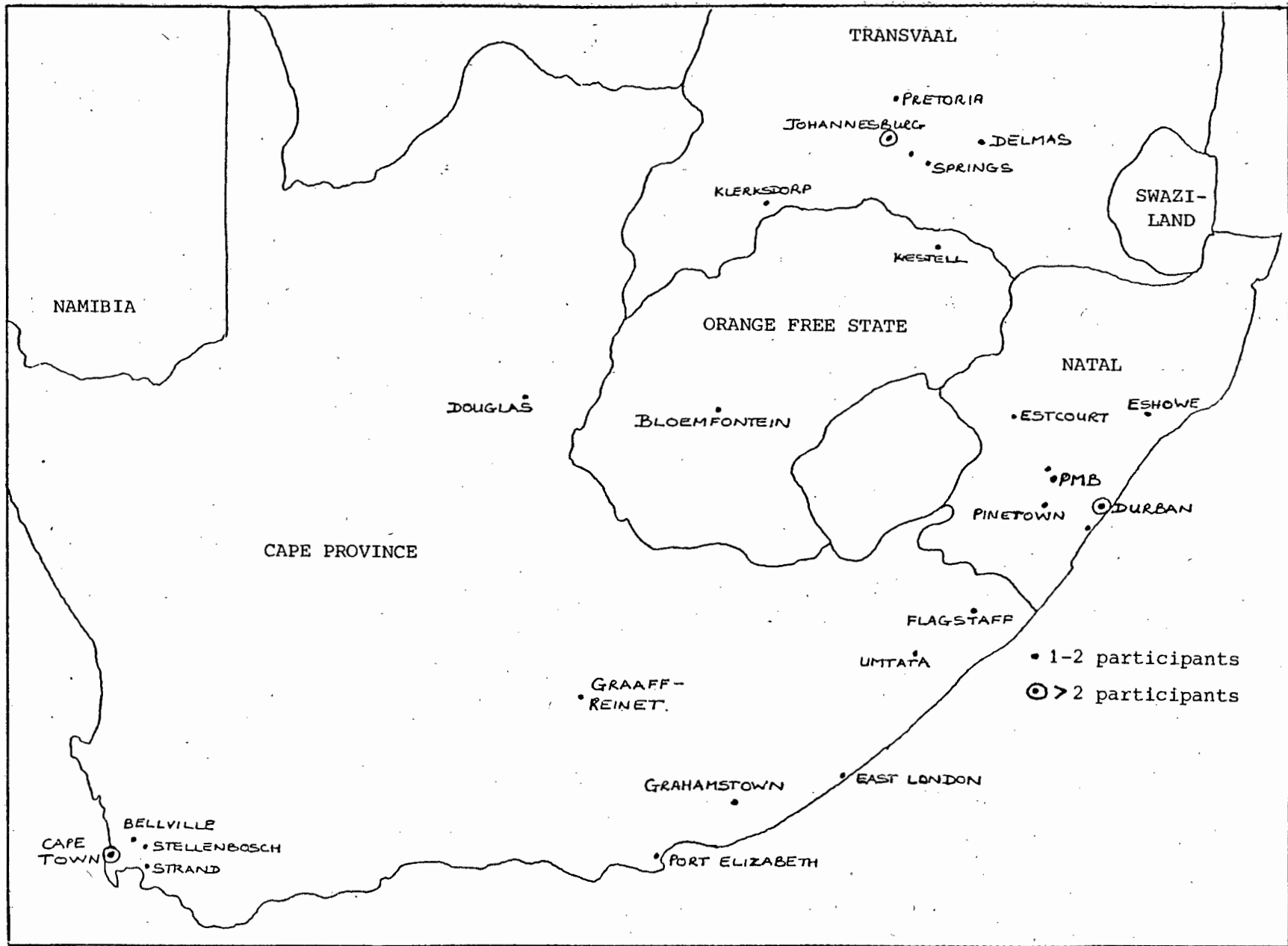
On analysis of the different accounts, access to lesbian/gay media proved to be an important variable. This had not been predicted at the time the questionnaire was devised, and the following categories should be interpreted fairly loosely as they were based on very open-ended questions. They are intended as a broad indication of the amount of positive lesbian/gay media to which the participants have been exposed.

Seventeen (28,3%) women indicated that they had no access to lesbian or gay media (level 1); twenty (33,3%) that they had had access to between one and three items (level 2); twelve (20%) that they had had access to more than three items (level 3); and eight (13,3%) had had access to many items, most of which were books (level 4).

Participants were also asked where they grew up, and where they lived at the time of completing the research. As it would involve too much space to describe these areas, two maps were drawn (presented on the following two pages). These maps show that while participants were concentrated in the PWV area, the Durban-Pietermaritzburg area, and the Western Cape, the research achieved a fairly broad sample of participants.



MAP 1: WHERE PARTICIPANTS LIVED AT THE TIME OF COMPLETING THE RESEARCH



MAP 2: WHERE PARTICIPANTS GREW UP

A fairly broad sample of religious affiliations was represented. Twenty-two (36,7%) women indicated that they were not religious. Thirty-four (56,7%) women indicated a Christian affiliation: five [8,3%] undefined; thirteen [21,7%] Protestant; six [10%] Anglican; five [8,3%] Catholic; and five [8,3%] belong to an Afrikaans church). One woman was Jewish, one "Old Apostolic", one "New age" and one eclectic.

Participants were also asked about their relationships. Thirty-nine (65%) of the women were involved in an intimate relationship at the time of participating in the research. In addition, seven (11,7%) women were previously married, and one was married at the time of participating.

While it does not matter, in general, that many distributions of participants across variables such as age or occupational categories are skewed (because Q is not concerned with numerical representativeness, but comprehensiveness), two variables are problematic in this study. They are "race" and language - which are related. This study hoped to be more representative of the breadth and complexity of South African society than previous studies, and while this has been achieved to some extent (as shown in the overview of the participants given above), it has not been fully achieved. Some possible explanations for this are discussed in the section on limitations in Chapter VIII.

By far the largest proportion of participants - fifty-five (91,7%) women - defined themselves as "white" or "European". Only one (1,7%) of the participants defined herself as "coloured", one (1,7%) as "Asian", and three (5%) defined themselves as "black" or "Xhosa".

The three "black" African women gave their home language as Xhosa. Of the others, forty-three (71,7%) gave English, eight (13,3%) gave Afrikaans, and six (10%) gave both English and Afrikaans as their home languages.

Thus, while the two major non-African languages are well represented, only one of the numerous African languages is represented. The lack of other African-language-speaking participants may be related to the magazine which published requests for participants. However, the magazines did not

respond to a request for an overview of their readership, so this suggestion cannot be checked.

An additional issue was explored using the questionnaire - participants were asked when they had realized they were lesbian. It was felt that this may be related to how positively they viewed their lesbianism.

In terms of the ages at which participants became aware of their lesbianism, forty (67%) became aware of their lesbianism in their teens; thirteen (22%) in their twenties; three (5%) in their thirties; one (1.7%) each in their forties and fifties; and 2 (3.3%) did not answer this question.

Graphical representations of the above variables appear in Appendix H.

## 5. DATA ANALYSIS

### a) - Initial factor analysis

The first, and most important, stage in the analysis of the Q-sorts was to establish which Q-sorts group together, indicating that there is a common account or understanding (i.e. factor) which underlies the Q-sorts the participants completed. This was established by carrying out a factor analysis on each Q-sample.

The data from the Q-sorts was tabulated into two data sets, and a principal components factor analysis was run on each set. In Q,

the factor analytic process is the same as that carried out in R methodology, the difference being that Q-sorts (and thus participants) are the variables; while statements replace the subjects in R methodology factor analysis.

The principle components method was used because it is one of the most frequently used methods and because it "extracts a maximum amount of variance as each factor is calculated" and "yields a mathematically unique solution of a factor problem" (Kerlinger, 1973, p. 667).

#### b) Selecting the Number of Factors

Given that the computer originally extracts the same number of factors as there are variables (in this case, 60 Q-sorts), and as this is of little value because one wants fewer factors than there are variables/Q-sorts, the question is how many factors to retain.

There are a number of ways of making this decision, of which Brown (1980) discusses three.

The most generally accepted method is to retain those factors which have an eigenvalue greater than 1.00 (Brown, 1980).

A second method is to accept all factors which have at least two significant loadings (Brown, 1980). Factor loadings express the correlations between the variables and the factors; and, like a

correlation coefficient, they range from +1.00 to -1.00 and are interpreted similarly (Kerlinger, 1973).

Note that a significant loading is conventionally set at 0.35 or greater. It is possible to use the "Guifford-Lacey expression for the standard error of a zero-order correlation" (Brown, 1980, p. 288), which would mean, in this research, that for a loading to be significant at the 0,01 level, it must be greater than 0.33 (see Brown, pp. 222-223, 288). The decision was made to use the conventional level of 0.35, as it is slightly higher and therefore even more stringent.

A third method is to retain factors where the cross product of their two highest loadings is greater than twice the standard error (Brown, 1980, p. 223); in this case greater than 0.26.

Fruchter (1954) points out that the different methods used to select the number of factors are not exact, and may provide contradictory answers. He suggests that "it is probably best, in practice, to get indications from several of them and to use that information to help make a judgement of factors that will lead to meaningful results" (p. 81). Brown (1980) suggests that it is usually best to retain more factors at the initial stage of factor extraction than one thinks may be needed; to carry out the rotation, and then to simply discard insignificant factors after rotation.

**Q-sample 1:** The initial factor extraction for Q-sample 1 yielded fourteen factors with eigenvalues of greater than 1.00, and eight

factors with two or more significant loadings. The cross-product method yielded only four factors to be retained.

**Q-sample 2:** For Q-sample 2 the eigenvalue  $>1$  criterion yielded thirteen factors; and there were ten factors with two or more significant loadings. The cross-product method yielded four factors.

For both Q-samples it was decided to retain the number of factors yielded by the eigenvalue criterion (14 and 13 respectively) for rotation; and to focus in the interpretation on those factors which are the most significant after rotation.

The decision to retain so many factors, when the more common practice is to retain only about seven factors (Brown, 1980) is related to the research itself. Initial checking of unrotated factors showed that subjects who are "interesting" in some way (e.g. not well represented in the P-set) load on a few of the factors which would have been discarded using a different criterion. Thus, although the factors are statistically not particularly significant, nor do they add much to the variance explained by the factors, their Q-sorts may prove to be particularly interesting and may also suggest avenues for further research.

Because of the peculiar nature of South African society and the very small number of "black" participants (five), it was decided to carry out a factor analysis which excluded the Q-sorts completed by "black" participants. However, this did not change

the factor configuration much. Moreover, the "black" women did not usually load alone on factors, and their Q-sorts were thus included in the analysis.

### c) Rotation

The following step in a factor analyses is to rotate the axes to maximise the loadings of Q-sorts on the factors; thus establishing variables/Q-sorts which are as factorially "pure" as possible. A factorially "pure" Q-sort is one which loads significantly on one factor only. Factorially complex factors have variables/Q-sorts which load significantly on more than one factor (Kerlinger, 1973).

It is possible to carry out either orthogonal or oblique rotations. Because oblique rotations allow factors to correlate with each other, they are often more realistic than orthogonal rotations, where the factors are uncorrelated. However, oblique rotations are more complex and often more problematic in that they "contain peculiarities and subtleties not present in orthogonal solutions" (Kerlinger, 1973, p. 674). Given this, and the fact that Brown (1980) and Kitzinger (1987) seem to assume the use of orthogonal rotation, it was deemed prudent to use the Varimax method of orthogonal rotation.

#### d) Factor Scores

The final step in the statistical analysis in Q methodology is the calculation of factor scores for each statement on each factor, which allows for the interpretation of the factors.

Each factor extracted represents an account of lesbian identity which is common (to a greater or lesser extent) to the women whose Q-sorts load significantly on that factor. In order to interpret the factor, it is necessary to merge those Q-sorts; so that "what is unique to each [person's account] is expected to be canceled out, and what is common among them is expected to emerge to prominence" (Brown, 1980, p. 240). The merging then results in one Q-sort for each factor.

However, different Q-sorts are closer to the factor than others and these Q-sorts should then have a greater influence on the form of the final Q-sorts. This is achieved by using factor weights for each Q-sort on each factor.

The process is more easily discussed using a simple example: Q-sorts A and B load significantly on Factor X. Factor weights are calculated for each Q-sort, and the original value for each statement in Q-sort A is multiplied by the factor weight for Q-sort A; and similarly for Q-sort B. The product for each statement on Q-sort A is then added to the product for the same statement on Q-sort B, resulting in a single score for each statement in Factor X.

However, each factor is represented by differing numbers of Q-sorts, and the factor scores calculated above cannot be compared across factors. In order to allow for the comparison of statements across factors, Z scores are calculated, thus normalizing the factor scores.

But, the Z scores, while precise, are difficult to work with; and it is thus conventional to convert them to a form which reflects the form of the original Q-sorts (i.e. each statement having a value between +6 and -6). This is done by ranking either the un-normalized scores or the Z scores, and then to assign them the values used in the original Q-sorts. So in this research the two statements ranked highest will be valued at +6, and the two statements ranked lowest will be valued at -6, etc.

The end result is a single straight-forward Q-sort for each factor; and the values for statements can be compared across factors. Although there is some error involved because of the loss of precision and somewhat arbitrary groupings, the practical value of this method far outweighs a small loss of precision.

What I will call "factor Q-sorts" were calculated for each of the factors on both samples using the method outlined above.

#### e) Factor Q-sorts

While Brown (1980) uses all the Q-sorts which load significantly on a factor to compile the factor Q-sort, Kitzinger (1987) uses only those Q-sorts which load purely on that factor (i.e. those

which do not load significantly on any other factor). It was felt that Kitzinger's method might offer greater clarity, in that the factor Q-sorts would be less affected by Q-sorts loading on more than one factor. Both methods were utilized for a number of factors, and it was found that the differences between the pairs of resulting Q-sorts were minor. A few statements moved one category; and this slight difference was felt to be insufficient justification for utilizing Kitzinger's approach, which is not used by Brown.

The end result of this process is a Q-sort for each factor, set out in the same way as the original Q-sorts. Where statements had the same un-normalized and Z-scores, they were placed in the same column (i.e. given the same ranking), and the distribution of statements therefore often differed slightly from the original distribution.

Because statements in the middle-range for each factor Q-sort (i.e. from +2 to -2) are those which are insignificant in all or most of the Q-sorts on which the factor Q-sort is based, or which are contradictory between the Q-sorts, the presentation and discussion of the factor Q-sorts (in Chapter VII) focuses on the statements at the ends of the ranges (i.e. from +6 to +3, and from -6 to -3).

f) **Analysis of participant variables**

The participant variables related to the participants whose Q-sorts define a particular account will not generally be discussed in Chapter VII for two reasons.

Firstly, the aim of this research was to find the accounts of lesbian identities presented by some South African lesbians, and not to attempt to explain how the accounts developed, or why they are presented. The participant variables were presented in this chapter in order to establish how broad and general the P-set was, according to the Q methodological principles of representative sampling.

Secondly, the small number of participants whose Q-sorts load on most of the factors means that comparisons can be neither statistically significant or meaningful.

However, there are a few instances where the participant variables (e.g. the number of participants who are religious) are relevant, and where this is the case, they will be mentioned. This is particularly true where these suggest potential avenues for future research.

## CHAPTER VI

### RESULTS

The results of the factor analyses, and the factor Q-sorts developed from these results, are presented in this chapter.

The first two tables present the factor loadings for the Q-sorts on the rotated factors. Insignificant loadings (i.e. those smaller than 0.35) were excluded, and Q-sorts loading on particular factors were grouped together, in order to facilitate reading the tables. The table thus shows which Q-sorts loaded significantly on which factors.

The factors extracted during the factor analysis of Q-sample 1 have been labelled A through N, and those from Q-sample 2 have been labelled I through XIII, to minimise confusion.

The third table presents the amount of variance explained by each factor. This is a measure of the statistical value of the factors, although it is not a measure of the importance of the accounts based on the factors.

The last two tables present the factor Q-sort arrays calculated for each factor (see Ch V section 5). The presentation and discussion of the factors in Ch VII is based on these arrays, which should be read as straightforward Q-sorts.

TABLE 10 : ROTATED FACTOR LOADINGS FOR Q-SAMPLE 1: LESBIAN IDENTITIES \*

Q SORT NUMBER:	FACTOR NUMBER:													
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N
36	0.86													
44	0.82													
46	0.82													
1	0.81													
35	0.76													
19	0.70													
5	0.69													
53	0.69													
45	0.65													
18	0.64													
57	0.61													
8	0.60													
58	0.58													
47	0.52													
42	0.48													
21	0.72	0.36												
23	0.57	0.48												
51	0.45	0.50												
10	0.37	0.60	0.39											
4	0.41	0.38							0.43					
49	0.52	0.43								0.35				
43	0.53		0.43											
27	0.43		0.38											
16	0.52			0.37										
2	0.47				0.57									
31	0.38				0.41					0.48				
20	0.67							-0.44						
22	-0.39								-0.48					
7	0.62									0.36				
12	0.61										0.38			
38	0.69											0.46		

\* Significant loadings only, rounded off to 2 decimal places.

TABLE 10 (cont): Rotated Factor Loadings for Q-Sample 1: Lesbian Identities \*

Q SORT NUMBER:	FACTOR NUMBER:													
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N
59	0.69													-0.40
50	0.56													-0.50
37	0.46													0.55
9		0.78												
14		0.53												
39		0.56			0.51									
24			0.78											
60			0.78											
15			0.44	0.47										
29			0.43						0.41					
26			0.39							0.53				
41			0.53											0.55
25				0.78										
52				0.76										
30				0.75										
33					0.79									
3					0.42			0.60						
6						0.72								
34						0.66								
55						0.58								
32						0.41				0.44				
40							0.81							
13							0.54							
17							0.38							
48								0.80						
28									0.78					
11										0.76				
56											0.82			
54											0.44		-0.36	

\* Significant loadings only, rounded off to 2 decimal places.

TABLE 11 : ROTATED FACTOR LOADINGS FOR Q-SAMPLE 2: "WOMEN, MEN & SOCIETY" \*

Q SORT NUMBER:	FACTOR NUMBER:												
	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX	X	XI	XII	XIII
23	0.84												
59	0.82												
45	0.80												
18	0.80												
35	0.79												
36	0.77												
11	0.76												
49	0.71												
25	0.69												
39	0.67												
20	0.54												
46	0.72	0.41											
38	0.55	0.35											
58	0.41	0.55											
47	0.40	0.36											
10	0.61	0.37	0.36										
19	0.58	0.53	0.35										
42	0.50	0.62	0.38										
24	0.44	0.51	0.47										
56	0.39	0.53	0.38										
4	0.38	0.37	0.50										
32	0.35	0.42	0.45										
5	0.42	0.46			0.37								
54	0.40	0.48			0.41								
27	0.40	0.46				0.38						0.35	
50	0.38	0.61						0.38					
44	0.71		0.39										
43	0.59		0.47										
53	0.55		0.44										
40	0.41				0.70								
9	0.79					0.40							
21	0.57					0.35					0.39		

\* Significant loadings only, rounded off to 2 decimal places.

TABLE 11 (cont): Rotated Factor Loadings for Q-sample 2: "Women, Men & Society" \*

Q SORT NUMBER:	FACTOR NUMBER:												
	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX	X	XI	XII	XIII
51	0.61										0.37		
8	0.49										0.58		
60		0.81											
12		0.77											
15		0.77											
57		0.75											
26		0.55											
30		0.49											
28		0.55	0.43										
29		0.42	0.72										
7		0.48	0.47					0.37					
52		0.52		0.48									
34		0.38		0.74									
14		0.54			0.45								
16		0.59				0.43							
17		0.59									0.40		0.38
48		0.46										0.69	
33			0.77										
22			0.47						0.53				
13				0.51									
37				0.38		0.40							
55					0.45								
31							0.76						
2							-0.67						
6								0.74					
3									0.85				
1										0.81			
41													0.72

\* Significant loadings only, rounded off to 2 decimal places.

TABLE 12: VARIANCE EXPLAINED BY EACH FACTOR \*

Q-SAMPLE 1		Q-SAMPLE 2	
FACTOR	VARIANCE	FACTOR	VARIANCE
A	13,98	I	13,40
B	8,81	II	8,84
C	3,68	III	4,96
D	3,67	IV	2,57
E	2,85	V	2,56
F	2,82	VI	2,00
G	2,33	VII	2,00
H	2,33	VIII	1,87
I	2,29	IX	1,81
J	2,16	X	1,75
K	2,05	XI	1,71
L	2,01	XII	1,45
M	1,52	XIII	1,41
N	1,46		

\* Rounded off to 2 decimal places.

TABLE 13 : FACTOR Q-SORT ARRAYS FOR Q-SAMPLE 1: LESBIAN IDENTITIES \*\*

STATEMENT NO	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N
1	-6	-5	-6	-3	-1	-6	-6	6	-6	-6	-6	-3	6	-5
2	-3	-4	-5	0	0	-5	-1	-2	-1	-5	-1	0	2	1
3	-2	-4	0	-3	-3	1	-1	1	-2	-1	-3	-2	5	3
4	0	4	-4	1	3	-3	3	6	0	1	3	1	2	-6
5	-3	-1	-2	-1	5	1	-5	-4	1	2	-1	-1	1	0
6	3	-5	-3	3	-4	-6	-6	2	3	-1	-6	2	1	-2
7	4	-1	1	0	0	-1	-3	2	5	2	0	0	1	-1
8	2	1	3	-4	3	3	-1	0	1	0	-4	1	5	0
9	6	5	4	-3	6	3	1	2	3	3	0	3	0	-1
10	-3	0	-1	5	0	-3	4	-1	-1	-2	1	4	3	-6
11	0	1	2	-6	6	4	6	-4	-2	-1	2	1	0	2
12	1	-1	2	-2	5	-1	-2	2	1	-1	-5	6	6	2
13	3	3	0	-1	3	2	4	-1	0	2	0	2	5	-1
14	-1	1	2	4	2	1	3	-4	0	4	2	4	4	2
15	6	5	5	3	4	4	-3	5	6	6	2	-5	-1	0
16	-2	2	4	4	1	2	4	3	3	2	1	5	4	-4
17	-1	-3	1	-1	0	3	0	1	-1	0	3	0	-1	5
18	1	0	3	1	1	0	0	4	-4	4	-1	0	-6	0
19	0	-2	-3	-1	-1	-2	-2	0	-5	-3	3	-1	-2	-2
20	1	-2	3	0	-1	2	4	0	2	3	2	1	-1	-5
21	2	-1	0	1	1	0	-2	5	-2	1	4	-4	0	-5
22	0	0	1	0	-2	0	-2	5	-1	-5	0	1	2	-1
23	2	4	-2	0	0	2	2	1	-2	0	1	-4	3	-1
24	2	3	1	-2	1	-3	4	-1	-2	-3	2	-2	-4	-3
25	5	3	6	1	-1	5	2	-4	4	6	6	2	1	2
26	-1	1	-3	2	-4	4	5	1	2	0	0	-3	-5	0
27	2	0	-1	0	1	0	-4	0	-6	2	5	-2	0	-3
28	3	4	1	-2	-1	1	-3	0	-1	1	4	-3	-2	3
29	1	3	3	-1	4	4	1	4	2	3	-2	3	3	1
30	5	6	5	3	0	5	-1	2	2	5	5	6	0	-3
31	3	2	1	3	2	0	0	2	6	4	-3	2	0	0
32	0	2	2	0	1	1	0	3	2	3	-3	1	0	4
33	0	1	5	3	-2	1	2	-1	1	1	1	3	-3	3

# + signs omitted

TABLE 13 (cont): Factor Q-Sort Arrays for Q-sample 1: Lesbian Identities \*

STATEMENT NO	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N
34	4	4	-1	2	2	3	0	-2	0	0	4	1	0	-2
35	4	3	6	5	4	0	-5	-2	4	5	3	-6	2	6
36	1	-1	-5	1	3	5	-3	-2	1	0	-3	2	2	-4
37	-2	-3	-5	-2	0	0	-3	-2	0	0	0	-1	1	-2
38	-2	-2	-1	1	-6	-1	-1	-5	-1	-5	4	-1	-1	-3
39	-1	2	2	6	-1	-4	0	4	1	4	0	0	-6	0
40	-5	2	-1	-5	-6	-2	5	-6	-3	-3	-1	-1	2	1
41	-1	6	1	-3	-1	-5	1	-5	0	-1	4	0	-3	5
42	0	0	3	1	-2	2	2	-2	4	0	1	5	-4	0
43	-3	-4	-6	-3	-2	-1	0	-1	-3	-3	-4	-1	-2	-3
44	0	0	0	6	-5	-1	1	1	0	-1	-4	-5	-3	-1
45	-4	-1	2	-4	-2	-1	0	0	-5	-2	-5	3	4	5
46	-5	-5	-4	2	-5	-1	1	-3	-1	-6	2	-6	-1	1
47	-6	-4	-2	2	-1	-3	-1	4	-3	-4	-4	-5	4	3
48	-5	-3	-2	4	-6	0	3	-3	1	-4	1	2	1	-3
49	-2	0	-3	-3	1	-4	-4	-3	-3	-1	-2	0	0	-2
50	-1	-3	0	4	2	-4	2	-1	3	-1	-2	-4	-4	-2
51	-1	-2	-3	-5	-2	-2	-2	-1	-1	-2	-3	-1	-2	4
52	-4	-6	0	-6	-2	-4	6	-2	-3	-4	-1	-1	3	0
53	-1	-2	-2	-4	0	-3	-5	0	1	-4	3	-4	-3	2
54	-3	-6	-1	-5	-3	-1	0	3	-3	-2	0	-2	-3	2
55	0	-1	3	-2	0	3	-2	-6	-4	1	-5	-2	-5	1
56	1	1	-4	-6	-4	1	5	1	0	1	-1	1	-5	-4
57	-4	0	-1	-1	-3	0	1	-5	-4	-3	2	4	3	4
58	-2	-2	-1	-1	1	-5	-1	-1	-2	-2	-2	-3	1	2
59	1	1	-2	0	3	-2	2	0	-4	1	1	0	-2	1
60	-4	-3	-4	2	-3	-3	0	-3	-5	-2	-1	3	-1	-1
61	4	1	1	5	4	2	-4	3	5	4	6	0	-1	6
62	3	2	0	-2	-5	-2	-4	0	5	1	0	-2	-4	3
63	1	-1	0	0	2	1	3	1	3	0	-2	-2	2	4
64	2	0	0	2	5	6	-4	3	2	3	-2	0	-2	-2
65	5	5	4	1	2	6	1	5	4	5	-1	4	-1	1

# + signs omitted

TABLE 14 : FACTOR Q-SORT ARRAYS FOR Q-SAMPLE 2: "WOMEN, MEN & SOCIETY" \*

STATEMENT NO	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX	X	XI	XII	XIII
1	-6	-4	-6	-5	-3	-6	-1	-4	6	-6	-5	-1	2
2	-3	2	3	0	-2	-4	6	-1	0	0	-2	-3	4
3	-2	1	1	-2	-1	0	-6	6	5	2	2	5	-1
4	-4	-1	0	-3	-3	-3	0	3	1	-3	0	-2	5
5	-2	0	1	-4	0	2	-4	-3	0	-3	-3	5	1
6	1	-2	1	1	0	1	-5	-2	0	-1	-1	4	0
7	2	4	5	6	0	3	1	2	2	6	6	5	1
8	-5	-5	-5	0	-5	-4	5	-5	-2	-3	-5	-3	-6
9	5	2	2	1	2	2	4	-1	-2	3	1	4	5
10	2	6	4	3	5	3	-2	2	-6	-3	-2	6	-2
11	6	3	5	-2	1	4	3	0	-2	1	3	4	6
12	-2	2	2	1	-1	-1	4	3	1	0	2	0	4
13	-5	-4	-6	-3	-4	-4	1	-3	-3	-6	-5	2	-4
14	1	-1	-3	-1	-2	1	3	5	-3	-2	0	-2	2
15	0	-2	-1	1	-1	-2	0	4	0	3	2	-3	1
16	3	3	4	2	1	0	1	-1	2	-2	3	-3	2
17	0	-1	-1	2	3	1	2	2	1	0	0	0	3
18	-1	1	1	0	-1	-1	0	0	-1	-4	-1	1	-4
19	-1	-3	1	-6	-2	-3	0	1	2	2	1	1	-3
20	3	1	2	-3	0	-1	0	0	-1	4	2	3	1
21	3	3	3	3	2	5	2	-2	-1	-5	4	4	6
22	0	-3	-2	-5	-4	-2	-2	-3	-2	-4	2	-2	-1
23	0	1	-1	2	-3	3	0	2	1	4	2	-4	-1
24	-2	-6	-5	-6	-4	-6	-4	-6	-4	-4	-3	-6	-1
25	-3	-5	-5	-4	-5	-5	2	-2	-4	3	-3	-5	-5
26	-3	-3	-3	-3	-1	-3	4	-4	-2	-2	-3	-2	-3
27	4	-2	-2	-2	0	0	5	-1	-4	4	4	-2	0
28	1	-2	-2	-5	2	1	-3	-3	-3	-5	3	-4	-1
29	2	4	-2	-1	4	2	-5	4	-1	1	1	3	1
30	5	0	0	0	4	0	-3	-1	0	1	-1	-3	-2
31	-4	-4	-4	-2	-2	-2	-3	-4	1	5	-4	-4	-3

# + signs omitted

TABLE 14 (cont): Factor-Q Sort Arrays for Q-sample 2: "Women, Men &amp; Society" \*\*

STATEMENT NO	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX	X	XI	XII	XIII
32	-1	-2	-2	0	-3	-1	-5	1	3	2	0	-1	2
33	4	4	6	5	2	4	3	6	3	5	4	3	3
34	-4	-1	-3	1	2	-2	5	-4	-3	6	-4	2	0
35	-3	-1	-1	3	-2	0	-4	3	2	1	1	-5	3
36	0	-1	-1	-4	-3	0	-1	-2	-2	-5	1	-5	-3
37	-1	1	0	1	-2	-2	-1	2	3	1	4	2	0
38	-2	2	-1	1	2	-3	0	1	-5	0	-1	1	-3
39	-3	-6	-2	-5	-5	-5	-1	-5	-1	-1	-4	-6	0
40	-6	-5	-5	-1	-4	-5	-1	-6	-5	-2	-6	-3	-2
41	-5	-3	-4	2	-6	-4	1	-3	-6	-2	-6	-1	-5
42	-2	3	4	6	1	-1	-4	5	-4	-4	-2	3	1
43	6	5	5	2	3	4	-1	4	2	-1	5	2	3
44	5	6	6	5	3	6	1	3	4	0	6	3	4
45	1	3	4	4	3	1	1	5	3	1	-1	-1	0
46	4	0	3	-1	5	5	-2	3	4	-1	5	0	1
47	-1	-4	-4	0	-6	-3	6	-2	2	3	-4	-1	-1
48	2	2	2	3	4	1	2	0	0	4	2	1	2
49	1	1	2	3	5	-1	3	2	-1	1	-1	0	-4
50	0	0	-1	4	4	3	1	0	0	-2	3	-1	3
51	-1	0	0	-2	-1	-1	-1	1	0	2	-2	1	-4
52	-1	2	2	4	0	0	-2	1	-5	3	0	1	-5
53	4	4	1	5	6	4	5	0	-1	0	0	2	5
54	1	-3	-3	-3	1	2	-1	-5	4	2	-2	0	-2
55	0	0	0	2	3	3	3	1	3	-1	1	0	-3
56	1	1	3	-1	0	2	-2	1	5	-1	-1	0	0
57	3	-1	0	-2	1	6	-3	-1	4	5	0	-2	-6
58	2	0	0	-1	-1	-1	0	-1	6	-3	5	1	-2
59	2	5	1	-1	1	2	-6	1	5	0	1	2	4
60	3	5	3	4	6	5	-3	0	1	-1	1	6	2
61	-4	-2	-3	0	1	-2	2	-2	-3	2	-3	-1	-1

# + signs omitted

## CHAPTER VII

### PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF ACCOUNTS

In this chapter, the accounts based on the factors extracted from the two Q-samples will be presented and discussed. Statements from the Q-samples and a few quotations from participants' letters and questionnaires will be used to illustrate the accounts.

In the presentation of an account, statements from the factor Q-sort on which that account is based will be set out in the following way:

'1'9      '2' I am happy being gay      '3'+6      '4'(G +2)

where      '1' is the number of the statement, as listed in Tables 2 and 5;

            '2' is the statement itself;

            '3' is the ranking of the statement in that particular factor Q-sort; and

            '4' is the ranking of that statement in another factor Q-sort, in this case factor G.

To prevent excessive repetition, the statements will not always be given. Where this is the case, reference will be made to the statement in the following way: (9: +6), which shows that statement 9 is ranked at +6 in this factor Q-sort.

Quotations from participants' letters and questionnaires are presented in single line spacing, followed by the participant's Q-sort number in brackets.

Each factor Q-sort represents the highly-ranked statements held in common as important by the women whose Q-sorts loaded significantly on that factor. Thus, the factor Q-sort is understood to represent those aspects of the women's accounts of identity which they hold in common. Except where only one Q-sort loads on a factor, the accounts do not, therefore, reflect any participant's individual account, but should be understood as a generalized account of lesbian identity.

Although fourteen and thirteen factors were retained from the analyses of Q-samples 1 and 2 respectively, and all twenty-seven factors were carefully examined, they will not all be presented and discussed in this chapter. Some of the accounts are very similar, and where this is the case, one representative account will be discussed in detail. The rest are briefly described and related to that account.

In addition, several accounts are ambiguous and confusing. This can be explained in terms of the way Q-sorts load on that factor. Where there are only two or three Q-sorts loading on a factor, and the loadings are of opposite values (i.e. + and -) the Q-sorts are not very similar to each other. This is because they fall on opposite sides of the rotated factor, and thus fall far from each other. In addition, the lower the loadings, the further the Q-sorts fall from each other. This results in a factor Q-sort which does not properly represent any of the Q-sorts on which it is based, and a confusing and contradictory account emerges.

On the basis of this, Accounts M, N and (VII) will not be presented or discussed. (Refer to TABLES 10 and 11.)

#### 1. Q-SAMPLE 1 : IDENTITY

The aim of this Q-sample was to find the accounts of lesbian identities presented by a broad sample of South African lesbians.

This section thus presents the accounts based on the factor Q-sorts which were developed from the factor analysis of Q-sorts completed by the participants using Q-sample 1. It was not intended to explain the way in which the accounts are developed by the women or why these accounts are presented. Thus little attempt is made to provide such explanations, except where some aspect seems particularly clear or interesting.

The factors extracted from the factor analysis of Q-sample 1 Q-sorts differ greatly in their significance (Factor A accounts for 13.98% of the variance, while Factor L accounts for only 2.01%; and thirty-four Q-sorts load significantly on Factor A, while only two Q-sorts have significant loadings on Factors K & L). More importantly, some of the resulting accounts are more distinctive and informative than the others; and this is not necessarily related to either of the variables mentioned above.

Twelve accounts from Q-sample 1 are presented here (with Accounts M and N excluded as explained above).

Account A presents lesbianism as fixed and innate. Being lesbian is presented as a positive experience, and there is no desire to change. As in most of the accounts, emotional relationships with women are presented as more important than sexual relationships.

Account B is very similar to Account A, except that being a lesbian is related to feminism and a commitment to women, and is not presented as fixed or innate.

Account C presents being a lesbian as positive, but not very important. Lesbianism is not presented as fixed or innate, and familial explanations for lesbianism are strongly rejected. This account is basically that of women who love women.

The women whose Q-sorts define Account F relate their lesbianism to choice, to their relationships with their fathers, and to falling in love with a woman. Being a lesbian is not presented as innate. This account can be understood as that of women who choose women, rather than men.

Account E relates being a lesbian to childhood experiences as well as to choice. Lesbianism is presented as a positive experience and as a felt part of the self. However, being a lesbian is presented as being no different from living a heterosexual life.

Account L does not present any strong sense of lesbian identity. Lesbianism is presented as fairly unimportant, and, like Account E, being a lesbian is not presented as being any different to

living as a heterosexual. However, unlike E, lesbianism is not presented very positively.

Account I stresses the sense of being a lesbian as fixed, natural and deeply felt, but does not present as unambiguously positive, as their god is not seen to accept homosexuality.

Account J is primarily that of gay people (rather than lesbian women). Gay men and lesbians are presented as similar, and being a lesbian is presented as a positive experience.

Account H differs from all the other accounts in that the women defining it present a strong desire to be men. This account could be understood to be that of transsexuals, although they identify themselves as lesbians.

The women defining Account G present themselves as bisexual, and present lesbianism as a sexual activity ("doing") rather than as an affectional-sexual identity ("being").

Account K also presents lesbianism as closely interwoven with sexual activity, although it is presented as an identity. Being lesbian is related to feminism, and the account presents men more negatively than any other account does.

Account D is the only account which presents being lesbian in a very negative light. This is related to the women's religious beliefs: they all identify themselves as Christians, and do not believe that their god can accept their lifestyle.

The full description of the accounts, presented below, is set out in the same order as the listing above.

**Account A : born lesbian; and happy**

Q-sorts completed by 34 women load significantly on Factor A, and, as this represents over half the P-set, this account is very important. However, only fifteen of these load on Factor A alone, while the remaining nineteen load on one or more of all the other factors except factors F, L and N. Moreover, while every other account has at least one statement which is more (or less) important in that account than in any other, this is not true for Account A. Thus Account A expresses, to a large extent, those aspects of the other accounts which are held in common by many of the participants. This is particularly true of the statements in Account A with the highest rankings.

This account presents lesbianism as a positive lifestyle which is easy to come to terms with, and which leads to growth and a sense of freedom.

9	I am happy being gay	+6
60	I think I would have been happier if I were <u>not</u> gay	-4
34	Being gay has helped me to grow as a person	+4
13	Being gay gives me a sense of freedom	+3

The account expresses no desire for or intention to change.

47	I would like <u>to</u> be heterosexual	-6
7	I will never <u>change</u> my mind about being gay	+4

Participants expressed satisfaction with their lesbianism:

"I feel that I have made a positive choice in accepting my sexual preference, & lifestyle, and would not wish it to be anything else" (45).

"I would never consider going back to a man" (36).

Being a lesbian is seen as an inborn characteristic (although the women who define this factor do not all agree with this) and is thus fixed and essential, and unrelated to sexual experience. The sense of identity/self as lesbian is felt deeply and experienced as "natural", and the notion that they could be bisexual is rejected.

6	I believe I was born gay	+3
5	Something in my childhood caused me to become gay	-3
45	I <u>could</u> be heterosexual if I wanted to	-4
31	Even if I never had sex with a woman, I would still be gay	+3
61	Somewhere deep inside me, I <u>know</u> that I am gay	+4
52	Being gay is something that one <u>does</u> , rather than something one <u>is</u>	-4
15	It feels totally natural to love women	+6
48	There are times when I feel that being gay is unnatural	-5
40	I am bisexual rather than gay	-5

Participants said:

"If anyone should ask me whether I would recommend a Lesbian lifestyle, I would answer Yes - but only if you are a Lesbian. This is not something you can learn - just as I could not learn to be heterosexual, I'm sure that a heterosexual woman couldn't just learn to be gay" (20).

"I believe that one does not choose to be gay - it comes naturally" (57).

While emotional relationships are presented as being more important than sexual ones, the account stresses that sex is enjoyable. Both emotional and sexual relationships with men are

seen as unsatisfying.

35	Emotional relationships with women are more important to me than sexual relationships	+4
65	I really enjoy making love to a woman	+5
2	I'm not comfortable with myself as a sexual person	-3
28	As far as I'm concerned, relationships with men aren't emotionally satisfying	+3
57	I have enjoyed sex with men	-4

One participant said that, although she enjoyed making love, "I just get on better with women because, being a woman myself, I know what makes another woman tick" (1).

Another described relationships with men as follows:

"Looking back, I can't say I have enjoyed having sex with a man very much; but then again, it would be just as untrue to say that I hated every minute of it.... He was a relatively sensitive and considerate lover, but it just never felt Right" (36).

Being a woman and being with women are seen as important and enjoyable, and the account rejects the notion that they would want to be men.

25	Being a woman is very important to me	+5
1	I would like to be a man	-6
62	I feel most relaxed and comfortable with just women around me	+3

One participant describes herself as follows:

"As a woman first, [and] happy about myself as a lesbian" (20).

Like most of the other accounts, this account presents a positive self image.

30	On the whole, I like myself	+5
----	-----------------------------	----

The women who present this account are generally less negative

about being labelled as lesbian than than women presenting most of the other accounts.

10 I don't like being labelled as gay -3

Although some of the participants indicated that they perceived themselves as feminists, they "became committed to feminism because of being gay, not the other way round" (Participant 45).

Account A presents a positive image of lesbianism as an identity which leads to growth and with which lesbians can be happy. Being lesbian feels "natural" and unchangeable, and there is, moreover, no desire to change. The "born gay" explanation for lesbianism is accepted, although not unequivocally; and causation is, in general, not important in this account. The lack of emotional sexual satisfaction experienced in relationships with men, and the value of the emotional and sexual satisfaction gained from relationships with women are important. Being a woman is also highly valued.

This account is very similar to Kitzinger's (1987) first account, which represents lesbianism as personally fulfilling. Two interesting differences emerge, however. Firstly, all the women who loaded purely on Kitzinger's Account 1 had been married, while only four of the 34 women whose Q-sorts load significantly on this factor had been married. However, Account A also suggests that the women loading on this account felt positively about rejecting heterosexuality. Secondly, Account A accepts the "born gay" explanation, while Kitzinger's Account 1 rejects this notion (-2). In accepting this explanation, Account A is similar to Ettore's "sick, but not sorry" lesbians, who do not regret

having been born as lesbians. It is unlike either of Faderman's "types", in that, while some might be feminists, none understand lesbianism in terms of a commitment to women. This account would also fit into the "Identity Integration" stage discussed by Sophie (1985/86), where a stabilized identity involves the inability or lack of desire to change.

Overall, Account A bears more relationship to Kitzinger's first account than to any of the other "types" of identity.

One particular participant's strong presence in this account (Participant 1, with a loading of 0.81) is very interesting in that her personal Q-sort ranks statement 44 (*In my community [a Xhosa community] being a gay woman is totally taboo*) at 0, but her letters stress that "Within the black communities lesbianism is something very filthy and a sin". There is thus a contradiction between the importance this perception had for her in her letters and in her Q-sort - which may be related to particular experiences at the time of writing the letters and doing the Q-sorts. This supports the notion that Q-sorts are only the accounts that someone presents at a particular time in her life.

#### **Account B : feminist and happy**

Nine Q-sorts load significantly on factor B, but only two (Q-sorts 9 and 14) load on this factor alone. Three load significantly on factor A, one on factor E, and three on factor A plus one other factor (C, I or J), as well as on B. Thus, as six

of the nine Q-sorts have significant loadings on factors A and B, this account will share a great deal in common with Account A.

The account shares with Account A a very positive attitude about being lesbian, but differs from Account A in that feminism is seen as important, and lesbianism is not understood to be biological or fixed.

Feminism is presented as having played an important role in these women's lesbianism, and lesbianism is seen to be about committing themselves to women.

41	Feminism played an important part in my becoming gay.	+6
24	Being gay is about committing myself to women	+3

Although lesbianism is presented as part of the self, rather than just as an "activity", there is no notion of lesbianism as fixed or essential.

52	Being gay is something that one <u>does</u> , rather than something one <u>is</u>	-6
6	I believe I was born gay	-5
43	Heterosexual women can't become gay	-4

The women present themselves as happy with their lesbianism (9: +5), which feels natural (15: +5). They present lesbianism as a positive and psychologically healthy experience (34: +4; 23: +4; 13: +3), and have no desire to change (47: -4). They are happy with themselves as lesbians and as people (30: +6).

They present themselves as secure in their identity as lesbian, and they reject the need to be involved in order to feel secure

with their identity more strongly than any other account.

17	I feel much more secure about my sexuality when I'm involved with someone	-3
----	---	----

Being a woman is seen to be important (25: +3), and they have no desire to be a man (1: -5). However, although they reject role playing, they do not reject the masculine sides to themselves. Neither of these last two ideas is important in Account A.

54	I feel that it's important to know whether one is butch or femme	-6 (A -3)
4	I enjoy the masculine side of myself	+4 (A 0)

The strong rejection of role-playing can be understood in terms of the role feminism has played in their lesbianism.

Although making love with a woman is seen as enjoyable and important (65: +5), and they see themselves as being comfortable as sexual beings (2: -4), emotional relationships are seen as more important than sexual relationships (although, at +3, this belief is not held strongly and unambiguously). Moreover, the lack of emotional satisfaction in relationships with men is stressed more than problems with sexual relationships (or with men in general). These perceptions are shared with Account A.

35	Emotional relationships with women are more important to me than sexual relationships	+3
56	The sexual part of being gay is very important to me	+1
28	As far as I'm concerned, relationships with men aren't emotionally satisfying	+4
21	Sex with a man just never felt right	-1
53	Basically I dislike men	-2

Relationships with women are described as somehow better than relationships with men:

"...I think I relate better to my gay lover than I have to any of my male lovers, it's a far better relationship" (9).

Although the account presents an awareness of societal discrimination against lesbians, these women have experienced reasonably fair treatment from others (issues which are not important in Account A).

- |    |   |    |
|----|---|----|
| 3  | In my experience, society generally does not discriminate against gay women | -4 |
| 29 | On the whole, I have been treated fairly by people who know that I'm gay    | +3 |

Like Account A, Account B presents lesbianism as personally fulfilling. However, while being a lesbian is experienced as part of the "self", there is no support for the idea that lesbianism is inborn or fixed. Instead, lesbianism is related strongly to feminism, and is understood in terms of a commitment to women. As in Account A, emotional relationships are more important than sexual relationships, and the lack of emotional satisfaction in relationships with men is stressed more than any lack of sexual satisfaction. Neither men nor the "causes" of lesbianism play an important role in this account.

Account B is similar to two of Kitzinger's (1987) accounts, in that it shares the "personal fulfilment" perspective of Account 1 and the "feminist" perspective of Account 4. As in Kitzinger's Account 4, the role of sex is de-emphasized, and a commitment to women is seen as more important. However, unlike Account 4,

Account B does not reject men, who are largely irrelevant. None of Ettore's "types" are very similar to this account.

This account could also fall into the "Identity Integration" stage presented by Sophie (1985/86). Although they relate their lesbianism to feminism, they do not seem to be activists, but present a view of lesbianism which suggests a positive and integrated identity. Although lesbianism is not presented as fixed and unchangeable, they present no desire to change.

#### **Account C : woman-loving-woman**

Nine Q-sorts load significantly on Factor C, but, as with Factor B, only two of these (Q-sorts 24 and 60) load on this factor only. Of the others, two have even higher loadings on Factor A, one loads on Factors A and B as well, and four load on Factors D, I, J or N as well as on C. Account C is thus primarily defined by Q-sorts 24 and 60 which load equally highly (0.78) on this factor.

Account C is distinguished from the other factors by the strong rejection of the notion that heterosexuals cannot become lesbians, by the importance of family and friends, and by the strong negative reaction to the thought that their mothers played a role in their becoming lesbian. They share with Account F the belief that they became lesbians when they fell in love with a woman, although this is not particularly important in either account.

43	Heterosexual women can't become gay	-6	(B -4) (K -4)
33	My family and friends are more important to me than gay women as a group	+5	
37	My relationship with my mother helps explain why I am gay	-5	
55	I became gay when I fell in love with a woman	+3	(F +3)

The importance of statement 33 could be explained partially by the acceptance that some of these women have found in their families:

"My family don't deny that I'm gay, they accept it and understand and are happy as long as I'm happy" (24).

Other common explanations for the "causes" of lesbianism are also rejected.

36	My relationship with my father helps to explain why I am gay	-5
49	I became gay because men treat women so unfairly	-3
6	I believe I was born gay	-3

They are happy with themselves (30: +5), and view being lesbian positively (9: +4; 60: -4). They did not experience it as difficult to come to terms with (46: -4), and say that it feels "natural" (15: +5). As one participant put it:

"Since realising that I was gay I have never thought that there was anything wrong with me. I feel very 'right' about my life and I've always been happy and it feels totally natural to love and be attracted to women" (24).

Being a woman is seen as more important than being lesbian.

25	Being a woman is very important to me	+6
1	I would like to be a man	-6
16	Being gay is not one of the most important things about me	+4

Although the account presents the women as comfortable with themselves as sexual (2: -5), and making love with a woman as enjoyable (65: +4), like most of the other accounts emotional rather than sexual relationships are stressed.

35	Emotional relationships with women are more important to me than sexual relationships	+6
56	The sexual part of being gay is very important to me	-4

"Being gay for me is not purely sexual, just that I never felt the same for a man that I have for two very special women" (27).

This is one of the few accounts which present outward appearances as important, although they are less important than in most of those other factors.

20	Trying to look attractive is important to me	+3
42	I don't think that I <u>look</u> gay	+3

Although men do not feature significantly in this account, discomfort is not experienced when with men (51: -3) and male bodies are not repulsive (19: -3). However, they are uncomfortable with their own masculine characteristics.

4	I enjoy the masculine sides of myself	-4
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This latter discomfort may be related to the importance of being a woman as well as the desire to look attractive (and not to look lesbian).

In general, these women seem comfortable with their lesbianism, both personally and in relation to society. Those who are religious feel that their god accepts their lesbianism.

26	I often feel that I am leading a double life	-3
29	On the whole, I have been treated fairly by people who know that I'm gay	+3
8	I feel that it's important to be open about being gay	+3
18	My god accepts me that way I am	+3

The focus of Account C is on "being a woman" rather than on "being a lesbian". The identity is understood to be that of a woman who finds emotional satisfaction with a woman. Both familial and "born gay" explanations of lesbianism are strongly rejected. Being a lesbian is presented as a positive experience, but is not central to their identity. They present themselves as happy and comfortable with their lesbianism, which is only a small part of themselves. Being a lesbian is not seen to be fixed or unchangeable.

This account bears some similarity to Kitzinger's Account 2 ("romantic love"), in that lesbianism is not seen as fixed; becoming lesbian is related to falling in love with a woman; and being lesbian is not seen as an important part of themselves. However, unlike Kitzinger's account, Account C does not support the idea that they have enjoyed sex with men; nor do they present themselves as bisexual. Thus, although loving someone is seen as important, it is equally important that that someone is a woman.

None of the other accounts presented in Chapter III are particularly helpful for understanding this account.

**Account F : woman-choosing-woman**

Four Q-sorts have significant loadings on factor F, and only one of these (Q-sort 32) loads equally - but not very highly - on two factors (F and J). Account F, defined predominantly by Q-sorts 6, 34 and 55, can therefore be expected to be fairly distinctive.

This account is made distinctive by the emphasis placed on the "causes" of lesbianism. It is the only account which relates lesbianism to relationships with their fathers, although, as in Account E, being lesbian is also presented as a choice.

36	My relationship with my father helps explain why I am gay	+5
11	I chose to become gay	+5

In addition, as in Account C, being lesbian is related to having fallen in love with a woman, although this statement has a low ranking.

55	I became gay when I fell in love with a woman	+3
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Other explanations for lesbianism, particularly biological explanations, are strongly rejected.

6	I believe I was born gay	-6
41	Feminism played an important part in my becoming gay	-5
49	I became gay because men treat women so unfairly	-4

Being lesbian is understood as a deeply felt part of "the self"; it feels natural (15: +5) and is understood neither as an activity (52: -4) nor as a commitment to women (24: -3).

64	When I realised I was gay, it was as if I had "found myself"	+6
----	--	----

Unlike most of the other accounts, this account does not stress the importance of emotional relationships over sexuality; but, although making love is very enjoyable, the sexual part of being a lesbian is not emphasised.

35	Emotional relationships with women are more important to me than sexual relationships	0
65	I really enjoy making love with a woman	+6
2	I'm <u>not</u> comfortable with myself as a sexual person	-5
56	The sexual part of being gay is very important to me	+1

Being a woman is important, and they strongly reject the idea of wanting to be men and do not enjoy their "masculine sides". This account emphasises that they do not feel closer to gay men than to heterosexual women: their sense of identity as "women" is clearly strong and important to them.

25	Being a woman is very important to me	+5
1	I would like to be a man	-6
4	I enjoy the masculine sides of myself	-3
58	On the whole, I feel closer to gay men than to straight women	-5 (L -3)

"I am proud to be a woman, and to be as feminine as I am" (6). However, they do not actively dislike men, although this is not ranked very highly.

53	Basically, I dislike men	-3
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Like most of the other accounts, this account presents the women as happy with themselves (30: +5) and their lesbianism (9: +3; 34: +3), with no great desire to change (47: -3; 60: -3).

"I am also very proud to be gay, although I do not believe that one's lifestyle should become one's life" (6).

However, this positive image is less pronounced than in many of the other accounts, with only statement 30 ranking highly. Only one woman ranked statement 9 ("I am happy being gay") more highly than +2 in her personal Q-sort (Q-sort 55: +5). The "happy being lesbian" image is thus not unequivocal. This is also illustrated by the perception that they feel more secure about their identity when they are involved in a relationship.

17	I feel much more secure about my sexuality when I'm involved with someone	+3
----	---	----

There is some ambivalence in this account. Although they feel that they have been treated fairly by others, and believe that it is important to be open about their lesbianism, the women feel fairly strongly that they lead a "double life".

29	On the whole, I have been treated fairly by people who know I'm gay	+4
8	I feel that it's important to be open about being gay	+3
26	I often feel that I am leading a double life	+4

"All of my friends know that I am gay, and ... they accept and respect me for what I am..." (6).

Account F offers three explanations for the participants' lesbianism: their relationships with their fathers; a choice; and falling in love with a woman. An interview would be needed to examine how these ideas fit together (if they do). It might be that they identified as lesbian when they fell in love with a woman, and, on reflection, felt they had made the choice to be with women because of the kinds of relationships they had had with their fathers.

Both biological and feminist explanations for lesbianism are rejected. Being a lesbian is experienced as a natural part of the self. Sexuality is stressed more in this account than in most of the other accounts. Lesbianism is presented fairly (but not unequivocally) positively, and there is no desire to change. However, the women do not present themselves as very secure in their lesbianism. They have experienced fairly positive reactions from society, but feel that they are leading a double life.

The women whose Q-sorts load significantly on this factor do not differ to any great extent from the full P-set, although some differences are worth noting. Of the four women, two belong to the NG or Nederlandse Gereformeerde Kerk (Dutch Reformed Church) and the other two are not religious. Although the five women in the full P-set who indicated affiliation to the NG Kerk or one of its sister churches load on a number of different factors, on no other factor is there more than one NG woman, and they always appear with other Christian women. Although religious affiliation did not play a significant role in this account, some of the other aspects of the account are potentially explicable in relation to membership of the NG Kerk.

An investigation into the ways in which religious lesbian women cope with being both religious and lesbian (Blyth, 1984) found that both the NG Kerk members who participated in the research used "inertia" as a coping mechanism. In other words, they remained in the church, kept their lesbianism hidden, and made no attempt to reconcile the two. They thus lived "double lives", which the women who define Account F also feel they do. In

addition, the patriarchal nature of the NG Kerk and of many religious Afrikaner families (see Chapter I) may provide an explanation for the belief that their relationships with their fathers played a role in their becoming lesbian. This would need further exploration.

This account is not noticeably similar to any of the accounts presented in Chapter III, perhaps because of the context of the account as discussed above.

**Account E : definitely lesbian, but no different from heterosexuals.**

Five Q-sorts load significantly on Factor E, but only one of these (Q-sort 33) loads on that factor alone. Q-sort 2 loads also on factor A, Q-sort 31 also on factors A and J, Q-sort 39 on factor B, and Q-sort 3 on factor H. As Q-sort 33 has a high loading on factor E (0.79), while the other loadings are much lower (0.41-0.57), this account is defined predominantly by Q-sort 33.

This account is distinguished from the other factors by the belief that childhood experiences "caused" the women's lesbianism (no other account supports this notion at all strongly).

However, seemingly in complete contradiction with this, is the belief that they chose to become lesbian. This contradiction can be reconciled if the childhood experiences are understood to have led to the choice. Whatever the explanation, they reject the notion that they were born lesbian.

5	Something in my childhood caused me to become gay	+5
11	I chose to become gay	+6
6	I believe I was born gay	-4

One participant related her lesbianism to the role she felt she had been called upon to play within her family:

"... all my life I have been 'daddy's girl' and as he never had the son he wanted I filled that space" (2).

This account is also distinguished by the belief that they had felt as if they had "found themselves" when they realized they were lesbian. This belief is shared only with Account E.

64	When I realised that I was gay, it was as if I had "found myself"	+6 (E +6)
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Being lesbian is presented in a very positive light (9: +6; 60: -3; 59: +3; 13: +3); as easy to come to terms with (46: -5); and something about which they are very certain (61: +4). It is experienced as "natural" (15: +4; 48: -6). The notion that they might be bisexual is **strongly\_rejected** (as it is by accounts A, D, and H).

40	I am bisexual rather than gay	-6
----	-------------------------------	----

The participants feel fulfilled and express no regrets:

"It's not an easy life, but it's the only one I'd choose" (2).  
 "I've never felt so fulfilled in my life" (33).

This account, like most of the others, stresses the importance of emotional relationships above sexual ones (35: +4). In general, the sexual aspect of being lesbian is not seen as important.

56	The sexual part of being gay is very important to me	-4
2	I'm <u>not</u> comfortable with myself as a sexual person	0
65	I really enjoy making love with a woman	+2

This account presents the experience of being a lesbian in society in a positive light; although aware of discrimination, they have not experienced much of it, and feel a part of society (a feeling which they share with accounts H and J). In particular, as in Account L, living as a lesbian is not seen to be any different from living as a heterosexual woman.

3	In my experience, society generally does not discriminate against gay women	-3	
29	On the whole, I have been treated fairly by people who know that I'm gay	+4	
44	In my community, being a gay woman is totally taboo	-5	
26	I often feel that I am leading a double life	-4	
38	I feel as if I don't really belong to the rest of society	-6	(H -5) (J -5)
8	I feel that it's important to be open about being gay	+3	
12	For me, being gay is no different from leading a straight life	+5	(L +6)

Men seem to be insignificant in this account, although the women agree that they are not most comfortable with only women.

51	I feel uncomfortable in the company of most men	-2	
53	Basically, I dislike men	0	
62	I feel most relaxed and comfortable with just women around me	-5	

This accounts presents two explanations for being lesbian: it is understood to be a choice and to be related to childhood experiences. Lesbianism feels natural, as a part of the self, and they are happy being lesbian. Sexuality is unimportant, but emotional relationships are important. They don't feel uncomfortable in society, and experience being a lesbian as no different from being heterosexual. Men are fairly insignificant

in this account.

Account E is similar to Kitzinger's (1987) Account 3, in that the women present themselves as definitely lesbian, but perceive this lesbianism as only a small part of themselves. They also present being lesbian as no different from living as a heterosexual woman. However, this account differs from Kitzinger's, in that her account supports a biological explanation for lesbianism, while Account E rejects this notion. Lesbianism is presented both as a choice, and as something related to childhood experiences. As with Account F, an interview would be need in order to examine the way in which these two beliefs fit together.

This account would fit into the later part of Sophie's (1985/86) Identity Integration stage, in that the women seem to have an integrated identity, having accepted their lesbianism as a positive, but not central, part of themselves. Moreover, they do not see themselves as any different to heterosexual women, and thus do not divide the world into homosexuals and heterosexuals. According to Sophie's research, this would indicate a stage later (and, presumably, more developed) than "gay pride".

#### **Account L : No strong sense of lesbian identity**

Two Q-sorts load significantly on factor L. Q-sort 56, with a loading of nearly twice that of Q-sort 54 (0.82 compared with 0.44) loads on this factor alone, and defines Account L. Q-sort 54 also has a negative loading on factor N.

Account L does not involve a strong sense of identity as lesbian. Although other accounts present being a lesbian as not particularly important, this account stresses this. Along with Accounts E and M, Account L stresses that living as a lesbian is no different from living as a heterosexual woman.

- |    |   |    |
|----|---|----|
| 16 | Being gay is <u>not</u> one of the most important things about me.    | +5 |
| 12 | For me, being gay is <u>no</u> different from leading a straight life | +6 |

There is little identification as a lesbian. The account stresses that the women do not feel that they look lesbian, nor do they wish to be labelled as such. There is little identification with the lesbian or gay communities.

- |    |  |    |
|----|--|----|
| 42 | I don't think that I <u>look</u> gay                                     | +5 |
| 10 | I don't like being <u>labelled</u> as gay                                | +4 |
| 33 | My family and friends are more important to me than gay women as a group | +3 |
| 58 | On the whole, I feel closer to gay men than to straight women            | -3 |

In addition, being lesbian is not perceived as unchangeable.

- |    |  |    |
|----|--|----|
| 45 | I could be heterosexual if I wanted to | +3 |
|----|--|----|

Although this account presents being lesbian as easy to come to terms with (46: -6), and there is no desire to be heterosexual (47: -5), lesbianism is not presented in a particularly positive light: it neither provides strength, nor feels natural.

- |    |  |    |
|----|--|----|
| 50 | The word "lesbian" makes me feel uncomfortable             | -4 |
| 9  | I am happy being gay                                       | +3 |
| 60 | I think I would have been happier if I were <u>not</u> gay | +3 |
| 23 | Being gay makes me feel strong                             | -4 |
| 15 | It feels totally natural to love women                     | -5 |

This account also presents an ambiguous picture of relationships with men - sex is presented as both enjoyable and "not right".

57	I have enjoyed sex with men	+4
21	Sex with a man just never felt right	-4

However, the account presents a positive image of feelings about men.

14	I usually get on well with men	+4
53	Basically, I dislike men	-4
28	As far as I'm concerned, relationships with men aren't emotionally satisfying	-3

It does not really matter that emotional relationships with men are not unsatisfactory, because (along with Account G only) Account L does not present emotional relationships with women as more important than sexual relationships.

35	Emotional relationships with women are more important to me than sexual relationships	-6 (G-5)
----	---	----------

In addition, sex with women is presented as enjoyable and fairly important.

65	I really enjoy making love with a woman	+4
----	---	----

There is little awareness of discrimination, and, as a result, the women do not experience being a lesbian in society as discomfoting.

29	On the whole, I have been treated fairly by people who know that I'm gay	+3
44	In my community, being a gay woman is totally taboo	-5
26	I often feel that I am leading a double life	-3



lesbianism as a fixed identity. Account L would fit into Sophie's (1985/86) Identity Integration stage for the same reasons as Account E does, although the image presented is not as positive as Account E.

**Account I : certainly lesbian, but not really happy**

Four Q-sorts have significant loadings on factor I, with only Q-sort 28 loading on this factor alone. Q-sort 7 loads on factors I and A, Q-sort 4 on I, A and B, and Q-sort 29 on I and C.

This account presents a deeply felt sense of identity as lesbian, and a strong sense of certainty about that lesbianism. This combined image of a fixed, natural, deeply-felt sense of identity is stressed more in this account than in any other.

15	It feels totally natural to love women	+6	
61	Somewhere deep inside me, I <u>know</u> that I am gay	+5	
52	Being gay is something that one <u>does</u> , rather than something one is	-3	
7	I will <u>never</u> change my mind about being gay	+5	
45	I <u>could</u> be heterosexual if I wanted to	-5	
40	I am bisexual rather than gay	-3	
31	Even if I never had sex with a woman, I would still be gay	+6	(J+4)

As can be seen from the last statement above, which is supported more strongly here than in any other account, lesbianism is not seen as a sexual identity, and emotional relationships are presented as more important than sexual relationships (35: +4) - although sexual relationships are enjoyable (65: +4).

Lesbianism seems to be understood in terms of positive relationships with women, and although they have not enjoyed sex with men, the suggestions that men are sexually boring or male bodies repulsive are strongly rejected.

62	I feel most relaxed and comfortable with just women around me	+5
1	I would like to be a man	-6
25	Being a woman is very important to me	+4
57	I have enjoyed sex with men	-4
27	In my experience, men are generally sexually boring	-6
19	I find masculine bodies rather repulsive	-5

Explanations for lesbianism which involve an element of choice are rejected, and there is moderate support for a biological explanation.

55	I become gay when I fell in love with a woman	-4
49	I became gay because men treat women so unfairly	-3
6	I believe I was born gay	+3

Nonetheless, one's identity as lesbian or heterosexual is not presented as entirely fixed.

43	Heterosexual women can't become gay	-3
----	-------------------------------------	----

Although being lesbian is presented as fairly positive, this image is not unambiguously positive.

9	I am happy being gay	+3
60	I think I would have been happier if I were <u>not</u> gay	-5
47	I would like to be heterosexual	-3
50	The word "lesbian" makes me feel uncomfortable	+3
59	I have felt better about my body since I became gay	-4
18	My God accepts me the way I am	-4

In addition, role-playing is rejected (54: -3), and it is important to these women that they do not look lesbian (42: +4).

Although being lesbian is not presented as important, there is some sense of connectedness (group identity) with other lesbian women.

- |    |   |    |
|----|---|----|
| 16 | Being gay is <u>not</u> one of the most important things about me       | +3 |
| 63 | When I meet a new gay woman, I immediately feel that she is one of "us" | +3 |

Account I involves a deeply felt sense of identity as lesbian, which is certain and fixed. There is moderate support for the "born gay" notion. It is not presented as a primarily sexual identity, but as an emotional one which is linked to being a woman. It is, however, not an anti-male account.

The presentation of lesbianism is not unambiguously positive. The women who define this factor (all four of whom indicate a religious affiliation) say that their god does not accept their lesbianism, and thus it is not possible for them to experience it positively.

Account I is predominantly distinguished by the emphasis placed on lesbianism as fixed, natural and deeply experienced.

Account I is slightly similar to Kitzinger's Account 5 ("sick, and sorry"), in that being lesbian is not seen as particularly fulfilling or positive - but Account I is much less negative than Account 5, in that the women express no desire to change, and do

not support the belief that they would be happier if they were not lesbian. Moreover, unlike Account 5, Account I provides some support for lesbianism being a biological phenomenon. This account is not really similar to any of the other accounts presented in Chapter III, although it may fit into the Identity Integration stage of Sophie's (1985/86) sequence.

**Account J : Lesbian as fairly happy gay person**

All five of the Q-sorts which load significantly on factor J also load significantly on one or two other factors (Q-sort 49 on A and B; Q-sort 31 on A and E; Q-sort 12 on A; Q-sort 26 on C; and Q-sort 32 on F).

Like Account I, this account presents lesbianism as something which feels natural (15: +6) and certain (61: +4), and which is related to an identity as a woman.

52	Being gay is something that one <u>does</u> , rather than something one <u>is</u>	-4
64	When I realised that I was gay, it was as if I had "found myself"	+3
40	I am bisexual rather than gay	-3
25	Being a woman is very important to me	+6

In addition, being lesbian is not understood primarily as a sexual identity, although sexual relationships with women are presented as enjoyable (65: +5).

31	Even if I never had sex with a woman I would still be gay	+4
32	Even if I had enjoyable sex with a man now, I would still be gay	+3
35	Emotional relationships with women are more important to me than sexual relationships	+5
2	I'm not comfortable with myself as a sexual person	-5

Being lesbian is presented as a moderately positive experience (9: +3), and there is no desire to change (47: -4). These women also present a positive self-image (30: +5).

- |    |   |    |
|----|---|----|
| 46 | I find being gay difficult to come to terms with        | -6 |
| 48 | There are times when I feel that being gay is unnatural | -4 |

Being a lesbian in society is not presented as a negative experience (29: +3), and no serious conflict is presented about being religious and a lesbian.

- |    |   |    |
|----|---|----|
| 38 | I feel as if I don't really belong to the rest of society | -5 |
| 39 | Being religious is important to me                        | +4 |
| 18 | My god accepts me the way I am                            | +4 |

Although there is no desire to be a man (1: -6), men are not perceived negatively (53: -4; 19: -3), and the women say they get on well with men (14: +4).

In addition, this is the only account which strongly supports similarities between gay men and lesbians. The proposition that being lesbian is related to a commitment to women is rejected, although not strongly.

- |    |  |    |
|----|--|----|
| 22 | Gay men and women have nothing in common except that they choose same-sex partners | -5 |
| 24 | Being gay is about committing myself to women                                      | -3 |

Although being a woman is presented as important, this identity is best understood in terms of "lesbian as gay person", rather than "lesbian as woman". Account J presents lesbianism as something which feels natural and certain. There is a deeply felt sense of identity as lesbian, which is not experienced as

something primarily sexual. The issue of causation is irrelevant in this account. There is little social conflict, and little conflict about being religious and lesbian. Men are not viewed negatively, and gay men and lesbians are seen to share something in common. However, they do not present themselves as completely happy with their lesbianism.

The five women whose Q-sorts define this account differ from the P-set in two important ways. Firstly, they all indicated a religious affiliation of some kind. Secondly, they have identified themselves as lesbian for longer than any other account (mean is 18.2 years).

This account is not particularly similar to any of the accounts presented in Chapter III. It may fall into the Identity Integration stage presented by Sophie (1985/86) - especially as the women have identified themselves as lesbians for nearly two decades on average - but the account presents an ambiguous picture of lesbianism. This may be related to their having identified themselves a lesbian during a time when lesbianism was even more negatively portrayed than it is today. This kind of ambiguity may be similar to that presented in Kitzinger's (1987) Account 7, where one woman presented a bifurcated account (pathological and feminist) which was related to earlier and later experiences. An interview would be needed to clarify this account.

### Account H : Wanting to be a man

The Q-sorts compiled by three women have significant loadings on factor H, but only Q-sort 48 loads on factor H alone. Q-sort 3 loads on both factors H and E, and Q-sort 22 loads negatively on both factors H and A. The account thus represents the Q-sorts of Q-sorts 48 and 3, rather than that of Q-sort 22.

This account stresses masculinity, and the women present a strong desire to be men. An enjoyment of their masculinity is stressed more strongly than in any other account, as is the importance of butch-femme roles. It is also the only account which presents being a woman as unimportant.

1	I would like to be a man	+6
4	I enjoy the masculine sides of myself	+6
54	I feel that it's important to know whether one is butch or femme	+3
25	Being a woman is very important to me	-5

The participants explain themselves as follows:

"I wish I were a man" (48).

"I am biologically female and I see myself as a masculine woman" (3).

"I feel emotionally masculine" (3).

"Anything that makes me feel like a woman I hate it. I hate even the breasts I have" (48).

The desire to be heterosexual, while still presenting lesbianism as something which feels natural and enjoyable and sex with men as something which "just never felt right", should be understood in the light of the desire to be a man.

47	I would like to be heterosexual	+4
15	It feels totally natural to love women	+5

65	I really enjoy making love with a woman	+5
21	Sex with a man just never felt right	+5
57	I have enjoyed sex with men	-5

"I love women, I don't enjoy my life as a woman" (48).

In addition, if being a lesbian is linked to the desire to be a man, then gay men (who perhaps desire to be women) have little in common with lesbians.

22	Gay men and lesbians have nothing in common except that they choose same-sex partners	+6
----	---	----

Most of the common ideas about the "causes" of lesbianism are rejected, although there is a mild support for a biological explanation.

6	I believe I was born gay	+2
55	I became gay when I fell in love with a woman	-6
41	Feminism played an important part in my becoming gay	-5
11	I chose to become gay	-4
5	Something in my childhood caused me to become gay	-4
49	I became gay because men treat women so unfairly	-3

An inner, subjective sense of being lesbian is moderately supported, and the idea of being bisexual is strongly rejected.

61	Somewhere deep inside me, I know that I am gay	+3
64	When I realised that I was gay, it was as if I had "found myself"	+3
32	Even if I had enjoyable sex with a man now, I would still be gay	+3

Being lesbian is presented slightly positively, and is not seen as something which is very important.

60	I think I would have been happier if I were <u>not</u> gay	-3
46	I find being gay difficult to come to terms with	+3
16	Being gay is <u>not</u> one of the most important things about me	+3

In general, their experience of being lesbian in society has been positive, and being religious does not pose a problem for them.

38	I feel as if I don't really <u>belong</u> to the rest of society	-5
29	On the whole, I have been treated fairly by people who know that I'm gay	+4
39	Being religious is important to me	+4
18	My God accepts me the way I am	+4

"...I feel very proud of being that way and people respect me for what I am..." (3).

Account H is distinguished by the women's desire to be men. This explains the desire to be heterosexual even though making love with a woman feels natural and making love with a man does not: they would like to be heterosexual males. In addition, they feel they have nothing in common with gay men. Most of the theories about causation are rejected in this account, although there is some support for the "born gay" idea. There is not a very strong sense of identity as lesbian. They feel comfortable in society, but do not view being lesbian very positively.

The two women who define this account (participants 48 and 3) are noticeable in that they are both "black" (one is "Xhosa", the other "Asian"). This is significant, given the small number of "black" women participating in the research, but needs further exploration. (The high ranking of statement 1 on factor M - which has been omitted - is due to the high negative rankings given to

this statement in Q-sorts 50 and 59 - which load negatively on factor M - rather than a high positive ranking in Q-sort 37.)

Account H is unlike any of the accounts presented in Chapter III. It could be asked whether this is, in fact, an account of lesbian identity, or whether it is an example of a trans-sexual identity. But these women have identified themselves as lesbians, and thus their account needs to be considered. Nonetheless, an interview would again be needed in order to discover how they see themselves, and whether they really identify as lesbians or as would-be-heterosexual-men.

**Account G : Bisexuality: lesbianism as sexual identity**

Of the four Q-sorts which load significantly on factor G, three (Q-sorts 40, 13, 17) load on this factor alone. Q-sort 20 loads fairly highly on factor A (0.67) and loads negatively on factor G (-0.44). On the basis of these two facts the account can be expected to differ noticeably from Account A and to be fairly distinctive.

This account presents a very different view of being lesbian in that it is the only account that suggests that the women may change their minds about being lesbian. Lesbianism is identified as an activity rather than as an identity, and an "inner sense" of identity as lesbian is absent.

7	I will never change my mind about being gay	-3	
52	Being gay is something that one does, rather than something one is	+6	(M+3)

- |    |  |    |
|----|--|----|
| 64 | When I realised that I was gay,<br>it was as if I had "found myself" | -4 |
| 61 | Somewhere deep inside me, I know<br>that I am gay                    | -4 |

No other account rejects statements 7, 64 or 61. The difference between this account and the others can be related to the fact that this is the only one in which the women identify themselves as bisexual, and the only account which identifies the sexual aspect of lesbianism as very important:

- |    |   |    |
|----|---|----|
| 40 | I am bisexual rather than gay   | +5 |
| 56 | The sexual part of being gay is<br>very important to me                               | +5 |
| 35 | Emotional relationships with women<br>are more important than sexual<br>relationships | -5 |

Lesbianism is understood in terms of a commitment to women, and as a choice; and other explanations for lesbianism are rejected.

- |    |  |    |
|----|--|----|
| 24 | Being gay is about committing<br>myself to women             | +4 |
| 11 | I chose to become gay  | +6 |
| 6  | I believe I was born gay                                     | -6 |
| 5  | Something in my childhood caused<br>me to become gay         | -5 |
| 37 | My relationship with my mother<br>helps explain why I am gay | -3 |
| 36 | My relationship with my father<br>helps explain why I am gay | -3 |

Although lesbianism is understood in terms of a commitment to women, there is no rejection of men.

- |    |   |    |
|----|---|----|
| 53 | Basically I dislike men   | -5 |
| 49 | I became gay because men treat<br>women so unfairly                                 | -4 |
| 27 | In my experience, men are generally<br>sexually boring                              | -4 |
| 62 | I feel most relaxed and comfortable<br>with just women around me                    | -4 |
| 28 | As far as I'm concerned,<br>relationships with men aren't<br>emotionally satisfying | -3 |
| 14 | I usually get on well with men  | +3 |

There is some ambiguity about whether being a lesbian is positive or not, and the feeling that being lesbian involves leading a "double life" is strongly supported.

13	Being gay gives me a sense of freedom	+4
48	There are times when I feel that being gay is unnatural	+3
26	I often feel that I am leading a double life	+5

Moreover, this account does not present lesbianism as a central part of the women's identity, and they do not like being labelled.

16	Being gay is not one of the most important things about me	+4
10	I don't like being labelled as gay	+4

Although being lesbian is perceived as a choice, and the account is predominantly 'bisexual', there is still some sense of connectedness with other lesbian women, i.e. there is a social identity as lesbian.

63	When I meet a new gay woman, I immediately feel that she is one of "us"	+3
----	---	----

The need to look attractive is presented more strongly than in any other account, and there is no desire to be a man. However, masculine sides of themselves are not rejected.

20	Trying to look attractive is important to me	+4
1	I would like to be a man	-6
4	I enjoy the masculine sides of myself	+3

Account G presents lesbianism as an activity (doing) rather than as an identity (being). There is no deep sense of self as lesbian: the identity is rather that of a bisexual, and the

sexual aspect of lesbianism is very important. A biological explanation for lesbianism is strongly rejected; and it is understood rather in terms of a commitment to women. However, there is no rejection of men. There is some sense of lesbianism as a social identity. However, the women defining the account do not seem to be fully comfortable with their lesbianism. Unlike most of the other accounts, Account G presents appearance as important.

Account G is particularly interesting in that it is very similar to Kitzinger's (1987) Account 6, which she does not discuss in depth. Both accounts have two main components: the identity is primarily bisexual, and sexual rather than emotional relationships with women are stressed. Thus, while Kitzinger seems to suggest that the account she found was idiosyncratic, it seems that this account is, at least, moderately reliable.

No other accounts presented in Chapter III are particularly as a comparison for this account.

#### **Account K : Lesbianism as sexual rejection of men**

Two Q-sorts load significantly on factor K, one of which (Q-sort 11) loads on factor K alone. The other (Q-sort 38) loads on A as well. As the loading for Q-sort 11 is 0.76, and that for Q-sort 38 0.46, the account is defined largely by the former.

This account is more negative about men than any other account, and defines lesbianism primarily as a sexual identity. It is the

only account which presents masculine bodies as repulsive, and is more positive about finding men sexually boring and disliking men than any other account.

27	In my experience, men are generally sexually boring	+5
19	I find masculine bodies rather repulsive	+3
53	Basically, I dislike men	+3
21	Sex with a man just never felt right	+4
28	As far as I'm concerned, relationships with men aren't emotionally satisfying	+4

"It just seems to me that men and women are incompatible, that they are always at cross purposes - and this is especially true in bed" (11).

In this account, as in most of the others, there is an emphasis on emotional relationships: unsatisfactory emotional relationships with men are stressed, and emotional relationships with women are more important than sexual relationships. However, being lesbian is related more directly to sexual relationships in this account than in any other.

35	Emotional relationships with women are more important to me than sexual relationships	+3
31	Even if I never had sex with a woman, I would still be gay	-3
32	Even if I had enjoyable sex with a man now, I would still be gay	-3
17	I feel much more secure about my sexuality when I'm involved with someone	+3

Thus, although being sexual is not particularly important, their identity as lesbian is intimately interwoven with their sexual relationships.

Lesbianism is presented fairly positively - as a growth experience - and there is no desire to change, but they are not

unequivocally happy about being lesbian. A positive self-image is, however, presented.

9	I am happy being gay	0
34	Being gay has helped me to grow as a person	+4
47	I would like to be heterosexual	-4
30	On the whole, I like myself	+5

Biological (6: -6) and familial (36: -3) explanations of lesbianism are rejected, as is the "falling in love" explanation (55: -5). Feminism is related to the process of becoming lesbian, but lesbianism is also subjectively experienced as a part of the self and the possibility of change is rejected (although heterosexual women can become lesbian).

41	Feminism played an important part in my becoming gay	+4
61	Somewhere deep inside me, I know that I am gay	+6
45	I could be heterosexual if I wanted to	-5
43	Heterosexual women can't become gay	-4

Being a woman is seen as very important (25: +6), and there is no desire to be a man (1: -6).

In this account, being lesbian is presented as being very different from living as a heterosexual, and the women defining this account feel that they do not belong in society. This feeling can be related more directly to the experience of being different, rather than a feeling of rejection from society. Although society is experienced as somewhat discriminatory, this experience is not overwhelming; but the experience of discrimination probably explains the need not to be open about their lesbianism.

12	For me, being gay is no different from leading a straight life	-5
38	I feel as if I don't really belong to the rest of society	+4
3	In my experience, society generally does not discriminate against gay women	-3
44	In my community, being a gay woman is totally taboo	-4
8	I feel that it's important to be open about being gay	-4

This is the only account which presents the subjective experience of being "different" and of not belonging to society so strongly.

Although Account K does not define lesbianism primarily as a sexual identity, it is intimately interwoven with sexual relationships. The account indicates that never having sex with a woman or having enjoyable sex with a man would affect their identity as lesbian.

Being a lesbian is related to feminism, and other explanations for lesbianism are rejected; but being a lesbian is experienced as an unchangeable part of the self. They feel that being a lesbian is different from being heterosexual, and they stress that they do not feel a part of society (although they do not experience strong discrimination from society).

Account K is similar to Kitzinger's (1987) Account 4 ("radical feminism") in that being lesbian is related to feminism, and men are presented negatively. However, this account (unlike Account B, which also relates lesbianism to feminism, and unlike Account 4) does not present being lesbian in particularly positive terms.



9	I am happy being gay	-3	
48	There are times when I feel that being gay is unnatural	+4	(G +3)
50	The word "lesbian" makes me feel uncomfortable	+4	(I +3)

"This 'gay' thing has been very shattering and in some ways (particularly spiritually) I've found it at times almost unbearable" (25).

These negative feelings about being lesbian are clearly related to the religious beliefs of the women who define this account. They all identified themselves as Christians in the questionnaire and statement 39 is more important in this account than in any other.

39	Being religious is important to me	+6	(H +4) (J +4)
----	------------------------------------	----	------------------

"I can't really accept that my lifestyle is acceptable to Him" (25).

"If I wasn't a Christian I'd have no hassle at all being gay" (25).

"... probleme ondervind om myself met my lesbiese geneigdheid te aanvaar en dit uit te leef waarskynlik te wyte aan ... onsekerheid oor godsdienstige aanvaarbaarheid" (30).

At the same time, this account presents moderately positive feelings about themselves as people although this is less positive than in many of the other accounts.

30	On the whole, I like myself	+3	
----	-----------------------------	----	--

"Anyway, it [identifying as lesbian] has been a crash-course in life and I've learnt so much - really positive things about myself and other people's perceptions of me" (25).

Despite negative feelings about being lesbian, this account presents a certainty about being lesbian. In particular, the

notion that one can choose to be gay is rejected more strongly here than in any other account.

11 I chose to become gay -6 (H -4)

Accepting the idea that one had chosen to become lesbian would involve taking responsibility for that choice: and being a lesbian would then be a sin which they could change. Instead, being lesbian is seen as an inborn, unchangeable part of the self, and not just as an activity.

6	I believe I was born gay	+3
45	I could be heterosexual if I wanted to	-4
52	Being gay is something that one does, rather than something one is	-6
61	Somewhere deep inside me, I know that I am gay	+5
40	I am bisexual rather than gay	-5

Lesbian sexuality is not considered particularly important.

56	The sexual part of being gay is very important to me	-6
35	Emotional relationships with women are more important to me than sexual relationships	+5

This would again be in line with their strong religious beliefs. One participant (52) noted that she perceives herself as homo-emotional (homoemosioneel) rather than as homosexual (homoseksueel).

While the notion that lesbianism is not central to one's sense of self is shared with other accounts, the labelling of a person as lesbian is rejected a little more strongly than any other account.

10	I don't like being labelled as gay	+5	(G +4) (L +4)
16	Being gay is <u>not</u> one of the most important things about me	+4	

One participant felt that "Dis jammer dat 'n mens se keuse van 'n lewensmaat volgens geslag bepaal moet word en boonop 'n naam moet kry!" (52).

Being open about one's lesbianism is not seen as important, a belief which makes sense in terms of the importance of religious beliefs and awareness of social condemnation.

8	I feel that it's important to be open about being gay	-4	
---	---	----	--

Despite otherwise fairly traditional views about lesbianism, role-playing is strongly rejected, as is the notion that they want to be men.

54	I feel that it's important to know whether one is butch or femme	-5	
1	I would like to be a man	-3	

Men are viewed positively, as they are in most of the accounts. In addition, this account presents the least discomfort in the presence of men.

14	I usually get on well with men	+4	
53	Basically, I dislike men	-4	
51	I feel uncomfortable in the company of most men	-5	

This account is clearly distinguished from the other accounts by the importance of religious beliefs, and an awareness of very negative attitudes towards lesbianism in their communities. Moreover, the account presents the women as unhappy with their lesbianism. Like some of the other accounts, lesbianism is

presented as inborn and fixed, and sexuality is presented as not very important. They do not like being labelled, as they see being lesbian as only a small part of themselves. Men are presented positively in this account.

Account D is very similar to Kitzinger's (1987) Account 5 ("sick and sorry") in that the women present themselves as unhappy with their lesbianism, do not like being labelled, and do not feel that it is important to be open about their lesbianism. The idea that being a lesbian involves some kind of choice is also strongly rejected. Account D differs from Kitzinger's account in that biological rather than childhood factors are seen to have resulted in their lesbianism.

Account D is also similar to Ettore's (1980) "traditionalist lesbian" who perceives herself as "sick", and as suffering from a personal problem, which she does not take responsibility for. Again, Account D differs from Ettore's in that lesbianism is presented as a sin.

## 2. Q-SAMPLE 2: WOMEN, MEN AND SOCIETY

Thirteen factors were retained from the factor analysis of the Q-sorts completed using Q-sample 2. As with Q-sample 1, the factors differ greatly in their significance and uniqueness. The accounts developed from the factors will be discussed in the light of the perspectives on women, men and society presented in Chapter IV.

The twelve accounts discussed below (Account (VII) having been excluded) are all basically moderate accounts, which generally support liberal feminist demands and reject controversial radical/socialist feminist propositions to a greater or lesser extent. As the accounts were generally very similar, it was not possible to provide meaningfully different names for each of them, and names have therefore been omitted.

Account (I) stresses the need for legal reform in terms of discrimination against women, the need to transform society, the need for women to strengthen and empower themselves, and women's right to be free. It strongly rejects anti-feminist statements, traditional ideas about women's roles, and feminist calls for separatism and the abolition of the family.

Account (II) is similar to (I), but stresses equality more than legal reform, and supports the need to end war and racism and to see the world as a living unit. Controversial feminist propositions are strongly rejected.

Account (III) is similar to the above accounts, but supports the ideas that women can be equal to men, that more women politicians are needed, and that it is important for women to be feminine.

Account (IV) presents an even more independent outlook than (III) in that the idea that women can be equal to men is more strongly supported, and feminism is seen as no longer necessary.

Account (V) also supports liberal feminist aims, but stresses the importance of seeing the world as a living unit, struggling against racism, transforming society, and using feminine values to save the world, more strongly than specific women's issues.

Account (VI) stresses that women live under the continual threat of violence from men, and that women are usually seen in terms of their relationships with men. However, separatism and anti-male statements are rejected, as are traditional images of women.

Account (VIII) stresses the perception of women as warm and caring. It also supports the ideas that heterosexual relationships involve power struggles and that women are forced to be heterosexual.

Account (IX) presents the reality of women as oppressed, and the hope that women will be able to change the world. Broader changes than equality are presented as necessary.

Account (X), defined by only one woman, is confusing. It supports separatism more strongly than any other account, as well as other

controversial feminist propositions, while also supporting conservative beliefs about women and men.

Account (XI) supports liberal and socialist feminist propositions. It also supports the idea that women and men are different, and that this should not be changed.

Account (XII) supports the need for equality between women and men, as well as getting rid of non-biological differences between them, and the need to change present family structures. The importance of seeing the world as a living unit is also stressed.

Account (XIII) is an ambiguous account which supports negative and positive images of men, supports and rejects the idea of separatism, and supports the need for feminism while stressing that it is important for women to be feminine.

The twelve accounts based on Q-sample 2, which are presented in detail below, are presented in the order in which the factors on which they are based were extracted during the factor analysis.

#### Account (I)

Thirty-four Q-sorts load significantly on factor I, eleven of which load on this factor alone. Twenty-three also load on one or more of the following factors: (II), (III), (V), (VIII), (XI), (XII). Thus, like Account A, the one based on this factor expresses common aspects of a number of the others. However, the eleven Q-sorts which load on this factor alone will result in

this account, also being distinctive.

Although this account supports ideas from a number of feminist perspectives, its strongest support is for liberal demands for legal changes.

- |    |   |    |
|----|---|----|
| 11 | There should be laws prohibiting discrimination against women | +6 |
| 43 | We should not have any laws that discriminate against women   | +6 |

Other liberal beliefs supported in this account include the right for women to earn the same as men if they do the same work, and the need for more women to participate in government.

- |    |  |    |
|----|--|----|
| 44 | Women have a right to equal pay for equal work | +5 |
| 16 | We need more women politicians                 | +3 |

Liberal feminists, however, are frequently blind to the fact that equal pay for equal work is meaningless if women are limited to more menial work, and it is the call for the elimination of the distinction between "women's work" and "men's work" that begins to suggest that this is not a purely liberal feminist account.

- |    |   |    |
|----|---|----|
| 21 | We must eliminate the divisions between "women's work" and "men's work" | +3 |
|----|---|----|

This is supported by the fact that this account supports the need for a complete restructuring of society more strongly than any other.

- |    |  |    |       |
|----|--|----|-------|
| 30 | The whole of society needs to be transformed | +5 | (V+4) |
|----|--|----|-------|

This is a call made by both radical and socialist feminism.

The account also supports the need for women to organize around women's rights, which could be linked to their strong support for

women's need to strengthen and empower themselves; although they do not support separatism.

20	Women need to organise around women's rights	+3
9	Women need to strengthen and empower themselves	+5
25	Women should have as little to do with men as possible	-3

This suggests that their sympathies lie less with radical feminist ideas and more with socialist feminist ideas; although they do support other notions held by both radical and socialist feminism.

27	No-one will be truly free until women are free	+4
33	Women must be free to choose whether or not to have children	+4
46	Women are usually seen in terms of their sexual relationships with men	+4

As lesbians, it makes sense that they strongly disagree with the view of women primarily as wives and mothers.

1	A woman's most important roles are as wife and mother	-6
13	A woman can't really be fulfilled without children	-5
34	Men and women are meant to be partners in life	-4

Along with the rejection of traditional female roles goes a rejection of criticisms frequently levelled against feminists and feminism.

40	Feminists really want to be men	-6
8	Feminists are afraid of men	-5
41	We don't need women's liberation or feminism any more	-5

"Women's spirituality and feminism together with some other issues are very important aspects of my life" (59).

- 61 Feminism takes energy away from  
the liberation struggle in South  
Africa

-4

"I believe that women's movements [in the South African liberation struggle] are already making the same mistake made elsewhere. We are naive enough to believe that by achieving rights for others we will automatically gain them for ourselves. In my personal opinion, if women concentrated on their own rights first and gained a position of strength in society, we could then change our society and remove all forms of discrimination" (20).

Their rejection of the belief that feminism detracts from the liberation struggle can be understood in the light of, firstly, their belief that feminism is not essentially a "white" movement, and, secondly, the assertion that no-one will be truly free until women are free. As they support the struggle against racism, and thus, presumably, desire some sort of freedom for everyone in South Africa, it is logical that they should support feminism.

- |    |  |    |
|----|--|----|
| 26 | Feminism is essentially a "white" movement     | -3 |
| 27 | No-one will be truly free until women are free | +4 |
| 53 | We need to struggle actively against racism    | +4 |

They reject two radical and socialist feminist demands. The first - the call for autonomous women's organizations - has already been mentioned; the second is more controversial and is supported more by radical than socialist feminism.

- |    |                                |    |
|----|--------------------------------|----|
| 39 | The family should be abolished | -3 |
|----|--------------------------------|----|

Conservative beliefs about the natures of men and women - including the idea that being feminine is important for women - are also rejected.

- |    |                             |    |
|----|-----------------------------|----|
| 4  | Men are naturally dominant  | -4 |
| 31 | Women are naturally passive | -4 |

35	Men are naturally aggressive	-3
2	It's important for a woman to be feminine	-3

There is less emphasis on these, however, than on traditional ideas about women's roles, which, as lesbians, they have already rejected in their lives.

Account (I) includes a number of different strands. One of its most important calls is for the transformation of society; but, unlike radical or socialist feminism, it also stresses the importance of legal reforms. The transformation of society is understood more in terms of achieving equality between men and women (as well as, for example, ending racism) than in terms of completely changing social structures. This account also supports the need for women to organise as women, to strengthen and empower themselves, and to be free to control their own lives. However, the idea of separatism is strongly rejected. Traditional beliefs about women's roles, as well as anti-feminist comments about feminists and feminism, are also rejected.

Overall, then, Account (I) is a fairly strongly feminist account, although the changes demanded tend more towards reform than towards a complete transformation of society.

#### Account (II)

Q-sorts completed by thirty women load significantly on factor (II). Six of these Q-sorts load on this factor alone, while the remaining twenty-four on one or two of all the factors except (VII), (IX) and (X). Thus, in addition to being distinctive

because of the six pure loadings, this account will also share common aspects with Accounts (I), (III) - (VI), (VIII), (XI) - (XIII).

The liberal perspective in this account is slightly stronger in this account than in Account (I), with the account supporting equality with men, equality of pay, legal issues, and increasing the numbers of women in positions of power:

10	Women should be equal to men	+6
44	Women have a right to equal pay for equal work	+6
43	We should not have any laws that discriminate against women	+3
11	There should be laws prohibiting discrimination against women	+3
16	We need more women politicians	+3

However, the stress on legal intervention, a cornerstone of liberal practice, is less prevalent in this account than in Account (I). The stress here is on equality. As in Account (I), the demand for equal pay might be understood in the light of demands for the end of the gendered division of work (24: +3).

This account presents a fairly global perspective; believing in ecological issues, an end to war, the need to "save the world", and the end of racism. Only three accounts strongly support the need to end war, and this can be related to an understanding of the world as a "whole, living unit" and, in South Africa, to the issue of racism (because institutionalized racism has led to a situation which could be understood to be a civil war).

59	War of all kinds must be abolished	+5	(IX+5)
			(XIII+4)
60	We need to see the world as a whole, living unit	+5	

- |    |  |    |
|----|--|----|
| 29 | A commitment to feminine values (e.g. warmth and caring) is needed to save the world | +4 |
| 53 | We need to struggle actively against racism  | +4 |

This "global" view can be understood as a radical or as a socialist feminist perspective. The belief in "feminine values" suggests a radical feminist perspective, which is supported by their belief in women's rights to control their own reproductive capabilities.

- |    |  |    |
|----|--|----|
| 33 | Women must be free to choose whether or not to have children | +4 |
|----|--|----|

However, socialist feminists also believe that women should control their own bodies; and this account also supports a number of other statements which can be understood from a socialist feminist perspective. These include a historical perspective on women's oppression, the rejection of the blanket view that all women are oppressed and the rejection of the view that racism can be understood purely in terms of male dominance.

- |    |  |    |
|----|--|----|
| 45 | Women have been discriminated against differently at different times | +3 |
| 54 | All women are oppressed, no matter who they are                      | -3 |
| 22 | Racism is basically to do with male dominance                        | -3 |

This account also rejects three of the most controversial statements made by some radical feminists:

- |    |  |    |
|----|--|----|
| 24 | Men are our enemy                            | -6 |
| 47 | Lesbianism is a logical choice for feminists | -4 |
| 39 | The family should be abolished               | -6 |

"Coming from a close and loving maternal family I'm inclined to believe that the bonds of family are some of the strongest in human relationships. Taking away the right to a family would be taking away an individual's chance to have or be part of one" (47).

This account also rejects the idea of separatism.

- |    |  |    |
|----|--|----|
| 25 | Women should have as little to do with men as possible                 | -5 |
| 19 | Women should form their own organisations, from which men are excluded | -3 |

"Separatism does not bring solutions where the protagonists are inextricably linked in a complex society. Communications with men can educate them as to feminist values" (47).

The belief that men should share equally in child-rearing (7: +4) can be understood from a liberal point of view (i.e. equality) or from a socialist feminist point of view (i.e. the need to transform society, including the way children are raised).

As this account is neutral or ambivalent about the issue of transforming society (the relevant statement has a ranking of 0), and strongly supports equality, the explanation in terms of liberal beliefs seems more likely.

However, feminism is seen as more than just equality, for although it is asserted that women can be equal to men, the belief that feminism is no longer necessary is rejected (although not very strongly).

- |    |  |    |
|----|--|----|
| 42 | Any woman who wants to be equal to men <u>can be</u> equal | +3 |
| 41 | We don't need women's liberation or feminism any more      | -3 |

The women's own experiences as lesbians may provide an explanation for two sets of ideas presented in the account.

Firstly, they strongly reject two assertions sometimes made about feminists:

40	Feminists really want to be men	-5
8	Feminists are afraid of men	-5

These are fairly common beliefs held about lesbians, and their belief that this is not true for them may lead them to feel strongly about rejecting these beliefs in relation to feminism. Secondly, unlike Account (I), which rejects traditional beliefs about men and women, Account (II) focuses on traditional beliefs about women which their own experience would have contradicted.

31	Women are naturally passive	-4
13	A woman can't really be fulfilled without children	-4
1	A woman's most important roles are as wife and mother	-4

Account (II) is, on the whole, less strongly feminist than Account (I). The emphasis here is on liberal demands for equality, and on a more global perspective in terms of change.

### Account (III)

Q-sorts completed by fifteen women have significant loadings on factor (III), of which only Q-sort 33 loads on this factor alone. The remaining fourteen Q-sorts load on factor (III) as well as on one or two of the following factors: (I), (II), (VIII) and (IX). Three of these load on factor (I), three on factor (II), and seven on both. Thus, as this factor shares Q-sorts predominantly with factors (I) and (II), the account will also share a fair amount in common with the accounts based on those factors.

As was expected, this account is distinguished only by the fact that the account supports the need for more women politicians more strongly than any other account, though not much more strongly.

16 We need more women politicians +4

Like Accounts (I) and (II), this account stresses a liberal feminist perspective. However, while Account (I) stresses legal issues and Account (II) stresses equality, Account (III) stresses equality of pay as well as women's right to control their reproduction. This latter assertion is one of the basic demands of radical feminism, and Account (VIII) is the only other account which stresses this demand as strongly.

33	Women must be free to choose whether or not to have children	+6	(VIII+6)
44	Women have a right to equal pay for equal work	+6	
11	There should be laws prohibiting discrimination against women	+5	
43	We should not have any laws that discriminate against women	+5	
10	Women should be equal to men	+4	

Like Account (II), this account supports the view that women can be equal to men, but, unlike Account (II), the idea that women need to organize separately is not discounted. It also supports the idea of women organizing around women's issues more strongly than Account (II).

42	Any woman who wants to be equal to men can be equal	+4	(II+3)
19	Women should form their own organisations, from which men are excluded	+1	(II-3)
20	Women need to organise around women's rights	+2	(II+1)

(However, the support for organising as women is not as strong as in Account (I): +3).

In addition, Account (III) supports the need for feminism more strongly than Account (II) and less strongly than Account (I).

- |    |  |    |                 |
|----|--|----|-----------------|
| 41 | We don't need women's liberation<br>or feminism any more | -4 | (II-3)<br>(I-5) |
|----|--|----|-----------------|

Account (III) also supports a number of radical feminist notions.

- |    |  |    |  |
|----|--|----|--|
| 56 | Male domination is a universal<br>fact                                       | +3 |  |
| 46 | Women are usually seen in terms<br>of their sexual relationships with<br>men | +3 |  |
| 60 | We need to see the world as a whole,<br>living unit                          | +3 |  |

The last statement is also one which is supported by socialist feminism, as are a number of other statements agreed with in this account.

- |    |   |    |  |
|----|---|----|--|
| 45 | Women have been discriminated<br>against differently at different<br>times    | +4 |  |
| 7  | Men should share equally in the<br>work of bringing up children               | +5 |  |
| 21 | We must eliminate the divisions<br>between "women's work" and "men's<br>work" | +3 |  |

The second two statements could also be understood from a liberal perspective and, given that with the exceptions of statements 33, 45 and 7, all the statements ranked between +6 and +4 are basically liberal, it seems likely that these statements should be understood from a liberal perspective. In other words, they should be related to ideas about equality rather than transforming social relations.

In addition, this account strongly rejects a large number of the more controversial perspectives and practices suggested by radical feminists and, in some cases, by socialist feminists. The account rejects separatism, and the view that heterosexuality is compulsory and lesbianism a feminist option.

25	Women should have as little to do with men as possible	-5
24	Men are our enemy	-5
47	Lesbianism is a logical choice for feminists	-4
14	Heterosexuality is forced upon women	-3

However, Account (III) rejects some conservative notions about women even more strongly than it rejects radical feminist ideas.

1	A woman's most important roles are as wife and mother	-6
13	A woman can't really be fulfilled without children	-6
31	Women are naturally passive	-4
34	Men and women are meant to be partners in life	-3

The account also rejects anti-feminist ideas about feminists.

8	Feminists are afraid of men	-5
40	Feminists really want to be men	-5

Unlike the first two accounts which stress the need to struggle against racism, this is not strongly asserted in this account.

However, it does reject accusations of feminism as a "white" movement that detracts from the liberation struggle.

53	We need to struggle actively against racism	+1	(I+4) (II+4)
26	Feminism is essentially a "white" movement	-3	(I-3) (II-3)
61	Feminism takes energy away from the liberation struggle in South Africa	-3	(I-4) (II-2)



account rejects the need for laws that prevent discrimination against women.

- |    |   |    |        |
|----|---|----|--------|
| 11 | There should be laws prohibiting discrimination against women | -2 | (IX-2) |
|----|---|----|--------|

This account also supports a number of statements which could be interpreted from a socialist feminist perspective, although some of these could also be understood from a liberal (e.g. statement 7) or radical (e.g. statements 60 and 33) feminist perspective.

- |    |   |    |
|----|---|----|
| 7  | Men should share equally in the work of bringing up children            | +6 |
| 33 | Women must be free to choose whether or not to have children            | +5 |
| 45 | Women have been discriminated against differently at different times    | +4 |
| 52 | Every society divides work along sex lines...                           | +4 |
| 21 | We must eliminate the divisions between "women's work" and "men's work" | +3 |
| 49 | Women's position in society supports the economic system                | +3 |

This account also rejects some traditional beliefs about women (particularly those relating to women as wives and mothers) and about men.

- |    |   |    |
|----|---|----|
| 1  | A woman's most important roles are as wife and mother | -5 |
| 13 | A woman can't really be fulfilled without children    | -3 |
| 4  | Men are naturally dominant                            | -3 |

Like accounts (I) and (II), Account (IV) supports the importance of struggling against racism (53: +5) and disagrees that feminism is a "white" movement (26: -3).

While supporting a number of feminist propositions, this account rejects a number of feminist ideas. In particular, it rejects

beliefs that could be interpreted as being anti-men.

24	Men are our enemy	-6
22	Racism is basically to do with male dominance	-5
28	Men are destroying the world	-5
39	The family should be abolished	-5
25	Women should have as little to do with men as possible	-4

This account is one of the most supportive of men. Only four other accounts support the belief that men as well as women are negatively affected by sexism.

50	Men are also hurt by sexism	+4
----	-----------------------------	----

This account is also one of the few which supports the belief that the differences between men and women are primarily biological, and would rather not get rid of these differences.

36	The differences between men and women have very little to do with biology	-4
5	We need to get rid of the differences between women and men	-4

The account also supports the belief that men are naturally aggressive, a belief supported by only two other accounts (although none of them support it strongly).

35	Men are naturally aggressive	+3
----	------------------------------	----

This account supports the idea that feminism is no longer necessary more strongly than any other account.

41	We don't need women's liberation or feminism any more	+2	(VII+1)
----	--	----	---------

This can be related to the very strong support for the idea that women can be equal to men. This view is held more strongly by this account than by any other.

42	Any woman who wants to be equal to men <u>can be</u> equal	+6	(VII+5) (III+4)
----	---	----	--------------------

"... everyone can attain what they set out to achieve - if they want it badly enough ..." (13).

In line with both of these beliefs, this account rejects the idea of women organizing for themselves, and, even more strongly, organizing by themselves.

20	Women need to organise around women's rights	-3	(VI-1)
19	Women should form their own organizations from which men are excluded	-6	

No other account rejects the idea of women organizing for or by themselves as strongly.

It is this strong rejection of women's organizations that most distinguishes this account from any of the other accounts.

Account (IV) supports equality between men and women, as well as a number of feminist analyses of social relations. It is more supportive of men than most of the other accounts, and does not support getting rid of the differences between women and men. Feminism is seen as no longer necessary, as women who want to be equal, can be equal.

In general, then, Account (IV) can be understood as an independent account in that, while discrimination against women is recognised, feminism and women's organisations are no longer seen as necessary. Of the four women whose Q-sorts define this factor, three held jobs classified as Category 1, and the fourth was a student. Thus, as women whose work is professional or

managerial (i.e. high status) they have managed to live out their own beliefs (having achieved some measure of equality). As they have had the power to achieve equality themselves, they believe that others should also be able to do so.

#### Account (V)

Five Q-sorts load significantly on factor (V), of which only Q-sort 55 loads on this factor alone. Q-sort 40, with the highest loading, also loads on factor (I), Q-sorts 5 and 54 also load on factors (I) and (II), and Q-sort 14 also loads on factor (II). This account will thus share a number of aspects in common with Accounts (I) and (II).

Account (V) supports the need for equality between women and men (10: +5), legal changes (43 & 44: +3) and women's involvement in main-stream society (48: +4).

However, the emphasis in this account is on a much broader level of change, involving a transformation of society, and including issues of racism and ecology. The account stresses the combination of these issues more strongly than any other account.

30	The whole of society needs to be transformed	+4	(I+5)
53	We need to struggle actively against racism	+6	
60	We need to see the world as a whole, living unit	+6	(XII+6)
29	A commitment to feminine values (e.g. warmth and caring) is needed to save the world.	+4	

Although these beliefs are held by many different feminists as

well as non-feminists, a commitment to changing the world should also be seen in conjunction with a number of views which are held primarily by socialist feminists.

- |    |  |    |
|----|--|----|
| 49 | Women's position in society supports the economic system                             | +5 |
| 46 | Women are usually seen in terms of their sexual relationships with men               | +5 |
| 55 | Men are only "the enemy" because of the way society works - not because they are men | +3 |
| 45 | Women have been discriminated against differently at different times                 | +3 |

This is one of only two accounts that support the view that sexuality is not a purely private/personal matter; a view originally proposed by radical feminism but also strongly supported by socialist feminism.

- |    |  |    |          |
|----|--|----|----------|
| 17 | Although we see sexual relationships as private, they are also public issues | +3 | (XIII+3) |
|----|--|----|----------|

This account also rejects the idea that feminists want to be men (40: -4) or are afraid of men (8: -5), and that feminism is no longer needed (41: -6).

Traditional ideas about women as wives and mothers are rejected (13: -4; 1: -3), as is the belief that women are closer to nature than men are.

- |    |   |    |
|----|---|----|
| 32 | Women are closer to nature than men are | -3 |
|----|---|----|

This last statement is one which is supported by some radical feminists - often by implication rather than overtly - and, like the other accounts already discussed, this account rejects some

of radical and socialist feminism's more controversial propositions (particularly those which could be interpreted as being anti-men). In addition, this account rejects more strongly than any other account the assertion that lesbianism is a logical choice for feminists.

47	Lesbianism is a logical choice for feminists	-6
25	Women should have as little to do with men as possible	-5
39	The family should be abolished	-5
22	Racism is basically to do with male dominance	-4
24	Men are our enemy	-4
23	All women share common experiences because they are women	-3
36	The differences between men and women have very little to do with biology	-3

It is interesting to note that although the account supports the need for feminism and a number of feminist demands and propositions, it rejects the need for women to organise separately and does not support (or is ambivalent about) women organizing at all.

19	Women should form their own organizations, from which men are excluded	-2
20	Women need to organise around women's rights	0

Account (V) supports the need for equality between women and men and the need for legal support for this equality. The account includes a global perspective on change, including transforming society, struggling against racism, and seeing the world as a whole, living unit. There is also support for a number of socialist feminist analyses, including the notions that women are generally perceived in terms of their relationships with men, and

that sexuality is not only a private issue. Traditional ideas about the roles of women are rejected, as are controversial radical feminist propositions. There is no support for women organising around women's issues. Overall, Account (V) is not so much a feminist account as one which stresses the need for certain world-wide changes.

#### Account (VI)

Five Q-sorts load significantly on factor (VI), and all five also load on other factors: Q-sort 27 on factors (I) and (II), Q-sort 9 on factor (I), Q-sort 21 on factors (I) and XI, Q-sort 16 on factor (II), and Q-sort 37 on factor (IV).

Account (VI), like the other accounts, supports a number of liberal feminist demands, particularly related to equality (44: +6; 10: +3) and legal changes (11 & 43: +4).

However the emphasis on ideas which are put forward primarily by radical feminists is equally strong. In particular, it supports the observation that women live under the threat of violence from men more strongly than any other account, and it may be that this issue has particular salience for these women. They may, for example, be members of Rape Crisis (which offers assistance to women who have been raped and/or battered) or they may have experienced such violence themselves.

57	Women live under the continual threat of violence from men	+6	(X+5) (IX+4)
46	Women are usually seen in terms of their sexual relationships with men	+5	

- |    |   |    |       |
|----|---|----|-------|
| 33 | Women must be free to choose<br>whether or not to have children | +4 |       |
| 23 | All women share common experiences<br>because they are women    | +3 | (X+4) |

This account is one of only two which support the last belief at all strongly: most accounts are neutral or ambivalent about this issue.

Account (VI) also supports a few propositions which are generally suggested by socialist feminism, although the belief that divisions between "women's work" and "men's work" need to be eliminated (21: +5) and that men should share in the work of child-rearing (7: +3) are related and can also be understood in terms of a move towards equality rather than a need to restructure society. In particular, the demand for "equal pay for equal work" only makes real sense if it is related to a change in the types of work that women are restricted to.

There is also strong support for issues which go beyond the boundaries of "women's issues": racism and ecological issues.

- |    |   |    |  |
|----|---|----|--|
| 60 | We need to see the world as a whole,<br>living unit | +5 |  |
| 53 | We need to struggle actively against<br>racism      | +4 |  |

This account, like the others, rejects traditional images of women. In addition, the idea that femininity is important for women is rejected more strongly by this account than any other.

- |    |  |    |       |
|----|--|----|-------|
| 2  | It's important for a woman to be<br>feminine                     | -4 | (I-3) |
| 13 | A woman can't really be fulfilled<br>without children            | -4 |       |
| 38 | Marriage encourages commitment and<br>stability in relationships | -3 |       |

Although the idea that marriage encourages stability and commitment is rejected, there is no support for the abolition of the family (39: -5).

Other radical feminist demands are rejected, particularly those which encourage separatism.

25	Women should have as little to do with men as possible	-5
19	Women should form their own organizations, from which men are excluded	-3
47	Lesbianism is a logical choice for feminists	-3

Apart from rejecting separatism, the account rejects the idea that men are "the enemy" (24: -6) and the idea that men are naturally dominant (4: -3). In addition, men are seen to also be hurt by sexism (50: +3).

Negative images of feminists are rejected (40: -5; 8: -4), and the account supports the need for feminism. However, the account does not support the need for women to organize around women's issues.

41	We don't need women's liberation or feminism any more	-4
20	Women need to organise around women's rights	-1

Account (VI) supports liberal feminist demands for equality and legal changes. It also strongly supports the belief that women live under the threat of male violence, and that they are usually perceived in terms of their relationships with men. Women are thus seen to share common experiences because they are women. There is, as in Account (V) support for more general issues such

as ending racism. Traditional images of women are rejected; in particular, the need for women to be feminine is rejected more strongly than in any other account. Separatism is also rejected, as are anti-male statements. While feminism is seen to be necessary, there is no support for women organising around women's issues.

### Account (VIII)

Q-sorts completed by three women loaded significantly on factor (VIII). Q-sort 6 loads on this factor only, Q-sort 50 loads factors (I) and (II) as well, and Q-sort 7 loads on factors (II) and (III) as well.

Account (VIII) contains a number of different strands. Like most of the other accounts, there is a liberal element, in that they support not having laws that discriminate against women (43: +4). There is also an independent strand, in that women are seen to be able to be equal to men if they want to (42: +5).

In addition, there is also a strong radical feminist element in the account. Women are presented as naturally warm and caring, while men are naturally dominant and aggressive. Women's "natural" characteristics are highly valued.

3	Women are naturally warm and caring	+6
4	Men are naturally dominant	+3
35	Men are naturally aggressive	+3
29	A commitment to feminine values (e.g. warmth and caring) is needed to save the world	+4

Supporting these views can be perceived of as conservative, but

they must be viewed in the context of other statements.

Heterosexuality is not understood as natural, and relationships between men and women are presented as involving power struggles.

14	Heterosexuality is forced upon women	+5
15	Heterosexual relationships always involve power struggles	+4
46	Women are usually seen in terms of their sexual relationships with men	+3
34	Men and women are meant to be partners in life	-4

In addition, the account denies that feminists really want to be men (40: -6) and that feminists are afraid of men (8: -5). Other conservative ideas about women are rejected: particularly those relating to women's roles as wives and mothers (1: -4). Thus, this is clearly a feminist account.

However, it is not unambiguously a radical feminist account. Like most of the other accounts, some of radical feminism's most controversial propositions are rejected. This includes perceiving men as women's enemy (24: -6), the abolition of the family (39: -5), and negative images of men (22 & 28: -3).

This could be related both to a tendency to be moderate, and to the acceptance of certain socialist feminist propositions. In particular, the oppression of women is seen to be historically variable, rather than unchanging and universal.

54	All women are oppressed, no matter who they are	-5
----	---	----

Although this is a feminist account, and the idea that feminism is no longer necessary is rejected (41: -3), there is little

support for women organising around women's issues (20: 0).

In general then, this is a predominantly radical feminist account (of a kind), which values women's "natural" characteristics more highly than men's. Although heterosexuality is not perceived as natural, there is a sense that the women presenting this account have a biologicistic understanding of women's and men's natures.

### Account (IX)

Two Q-sorts load significantly on factor (IX), with Q-sort 3 loading purely on the factor, and Q-sort 22 also loading on factor (III).

Account (IX) is interesting in that it is the only account which supports the proposition that a woman's most important roles are as wife and mother more strongly than any other account. It also supports the existence of male domination.

1	A woman's most important roles are as wife and mother	+6
56	Male domination is a universal fact	+5

However, these statements should be understood in the light of a fairly strong support for radical feminist ideas about male-female relationships.

46	Women are usually seen in terms of their sexual relationships with men	+4
57	Women live under the continual threat of violence from men	+4
54	All women are oppressed, no matter who they are	+4

This is thus clearly a strongly feminist account, which also accepts the reality of many women's lives. The proposition that

this is a feminist account is supported by the strong rejection of the idea that feminism is no longer necessary.

41 We don't need women's liberation or feminism any more -6.

Their very strong rejection of the proposition that women should be equal to men (which they reject much more strongly than any other account) should be understood in the light of this strong radical feminist element.

10 Women should be equal to men -6

It seems that equality is not the aim, but that men and women are perceived differently, and women's values rated more highly.

58 Women will manage to change the world +6  
32 Women are closer to nature than men are +3

Rather than equality, a change in the world, including the total abolition of war (59: +5), seems to be the aim of this account. At the same time, men are not perceived as the enemy (24: -4), and separatism is not supported (25: -4). There is also no support for women organising around women's issues (20: -1).

In general, this is a fairly feminist account which seems to suggest that women are in some way superior to men (in terms of the values held by these women).

#### Account (X)

This is the only factor which has one significant loading (Q-sort 1). In addition, it is factorially pure, in that this Q-sort

does not load significantly on any other factor.

It is made even more interesting in that Q-sort 1 was completed by a Xhosa-speaking woman who had left her own community because she felt that lesbianism was totally taboo there:

"I do not mix with black people because they shun me for what I am" (1).

The account which she represents is particularly confusing, and it would need an interview with her to clarify the ambiguities. Thus, only some of the issues will be dealt with. She presents a bifurcated account: both conservative and feminist.

On the one hand, she says that men and women are meant to be partners (34: +6), and that women are naturally passive (31: +5).

On the other hand, she supports a number of feminist propositions, some of which are fairly controversial.

57	Women live under the continual threat of violence from men	+5
23	All women share common experiences because they are women	+4
27	No-one will be truly free until women are free	+4
15	Heterosexual relationships always involve power struggles	+3
47	Lesbianism is a logical choice for feminists	+3

Her account is not anti-men, in that men are not perceived of as the enemy, nor are they seen to be destroying the world. At the same time, hers is one of the few accounts that supports separatism in any way, and it supports women organising more strongly than any other account.

18	Men who struggle actively against sexism deserve a place in the women's movement	-4	(XIII-4)
25	Women should have as little to do with men as possible	+3	
20	Women need to organise around women's rights	+4	(I+3) (XII+3)

However, her account does not present the same beliefs about men that she puts forward in her letters: and these explain her support for separatism:

"I did not know what to say about men, for I hate men. I would be very pleased if there were no men on earth at all" (1).

In order to fully understand her account, it would be necessary to examine her perception of being a "black" woman in South Africa, her understanding of separatism (refer to brief discussion of Black Consciousness in Chapter IV), and her original community's perceptions about the natures and roles of men and women.

It seems clear from a brief look at this account however, that a woman's understanding of feminism cannot be separated from her context, and from the other oppressions she may have experienced. In this case, the participant has also been oppressed as a "black" person by "white" people, and as a lesbian by "black" people.

#### Account (XI)

Four Q-sorts load significantly on factor (XI), all of which also load on other factors. Q-sorts 51 and 8 also load on factor (I), Q-sort 21 on factors (I) and (VI), and Q-sort 17 on factor (III).

Account (XI) is thus not a particularly distinctive account. It is much like the other feminist accounts, in that there is a mixed support for liberal (44: +6; 43: +5) and socialist (46: +5; 58: +5; 27: +4) feminist propositions. In addition, anti-feminist (4: -6; 41: -6; 8: -5), controversial feminist (47: -4; 39: -4; 24: -3; 25: -3), and conservative (1: -5; 13: -5; 34: -4; 31: -4) propositions are all rejected.

This account differs from the others only in that it provides the only strong support for the idea that men and women are very different from each other.

37 Men and women are very different  
from each other +4

In addition, there is little desire to get rid of these differences.

5 We need to get rid of the differences  
between women and men -3

However, the account does not indicate what these differences are, or why they should be maintained.

### Account (XII)

Two Q-sorts load significantly on factor (XII), one of which (Q-sort 27) also loads on factors (I), (II) and (VI). The other (Q-sort 48) also loads on factor (II).

Account (XII) is the most directly liberal account which emerged in this study.

Equality between men and women (10: +6) is stressed in this account as it is in many of the others; this includes equal pay (44: +3; 21: +4) and laws prohibiting discrimination against women (11: +4). However, equality is taken further, to include ending differences between men and women.

- |   |   |    |
|---|---|----|
| 5 | We need to get rid of the differences between women and men | +5 |
|---|---|----|

Getting rid of differences between women and men, however, cannot be intended as an elimination of all these differences, as they are perceived to be biologically based.

- |    |   |    |
|----|---|----|
| 36 | The differences between men and women have very little to do with biology | -5 |
|----|---|----|

Moreover, although they support changes in the present family structure (the only account to do so), a total transformation of society is not supported.

- |    |  |    |
|----|--|----|
| 6  | The family as we know it needs to be changed | +4 |
| 30 | The whole of society need to be transformed  | -3 |

Account (XII) rejects radical/socialist feminist propositions more strongly than conservative notions about women. Separatism is strongly rejected, as is the abolition of the family.

- |    |   |    |
|----|---|----|
| 24 | Men are enemy   | -6 |
| 39 | The family should be abolished                            | -6 |
| 25 | Women should have as little to do with men as possible    | -5 |
| 15 | Heterosexual relationships always involve power struggles | -3 |
| 35 | Men are naturally aggressive                              | -5 |
| 28 | Men are destroying the world                              | -4 |
| 31 | Women are naturally passive                               | -4 |
| 2  | It's important for a woman to be feminine                 | -3 |

Although some feminist propositions are rejected, there is support for women to organise.

20	Women need to organise around women's rights	+3
9	Women need to strengthen and empower themselves	+4

The account also stresses ecological issues.

60	We need to see the world as a whole, living unit	+6
29	A commitment to feminine values (e.g. warmth and caring) is needed to save the world	+3

Account (XII) supports full equality between women and men, and stresses the need to get rid of those differences between women and men which are not directly related to biology. It supports changing the present family structure, but rejects a number of radical/socialist feminist propositions even more strongly than it rejects conservative notions about women. The account does support the need for women to organise.

In general, this is a liberal feminist account which seems to support androgyny, and which does support the need for women to organise.

#### Account (XIII)

Two Q-sorts load significantly on factor (XIII). Q-sort 41 loads on this factor alone, while Q-sort 17 loads on factors (II) and (XI) as well.

Account (XIII) includes a number of contradictions, some of which

are explicable, some not.

For example, the account both supports and rejects separatism. They reject working with men more strongly than any other account (except, to some extent, Account (X)).

51	Women need to work together with other people who are discriminated against (e.g. working class men)	-4	
18	Men who struggle actively against sexism deserve a place in the women's movement	-4	(X -4)

At the same time, it rejects other forms of separatism.

25	Women should have as little to do with men as possible	-5	
19	Women should form their own organisations, from which men are excluded	-3	

This contradiction may be explicable in terms of two attitudes towards men. On the one hand, men are perceived as naturally dominant and aggressive, and the belief that men are the enemy is less strongly rejected than in any other account. On the other hand, men are also seen to be hurt by sexism.

4	Men are naturally dominant	+5	
35	Men are naturally aggressive	+3	
24	Men are our enemy	-1	
50	Men are also hurt by sexism	+3	

In addition, men and women are seen to share some common concerns.

53	We need to struggle actively against racism	+5	
59	War of all kinds must be totally abolished	+4	

There is support for a number of liberal feminist demands,

including legal changes (11: +6) and equality of pay (44: +4). The latter can also be linked to a demand for the elimination of divisions between "women's work" and "men's work" (21: +6).

The account also strongly supports the need for women to strengthen and empower themselves, and rejects the notion that feminism is no longer necessary.

9	Women need to strengthen and empower themselves	+5
41	We don't need women's liberation or feminism any more	-5

At the same time, the account supports the need for women to be feminine; and rejects, more strongly than most, some socialist feminist propositions.

2	It's important for a woman to be feminine	+4
57	Women live under the continual threat of violence from men	-6
52	Every society divides work along sex lines ...	-5
49	Women's position in society supports the economic system	-4

Account (XIII) thus includes some contradictions: it supports negative and positive attitudes towards men, and both supports and rejects separatism. The need for feminism is supported, as is the importance of a woman being feminine.

In terms of participant variables, it is interesting to note that one of the two women whose Q-sorts define this factor is Xhosa-speaking. Only two factors from Q-sample 2 are strongly affected by Xhosa-speaking women's Q-sorts (Accounts X and XIII): and both of these Q-sorts include a number of contradictions. In both

cases, in depth interviews would be needed in order to begin to understand the contradictions clearly.

### 3. ATTEMPTING TO LINK THE ACCOUNTS FROM Q-SAMPLES 1 AND 2

One of the two auxiliary aims of this research was to examine the relationship between the accounts developed from Q-sample 1 and those from Q-sample 2. It is believed that there is potentially a link between the accounts lesbians present of their lesbianism, and the understanding they have of the natures and roles of women and men in society. Finding these links might then help clarify the accounts that the participants presented of their lesbianism.

Attempts were made to find these links in two ways, and a third way was considered, but rejected.

Firstly, the accounts from Q-sample 1 were used as the basis for the examination. Each account was dealt with separately. The Q-sorts defining an account from Q-sample 1 were listed. The factors from Q-sample 2 on which these Q-sorts had significant loadings were then also listed. The accounts based on the most frequently occurring factors were examined. This did not provide any meaningful relationship. In an attempt to clarify the picture, those factors from Q-sample 2 on which the Q-sorts had the highest loading (i.e. only one factor for each Q-sort) were listed, and the most frequently occurring accounts examined. This did not make the relationships any clearer.

Secondly, the accounts from Q-sample 2 were used as the basis for the analysis, and the same two procedures were carried out. The results were not any more meaningful than the first procedure.

Carrying out a factor analysis on the raw data from both Q-samples combined was considered. This approach was discarded because the instructions for the two Q-samples differed and it would have involved combining two different Q-sorts for each individual, a procedure which was not considered valid. In addition, it was felt that this would not have clarified the relationships, as new accounts would have emerged which would almost certainly not have related clearly to the original accounts.

Thus, the attempts to link the two sets of accounts proved ineffective. This can be related to a number of factors.

- 1) The first relates to the way in which factor Q-sorts are developed from the individual Q-sorts. Each factor Q-sort (and thus each account) is developed from the aspects of the Q-sorts which are common to those Q-sorts loading significantly on the factor, which means that many individual aspects are lost. This is illustrated by the fact that one Q-sort can load significantly on two very different (i.e. contradictory) factors. This problem could, and perhaps should, have been foreseen, as it reflects both an aspect of Q-methodological procedure as well as a reality about subjectivity - that it is contradictory (Henriques et al, 1984).

2) The second major problem, which could not have been foreseen, relates to the fact that many of the Q-sorts loaded on more than one factor. This is true for twenty-seven (45%) of the Q-sorts in Q-sample 1, and thirty-four (56,7%) of the Q-sorts in Q-sample 2. The relationships between the two sets of accounts are thus understandably confusing and unclear.

3) Many of the accounts are very similar. This is particularly true for the accounts emerging from Q-sample 2. As a result, even if the relationships between the factors were unclear, it would be difficult to decide what aspects of the accounts were relevant to those relationships.

4) Many of the factors have only a few Q-sorts which load significantly on them, and this makes drawing any conclusions from such a small number of Q-sorts extremely difficult. For example, should both Q-sorts loading on factor K also load on factor (II) (as is the case), this is as likely to be due to chance, given the large number of Q-sorts which load on factor (II), as it is to be due to a meaningful relationship between Accounts K and (II).

5) The final problem relates to the way in which Q-sample 2 was developed. The aim of this Q-sample was (if possible) to assign the women to different feminist and non-feminist perspectives, rather than having them label themselves. On the basis of this, conclusions were to be drawn about the ways the participants viewed "women, men and society" and how these linked to perspectives about lesbianism. However, the accounts which

emerged were largely a mixture of liberal, radical and socialist feminist perspectives, with an overall tendency towards reform and moderation. Thus, there was not sufficient clarity about the ways in which the participants perceived the natures and roles of men and women in society in order for links to be made between the two sets of accounts.

#### 4. PARTICIPANTS' EXPERIENCES OF COMPLETING THE Q-SORTS

A number of participants indicated that they had found completing the Q-sorts a valuable experience. Some of them described their experiences as follows:

"I actually learnt a lot about my own opinions - eg that 'butch' and 'femme' aren't very important to me; that I actually don't dislike men as much as I thought I did; and that sexuality is quite important to me" (6).

"This Q-sort helped me to see how I feel about various things" (10).

"Very thought-provoking" (20).

"Has made me ask questions I would not have asked myself before" (28).

"Some of them really got me thinking" (43).

"In fact I learnt a whole lot in doing this Q sort [1], about myself and general concepts" (49).

"These two sets of statements [the Q-samples] have really brought about quite a change for me" (6).

"I found this [Q-sample 1] quite challenging to sort out and it helped me to think about some things I'd been hiding from myself" (13).

"I've been more honest in sorting these statements for 2 days than I have been for 3 years" (6).

Completing the Q-sorts thus proved valuable for the participants in that it made them think about some of the issues covered in

the Q-samples, examine and re-evaluate their own beliefs, and even bring aspects about their understanding of their lesbianism into the open.

This was clearly research both for and about the participants, and the research thus fulfilled at least one of the aims of feminist research by being of value both to the researcher and to the women participating in the research.

## CHAPTER VIII

### CONCLUSIONS

#### 1. SUMMARY: MAIN FINDINGS OF THIS RESEARCH

The overall findings of this research are discussed below in relation to the aims of the study as set out in Chapter I.

##### a) Aim 1: accounts of lesbian identities

The first, and primary, aim of this research was to explore the contents of accounts of lesbian identities presented by some South African lesbians.

Fourteen factors were extracted from the factor analysis of the Q-sorts completed by the sixty participants, and factor scores were then used to develop factor Q-sorts. Of the fourteen accounts developed from the factor Q-sorts, twelve were discussed in the previous chapter (two having been discarded), and are summarised below.

##### Summary of accounts of lesbian identities

Account A ("Born lesbian; and happy") presents lesbianism as fixed and essential, as an identity which "feels natural", and which is unrelated to sexual experience. There is some consensus about the idea that lesbianism is a biological characteristic,

and thus unchangeable. The account presents a positive image of lesbianism as leading to growth and with which lesbians can be happy. No desire to change is expressed. The emotional and sexual satisfaction experienced in relationships with women is stressed, as is the lack of such satisfaction with men. Being a woman is highly valued, and there is no desire to be a man. This account is similar to Kitzinger's (1987) Account 1 ("personal fulfilment") although Kitzinger's account rejects a biological explanation for lesbianism.

Account B ("Feminist and happy") also presents being lesbian as personally fulfilling, as well as a psychologically healthy experience, which feels natural. There is no desire to change. However, while being a lesbian is experienced as an identity ("being") rather than as an activity ("doing"), there is no support for the idea that lesbianism is inborn or fixed. Instead, it is related strongly to feminism, and is understood in terms of a commitment to women. Account B is similar to Kitzinger's (1987) Account 1 ("personal fulfilment") in that being lesbian is presented as a positive experience, as well as to her Account 4 ("radical feminist") in that being lesbian is related to feminism and is understood in terms of a commitment to women, while the role of sexuality is de-emphasised. However, unlike Account 4, Account B expresses no rejection of men, who do not feature strongly in the account.

Account C ("woman-loving-woman") strongly rejects familial and biological explanations for lesbianism, which is not presented as fixed or essential. The only explanation for lesbianism which is

supported is the notion that they fell in love with a woman. Being lesbian is presented as a positive experience, but it is not central to their identity: being a woman is presented as far more important. The focus is on "being a woman" rather than on "being a lesbian", and the identity can be understood as that of a woman who finds emotional satisfaction with another woman. This account bears some resemblance to Kitzinger's Account 2 ("romantic love"), although, unlike Kitzinger's, men are not presented as possible partners, and the gender of the person whom they love is important.

**Account F** ("woman-choosing-woman") emphasises the issue of causation, and three possible explanations are offered: their relationships with their fathers helps explain it; being lesbian is a choice; and they fell in love with a woman. An interview would be needed to examine these ideas more clearly. Both biological and feminist explanations are rejected. Being lesbian is presented as an identity which feels natural, and there is no desire to change. However, they are not very secure in their identity, and being lesbian is not presented as a very positive experience. Although they have experienced some positive reactions from society, they feel that they are leading a double life. This account is not really similar to any of the accounts presented in Chapter III. It may, however, be partially explicable in terms of the affiliation of two of the women to the Nederlandse Gereformeerde Kerk, which is both patriarchal and conservative.

Account E ("definitely lesbian, but no different from heterosexuals") supports the idea that childhood experiences are the explanation for their lesbianism; while also supporting the idea that being lesbian is a choice. As in Account F, an interview would be needed to examine the relationship between these ideas. Lesbianism as presented as an identity which feels natural and which is a positive experience. Although sexuality is important, emotional relationships are even more important. Being a lesbian is presented as no different from being a heterosexual. Account E is similar to Kitzinger's (1987) Account 3 ("private sexual orientation"), except that Kitzinger's supports a biological explanation for lesbianism, while Account E strongly rejects this notion.

Account L ("No strong sense of lesbian identity") presents a fairly ambiguous account, illustrating the contradictory nature of subjectivity. The account presents being lesbian as no different from being heterosexual, and as only a small aspect of the self. There is, in general, very little identification as lesbian. Although being lesbian is not presented very positively, there is no desire to change. Account L is similar to both Account E above, and Kitzinger's (1987) Account 3 ("private sexual orientation"). However, unlike Account E (but like Account 3), they do not want to be labelled in terms of what they see as a small part of themselves; and unlike Account 3 (but like Account E), lesbianism is not presented as a fixed identity.

Account I ("certainly lesbian, but not really happy") presents a deeply felt sense of identity as lesbian as well as a strong

sense of certainty about that identity, although there is only moderate support for a biological understanding of lesbianism. Being lesbian is not presented as unambiguously positive. The women whose Q-sorts define this factor all indicated a religious affiliation, and the account rejects the idea that their god accepts them as they are. Account I is similar to Kitzinger's (1987) Account 5 ("sick, and sorry"), except that Account I is less negative than Kitzinger's, in that there is no desire to change, and the account does not support the idea that they would be happier if they were not lesbian. Moreover, unlike Account 5, Account I does provide some support for the idea that lesbianism is biological.

Account J ("Lesbian as fairly happy gay person") is the only account which stresses that gay men and lesbians have more in common than just their choice of same-sex lovers. Although being a woman is seen as important, the identity is more that of a "gay person" than of a "lesbian woman". Although being lesbian is presented as an identity which is experienced as natural and certain, and there is little social conflict and no conflict about being both lesbian and religious, they do not present themselves as completely happy with their lesbianism. There seems to be some ambiguity in this account in that there is a sense that being lesbian is both a negative and a positive experience.

Account H ("wanting to be a man") is distinguished from all the other accounts in that the women who define this account express a strong desire to be men, and do not feel that being a woman is important to them. There is also some support for butch-femme

role-playing. The desire to be heterosexual, which is fairly strongly expressed, while at the same time experiencing sex with women as natural and sex with men as "not right", should be understood in the light of their desire to be men. Most of the explanations for lesbianism which appear in the Q-sample are rejected, although there is some support for a biological explanation. The account does not support a strong sense of identity as lesbian, and being lesbian is not experienced very positively. This account is unlike any of the accounts discussed in Chapter III, and it could be suggested that this is an account of identity as trans-sexual. However, as the women have identified themselves as lesbian, the account must be considered here. Moreover, as both the women who define this account are "black" (out of five "black" participants in this research) an avenue for possible exploration is suggested. However, as the number of women who define this account is so small, this may simply be due to chance.

Account G ("Bisexuality: lesbianism as sexual identity") presents lesbianism as an activity (doing) rather than as an identity (being), and the "inner sense of self" as lesbian is absent. Moreover, the sexual aspect of lesbianism is presented as very important, and the women define themselves as bisexual rather than lesbian. Biological explanations for lesbianism are strongly rejected, and it is understood in terms of a choice and a commitment to women, although there is no rejection of men. There is some ambiguity about whether being lesbian is a positive experience or not, and the feeling that being lesbian involves leading a "double life" is strongly supported. Being lesbian is

not an important part of themselves, and they do not want to be labelled. Account G is very similar to Kitzinger's (1987) Account 6, which she does not discuss in depth, seeing it as a temporary and unclear identity. This research suggests that this account may be fairly reliable, and, as the mean length of time that the women defining this account have identified themselves as lesbian is 6.5 years, it is unlikely that this account is any more temporary than any other.

**Account K** ("lesbianism as sexual rejection of men") is more negative about men than any other account, in that masculine bodies are presented as repulsive, sex with men is presented as boring, and men are disliked. Lesbianism is presented as intimately interwoven with sexual experiences, in that the women say that would not still be lesbian if they had never had sex with a woman, or if they did have enjoyable sex with a man. Identifying as lesbian is related to feminism, but lesbianism is also presented as an identity and the possibility of change is rejected. In addition, being lesbian is presented as very different from being heterosexual, and the women defining this account feel that they do not belong in society. Account K is similar to Kitzinger's (1987) Account 4 ("radical feminism") in that being lesbian is related to feminism, and men are presented negatively. However, unlike Kitzinger's, Account K does not present being lesbian in particularly positive terms (except that it has led to personal growth).

**Account D** ("sinful and sorry") is distinguished by the importance religious beliefs have for the women who define this account, and

the belief that their god does not accept their lesbianism. Moreover, unlike Account I, being a lesbian is seen to be totally taboo within their community, and society in general is also seen to be somewhat discriminatory. As a result, this is the only account in which the women present themselves as unhappy with their lesbianism, and it is more negative about lesbianism than any other account. In addition, their self-image, while positive, is less positive than in any other account. Lesbianism is presented as biological and fixed, and the idea of choice is strongly rejected. This could be related to their religious beliefs, because if being lesbian were a choice, the women would have to take responsibility for that choice, and for their so-called "sinfulness". Account D is similar to Kitzinger's (1987) Account 5 ("sick and sorry"), although Kitzinger's account presents childhood factors as an explanation for lesbianism, and it is presented as a sickness rather than, as here, a sin.

#### **Overview of accounts of lesbian identities**

In the accounts as a whole, there is some support for the notion that lesbianism is a biological characteristic, but this support is not very strong. However, being lesbian is presented in most cases as an essential identity: pervasive and fixed, and as a natural part of the self.

For Accounts C, L and G, being lesbian is presented as not very important. With the exception of Account G, it is presented as an identity ("being") rather than as activity ("doing").

This stress on lesbianism as an "identity" rather than as a construct illustrates the point made by Franklin & Stacey (1988): that an essentialist understanding of lesbianism meets some of the emotional needs of lesbians and helps them make sense of their personal histories more than a social constructionist perspective does. This is an issue with which social constructionism needs to deal seriously.

Explanations other than the biological are also supported.

Accounts F, E and G suggest that becoming lesbian was a choice, while accounts C and F relate it to having fallen in love with a woman. Account C strongly rejects any notion of parental involvement, while Account F relates becoming lesbian to their relationships with their fathers, and Account E relates it to childhood experiences. Accounts B and K relate feminism to their becoming lesbianism, and Accounts B and G understand lesbianism in terms of a commitment to women.

Most of the accounts present lesbianism in moderately positive terms, with Accounts A, B, C and E presenting it very positively, while Account D presents a very negative picture of it. With the exception of Accounts H and D, no desire to become heterosexual is expressed.

Although the sexual aspect of lesbianism is generally presented as enjoyable, most of the accounts (except Accounts G and K) present emotional relationships with women as more important than sexual relationships.

Only Account H rejects the idea that being a woman is important, and it is also the only account in which the desire to be a man is expressed. Only Accounts C, H and K express negative attitudes towards men. Account J is the only account which strongly supports the idea that gay men and lesbians have more in common than just their choice of same-sex partners.

Most of the accounts present an awareness of the social stigmatization of lesbianism. However, with the exception of Account D, which presents lesbianism as totally taboo within those women's communities, the accounts suggest that the women have not been treated badly by others.

The accounts presented here support the propositions that accounts of identities need to be socially intelligible, but do not have to make sense or be integrated into a neat totality.

In general, the accounts presented in Chapter III did not prove very useful in the analyses of the accounts found by this study.

These accounts bear little resemblance to Faderman's (1984) accounts, except on a very superficial level, in that lesbianism is related to feminism. This can be explained in terms of the use of very different methodologies - Faderman's research was based on the published autobiographical testimonies of lesbian feminists. To this researcher's knowledge, there have been no such texts published in South Africa. Moreover, without biographical data, it was difficult to attempt to link the two sets of accounts.

Similarly, the accounts presented here bear very little resemblance to Ettore's (1980) "types" of lesbian. This can be related to three factors. Firstly, different methodologies were used: Ettore's research was based on participant observation and interviews. Secondly, all her subjects were members of lesbian organisations, of which there are very few in South Africa (see Chapter I). Thirdly, had it been possible to link the two sets of accounts found in this research, this might have enabled links to be drawn between these accounts of lesbian identities and Ettore's, as more would have been known about the women's perceptions about feminism.

Moreover, Ettore (1980) relates the development of what she calls the "ideological view" to the rise of the Gay Liberation Front and the Women's Liberation Movement. As was discussed in Chapter I, neither of these have emerged in South Africa to any noticeable extent.

It was not possible to draw any links, other than superficial ones, between the accounts presented here and the stages of lesbian identity development presented in Chapter III (Sophie, 1985/86). However, this research does suggest that such a developmental sequence is overly simplistic.

The developmental sequence proposed by Sophie (1985/86) on the basis of her own research and a review of other research on the development of a homosexual identity, assumes the existence of an identity which moves through set linear sequence, reaching an end point which is presented (indirectly) as the healthiest identity.

This is one which involves an integration of a positive lesbian identity into the lesbian's overall sense of identity: what Sophie refers to as "Identity Integration". Disclosure to others is important during this stage, as acceptance by others is related to self-acceptance. The beginning of identity integration may involve gay/lesbian activism (although it seems to be assumed that this is only a temporary phase).

The problem with this perspective, as this study has illustrated, is that it is decontextualised, and does not consider the realities of many lesbians' lives. Historical changes (such as feminism), socio-economic factors (such as access to privacy), and cultural factors (such as the attitudes of the larger community within which the lesbian lives) will all affect the process of identity development. Moreover, factors such as the availability of literature which portrays lesbians positively, the influence of different religious beliefs on the broader community's attitudes towards as well as the lesbian's perceptions of lesbianism, and the accessibility of lesbian groups, will all influence a lesbian's achievement of an "Integrated Identity".

In addition, stage theories of lesbian identity development seem to assume an environment in which being lesbian is not strongly stigmatised. For lesbians who live in an environment (such as South Africa) in which lesbianism is very negatively portrayed, a sequence such as that outlined by Sophie (1985/86) is not realistic. Moreover, it may not be healthy: the perspective most highly valued by Ettore (1980) and Kitzinger (1987) - radical

lesbian feminism - may be a healthier option for a lesbian in a highly discriminatory society.

Investigating the different processes through which lesbians develop a relatively stable identity in different socio-economic and cultural environments is an important area of research, as it would extend the area of knowledge about the social construction of lesbianism. In addition, it would enable therapists to make informed and valid decisions about the best way in which to help lesbian clients, without having to assume that an "Integrated Identity" is the healthiest option for them.

Although such developmental processes could not be examined using Q methodology as it was used in this study, Q could be used to examine these processes. It would be necessary to use in-depth interviews in conjunction with Q. Then, Q methodology could be used to examine lesbians' retrospective memories of the development of their identities as lesbian. The various Q-sorts completed by lesbians to represent different times in their lives could be compared with each other or with those of others.

However, lesbians tend to reconstruct their autobiographies on the basis of present identities (Faderman, 1984). In order to overcome this problem Q-sorts could be administered to lesbians in a longitudinal study, although this would undoubtedly have numerous problems of its own (including finding a sample of women who were beginning to question their sexuality).

Despite the problems faced by researchers who examine the development of identities, this would be a fruitful area of research.

The basic characteristics of the participants in this and Kitzinger's (1987) studies are similar: both P-sets were predominantly "white", middle-class, gentile, English-speaking, and held professional and managerial paid jobs. Thus, differences between the two sets of accounts are likely to be explicable in terms of factors other than these.

There were a number of similarities between the accounts found through this study and the accounts presented by Kitzinger (1987). All seven of the accounts which she presented ("personal fulfilment", "romantic love", "private sexual orientation", "radical lesbian", "sick, and sorry", "bisexual" and the bifurcated account) were also found here, although in each case, there are some differences. Some of these differences might be related to the different Q-samples which were used, although others may be related to the context in which the participants found themselves.

In addition, a number of additional accounts were found. However, as Kitzinger presented only seven accounts, it would be impossible to know on the basis of this research whether the additional accounts are more specific to South Africa or whether they are simply due to the larger sample and greater number of accounts retained in this study.

b) **Aim 2: linking the two sets of accounts**

The second aim of this research was to examine the relationships between the accounts of identity (presented above) and the accounts presented by the participants of how they understand the natures and roles of women and men in society.

Several different attempts to link the two sets of accounts proved unsuccessful for a number of reasons. The first major reason for this failure relates to the way factor Q-sorts are developed from the individual Q-sorts, and the second relates to the fact that many Q-sorts loaded significantly on more than one factor. Other reasons include the similarities between the accounts (particularly those based on Q-sample 2), the small number of Q-sorts which load on many of the factors, and the way Q-sample 2 was developed.

Thus, this second aim proved unsuccessful for a number of reasons related to ~~this~~ research, and the idea that there is a link between the accounts women present of their lesbianism and the accounts they present of the natures and roles of women and men in society is not negated, but needs further exploration.

c) Aim 3: accounts of "women, men and society"

The third aim of this research was to examine whether the commonly accepted theoretical feminist frameworks reflect women's "real-world" understanding of the natures and roles of women and men in society.

Thirteen factors were extracted during the factor analysis of the Q-sorts based on Q-sample 2, and thirteen accounts were developed from the resulting factor Q-sorts. Twelve of these (one having been discarded) were discussed in the previous chapter and are summarised below.

Summary of accounts of "women, men and society"

Account (I) is a fairly strongly feminist account which supports the need for legal reform, and the transformation of society in terms of achieving equality between women and men, and, for example, ending racism. This account also supports the need for women to organise around women's rights, to strengthen and empower themselves, and to be free to control their own reproductive capacities. However, the idea of separatism is strongly rejected. Traditional beliefs about women's roles are very strongly rejected, as are anti-feminist comments about feminism and feminists. Thus, despite being a strongly feminist account, it tends more towards reform than towards a complete transformation of society.

Account (II) is similar to Account (I), although the need for complete equality between women and men is stressed more than the need for legal reforms. The account also supports more global issues, such as an end to racism and war, and the need to save the world. Controversial feminist propositions are most strongly rejected, followed by anti-feminist statements, and assertions about the natures and roles of women. This is thus a slightly more moderate account than Account (I). The emphasis here is on liberal demands for equality, and the need for more global change.

Account (III) is very similar to both Accounts (I) and (II), in strongly supporting liberal feminist demands. Unlike in the other two accounts, the need for equal pay for equal work as well as women's right to control their own reproductive processes are most strongly supported. Like Account (I), conservative notions about women's roles are rejected more strongly than controversial feminist demands and anti-feminist comments. There is support for both radical and socialist feminist analyses of male-female relations.

Account (IV) can be understood as an independent account in that it supports equality between women and men as well as a number of feminist analyses of social relations, while, at the same time, arguing that feminism and women's organisations are no longer necessary, as women who want to be equal can be equal. The women whose Q-sorts define this account are of a fairly high social status, and thus have the personal power to make group support unnecessary. This account is also more supportive of men than the

other accounts, and does not support the idea of getting rid of the differences between women and men.

**Account (V)** is not so much a specifically feminist account, as one which supports the need for world-wide changes, such as the transformation of society, the end of racism, and the need to see the world as a living unit. It also supports the need for equality between women and men and legal support for this equality. There is also support for a number of socialist feminist analyses, including the idea that women are generally perceived in terms of their relationships with men, and that sexuality is a public as well as a private issue. Traditional ideas about the roles of women are rejected, as are controversial radical feminist propositions. There is no support for women organising around women's rights.

**Account (VI)** strongly supports the belief that women live under the continual threat of violence from men, and that they are usually perceived in terms of their relationships with men. There is support for liberal demands for equality and legal reform as well as support for more general issues such as ending racism. Traditional images of women are rejected, particularly the need for women to be feminine. While feminism is seen as necessary, there is no support for women organising around women's issues.

**Account (VIII)** is a predominantly radical feminist account of a kind. In this account women are presented as naturally warm and caring, and these same values are seen to be necessary to save the world. Men are presented as naturally dominant and

aggressive. In addition, there is support for the propositions that heterosexuality is forced upon women and that heterosexual relationships involve power struggles. Like the other accounts, anti-feminist, conservative, and controversial feminist propositions are rejected. Although feminism is still seen as necessary, there is no support for women organising around women's rights.

Although **Account (IX)** supports the idea that a woman's most important roles are as wife and mother, this support is interpretable in terms of a strong support for radical feminist ideas about male-female relationships, and a strong rejection of the idea that feminism is no longer necessary. In addition, this account rejects the idea that women should be equal to men. This seems to be interpretable in relation to the beliefs that women are closer to nature than men are and that women will manage to change the world. There is, however, no support for women organising around women's rights. This is predominantly a radical feminist account which supports both the reality of women's lives as oppressed, and women's natural superiority.

Only one Q-sort, completed by a "black" Xhosa-speaking woman, defines **Account (X)**. The account is not very clear, but seems to present a bifurcated view: both conservative and feminist. On the one hand, women's passivity and women and men as partners are supported. On the other hand, a number of feminist propositions, including some fairly controversial statements (such as the belief that women live under the threat of male violence, and that lesbianism is a logical choice for feminists), are

supported. In addition, the account provides some support for separatism, as well as for women to organise around women's rights.

Account (XI) strongly supports the idea that women and men are very different from each other, although the account does not indicate what these differences are. In addition, there is no desire to get rid of these differences. In other ways, the account is similar to many of the others, supporting liberal and feminist propositions, while rejecting anti-feminist, controversial feminist, and conservative propositions.

Account (XII) supports equality between women and men, as well as equal pay and legal reform. It also supports the need to get rid of the differences between women and men, except those which are biological. There is support for the need to see the world as a living unit, as well as support for the need for women to organise, strengthen and empower themselves. At the same time, radical and socialist feminist propositions, particularly those relating to separatism and the abolition of the family, are rejected even more strongly than conservative ideas about women.

Account (XIII) is a fairly contradictory account. It rejects the idea of women working with men, at the same time as it rejects the idea of women having little to do with men. Similarly, men are perceived as naturally dominant and aggressive, while they are also presented as being negatively affected by sexism. There is also support for liberal demands for equality, and for the need to end war and racism. The idea that feminism is no longer

necessary is rejected, and women need to strengthen and empower themselves. At the same time, some socialist feminist analyses are rejected, and there is strong support for the idea that it is important for women to be feminine.

### **Overview of accounts of "women, men and society"**

All the accounts can be characterised in general as moderate, with some support for liberal, socialist and radical feminist propositions and a strong rejection of conservative views about women as well as controversial feminist propositions.

This tendency towards liberal and moderate perspectives compares with the similar tendency in the identity accounts. Moreover, as was mentioned in Chapter IV, it makes sense for lesbians to support liberal feminist ideas, as these support their right to live their lives as they choose, without discrimination and without pressure towards self-disclosure.

The accounts generally support equality between women and men and legal support for this equality. There is also support for women's rights to choose whether or not to have children, for the idea that men should share the work of raising children, and for the proposition that women live under the threat of violence from men (with the exception of Account XIII which disagrees strongly with the last). In addition, there is fairly strong support for the perception that women are perceived primarily in terms of their relationships with men, rather than as individuals in their own right.

Most of the accounts strongly reject conservative notions about women's primary role being that of wife and mother, and of women only being able to be fulfilled if they have children.

Some accounts also strongly reject anti-feminist statements about feminists wanting to be men and feminists being afraid of men.

There is, however, also a strong rejection of controversial feminist propositions, such as perceiving men as the enemy of women, wanting to abolish the family, and understanding lesbianism as a logical choice for feminists.

Moreover, although the idea that feminism is no longer needed is strongly rejected by most of the accounts (except account IV), only three accounts support the need for women to organise around women's rights. The idea of women organising separately is strongly rejected, as are most separatist propositions. Four accounts support the idea that women who want to be equal to men can be equal.

Many of the accounts also strongly support broader issues, such as the need to struggle against racism, to end war, and to see the world as a whole, living unit. There is some support for the idea that feminine values (such as warmth and caring) are needed to save the world.

In order to fully understand these accounts it would be necessary to interview the women who completed the Q-sorts. However, suggestions can be made in terms of the women's existence as

South African lesbians. The lack of support for conservative notions can be interpreted, in part, in relation to the fact that most of the women participating in this research have rejected traditional lifestyles and have no desire to return to them. The strong rejection of anti-feminist statements can also be interpreted in the light of their lesbianism: the accusations levelled against feminists are frequently the very same accusations that are levelled against lesbians. Other aspects of the accounts - the strong tendency towards moderation, which is not broken by any of the accounts, and the support for broader issues - can also be understood in terms of the context in which the participants find themselves: a conservative country, where there is very little evidence of any radical/socialist lesbian feminist consciousness and little feminist or lesbian literature, and a country which is enmeshed in racial problems.

## 2. LIMITATIONS OF THIS RESEARCH

Although the study managed to fulfil its primary aim - the elicitation of accounts of lesbian identities - as well as one of the two secondary aims, there were a some problems which would be worth considering. Some of these are related to the actual procedure followed here, and others are related to the use of Q methodology in South Africa.

None of the problems invalidate the findings presented; they are outlined here in order to provide some guidelines for future research in this area.

a) Limitations of the procedure followed

The major limitation of this research is that the importance of interviews with the participants after they had completed their Q-sorts was greatly underestimated. Brown (1980) notes that the follow-up interview, which enables the participant to explain her or his Q-sort, is often overlooked, and maintains that the Q-sort is really "the skeleton of the subject's attitude" (p.200) which the interview would enable her or him to expand upon.

In this case, the interview was not overlooked. Instead, a choice had to be made between a geographically diverse P-set, reached via the postal system, and a P-set confined to Cape Town and its environs, the only area accessible to the researcher. Given the fact that most of the research done in South Africa on lesbians to date has been restricted to major urban areas (particularly Cape Town and Johannesburg), it was decided that access to a broad sample of lesbians would outweigh the loss of the interview.

While a broader sample was achieved, follow-up interviews would certainly have clarified some of the less clear accounts, and may have allowed some links to be made between the two sets of accounts. Moreover, interesting and potentially valuable aspects of the different accounts could have been examined in more depth.

The second problem relates to the issue of sampling specific to this research (rather than to Q in general). Because of the nature of the research it was decided to use volunteers (see

Chapter V). However, volunteers have been shown to differ in certain ways from non-volunteer samples. Rosenthal (1970) suggests that the following characteristics of volunteers compared with non-volunteers can be accepted with some confidence (p. 34):

1. Volunteers tend to manifest greater intellectual ability, intellectual interest, and intellectual motivation.
2. Volunteers tend to be more unconventional.
3. Volunteers, particularly females, tend to be younger.
4. Volunteers tend to be less authoritarian.
5. Volunteers tend to manifest greater need for social approval.
6. Volunteers tend to be more sociable.

He concludes that in any psychological research there is a good chance that the volunteer participants will "differ appreciably from the unsampled non-volunteers" (Rosenthal, 1970, p. 35). As it is almost impossible to have access to non-institutionalised and non-patient samples of stigmatised people unless they volunteer themselves, the differences between such samples for the lesbian population must remain speculative.

#### b) Limitations of Q methodology

Despite the advantages of using Q methodology, there are also a number of limitations, particularly within the South African context. The most serious limitations of Q is related to the small percentage of South African women who would be able to complete a Q-sort.

Q is not appropriate for pre- or semi-literate people, thus excluding a large proportion of South African women. Brown (1980) refers to the Piagetian theory that the ability to

significantly order stimulus objects is normally achieved between the ages of four and eight (Piaget, 1971, in Brown), presumably in order to argue that completing a Q-sort is basically a simple process. However, completing a full Q-sort is in fact a lengthy and complex process. The poor education offered to most South Africans who are not classified "white" means that many adults with some high school education would find completing a Q-sort a daunting or even impossible task.

If we make the assumption that a Standard 8 education, i.e. ten years of schooling, is needed for an individual to cope competently with a Q-sort, then the following data from the 1980 census illustrates the severity of this limitation. For individuals 20 years and older: 53% of "white", 19% of "Asians", 7% of "coloureds" and 4% of "black" Africans completed 10 or more years of schooling (Ellis, 1987, p. 32). Moreover, data for the TBV states (Transkei, Bophuthatswana and Venda) were not included in the census survey. There is little significant difference between the school education levels of women and men (Ellis, 1987); thus about 96% of black African women probably would be unable to cope competently with a complex Q-sort.

An additional limitation is related to the issue of translation. The difficulties faced when translating the Q-samples into Afrikaans, and the impossibility of accurately translating the Q-samples into an African language, such as Xhosa or Zulu, have already been discussed. Thus only women reasonably fluent in English or Afrikaans could have participated in this research. This excludes a large percentage of the population.

Moreover, many working-class South Africans quite simply would not have access to the space and privacy needed to complete Q-sorts of this nature (Wilson & Ramphele, 1989).

All of the above, taken together, indicates that Q methodology is not an appropriate method of research in South Africa, except for a small, elite percentage of the population. However, as this would hold true for many of the methodologies used by social scientists, this does not invalidate the research.

All of the factors relating to the participants discussed above will undoubtedly have affected the results, as the women who were excluded may have presented accounts which are not represented here. This does not, however, invalidate the accounts which were found in this study. All it suggests is that these are only some of the accounts presented by South African lesbians.

### 3. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

This study has suggested two major areas for further research about and for lesbian women in South Africa.

The first is related directly to this research, and falls into two parts. Firstly, given that this research has uncovered identities presented by a few lesbians in South Africa, the next step to begin to uncover the processes whereby these identities come to be constructed. This would involve, among other things,

examining the images of lesbians presented by the media (particularly women's magazines, which is one of the rare forums where lesbianism is mentioned), social and medical "sciences", religious and educational systems, and the law. Little is known about these images as they are presented in South Africa, although the area is well-researched in most Western countries. Secondly, also following on from the present research, the implications for lesbian women themselves of the identities they present need to be examined.

The second is less directly related to this research, but developed from the researcher's attempts to find "black" lesbians, and to find information about "black" lesbians in South Africa. "Black" lesbians - particularly "black" African lesbians - are the most invisible of invisible minorities: many people deny that they exist (lesbian United Congress of Women member, personal communication). However, the large presence of "coloured" lesbians in gay clubs in Cape Town, and the participation of three Xhosa-speaking "black" African women in this research, shows that this is clearly false. But their lives and experiences remain undocumented and invisible, and until they become visible they will not be able to demand recognition, or be accepted within any community. A cautionary note: this researcher believes that this documentation must be done by "black" lesbians themselves, partially to forestall cultural imperialism ("white" researchers taking control of "black" women's experiences) and partially to overcome language difficulties.

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## APPENDIX A : Q-SAMPLE TRANSLATION DECISIONS

## Q-SAMPLE STATEMENT NO.

- |   |           |   |
|---|-----------|---|
| 1 | 8         | "Being gay" had to be translated as "die feit dat ek gay is". This was not felt to be problematic as the phrase is not the focus of the statement.                                    |
| 1 | 24        | The terms "commitment" and "committing myself to" (in terms of relationships) are not translatable into Afrikaans. In this case, the sentence was rephrased to retain the meaning.    |
| 1 | 29        | "Fairly" was translated into "goed" (good) - the more direct translation "regverdig" was felt to be further in meaning (and connotations) from "fairly" than the more simple "goed".  |
| 1 | 31 and 32 | "Even if" was translated as "al sou ek" (even should I).  |
| 1 | 65        | The Afrikaans phrase "maak liefde" is not (yet) widely accepted, and thus "make love" was simply translated into "seks" (sex), despite the loss of the nuances of the English phrase. |
| 2 | 3 and 29  | There is no direct translation for "caring" and the term "versorgend" (nurturant) was used as it is also seen as a 'female value'.  |
| 2 | 4         | "Domineerend" unfortunately translates into English as "domineering" and "dominating" as well as "dominant": this is unavoidable.   |

## APPENDIX A (cont)

## Q-SAMPLE STATEMENT NO.

- |   |    |   |
|---|----|---|
| 2 | 9  | This proved to be a particularly problematic statement as the (feminist) terms "empower" and "strengthen" do not appear in Afrikaans. The term "magtig" alone was used, as it means "powerful", "mighty" and "potent" and also suggests strength. |
| 2 | 29 | The phrase "a commitment to" had to be left out of the sentence, as it is not translatable. This was not felt to be a serious problem: ideally the English should have been changed.  |
| 2 | 34 | The phrase "partners in life" is untranslatable. "Lewensmate" (partners for life) was chosen as the closest translation.  |
| 2 | 38 | Unlike other instances discussed above, the English "commitment" was retained in the Afrikaans, as this is a fairly common colloquial usage.  |
| 2 | 50 | "Hurt" was translated as "gegrief" (wronged) as it was felt to be closer in connotations and meaning than the direct translation "seergemaak".  |

**APPENDIX B : INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETING THE Q-SORT**

Dear Participant

Many thanks for taking part in this research. This is the main stage in the research - I'm sorry it's taken so long for me to get back to many of you, but preparing this stage took longer than I thought it would.

This envelope contains:

Envelope 1: INSTRUCTIONS

- => Q-Sort Instructions
- => Practice Q-Sort

Envelope 2: Q-SORT No 1: IDENTITY

- => Identity Q-Sort cards (please return)
- => Identity Q-Sort Results paper (please return, completed)
- => Strip of paper for top of your work area

Envelope 3: Q-SORT No 2 (Women, Men & Society)

- => Women's Q-Sort cards (please return)
- => Women's Q-Sort Results paper (please return, completed)
- => Strip of paper for top of your work area

Stamped, addressed envelope in which to return RESULTS and Q-sort cards.

You will need to read the INSTRUCTIONS before opening any other envelopes. The instructions will probably look quite overwhelming at first - read them through, and I'm sure they won't seem so bad!

Sincerely



Sue Blyth

## APPENDIX B (cont)

1

Q-SORT INSTRUCTIONS

This stage of the research involves you completing two Q-sorts. A Q-sort is simply a set of statements or sentences, each printed on a card, which you will be asked to sort in a particular order. (The rest of these instructions will explain how this is done.) A "picture" of how you see yourself and being gay will emerge from the way you sort the statements. I have used the word "gay", rather than "lesbian" or any other word, because it seems that most participants are more comfortable with "gay".

To do the Q-sorts, you will need to find a quiet place where you won't be disturbed and where you feel comfortable. You will also need a fairly large, flat area to work on.

**PRACTICE Q-SORT**

I have enclosed a practice Q-sort, with 13 cards, with this instruction sheet. You are free to get help from someone when doing this Q-sort. I suggest that you wait until you are comfortable with this one, before trying one of the longer "proper" Q-sorts.

1. Take the 13 cards and read all the sentences printed on them carefully. Now divide them into three piles:

Pile 1: Statements I agree with

Pile 2: Statements I disagree with

Pile 3: Statements I don't understand, don't care about, don't know where to put, or are irrelevant.

2. a) Now, from Pile 1 remove the card with which you agree most, and place this on the left hand side of your work area.

b) Leave Pile 1, and from Pile 2 remove the card with which you disagree most, and place this on the right hand side of your work area.

c) Then return to Pile 1, and from the remaining cards remove the 2 with which you agree most, and place these inside the card on the left.

=> The layout will now look like this (each block is a card):

(agree)    (disagree)

d) Return to Pile 2, and from the remaining cards remove the 2 cards with which you disagree most, and put them inside the card on the right.

e) Then from Pile 1, remove the 2 cards with which you agree most and put them inside the cards on the left.

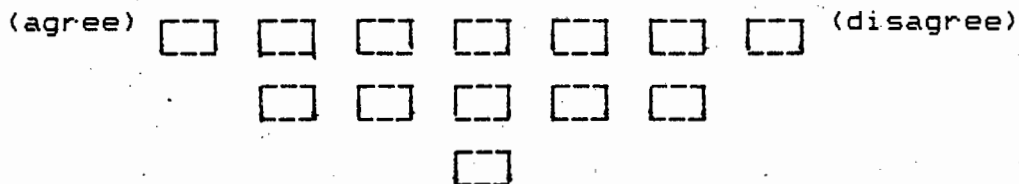
f) Do the same from Pile 2, putting them on the right.

## APPENDIX B (cont)

2

=>If at any point, you run out of cards in Piles 1 or 2, use cards from Pile 3. The last three cards (no matter where they come from) go in the centre of the cards.

The final arrangement of cards will look like this:



3. Now look at the way you have sorted the cards, and move them around if you want to. Remember that in the end there must still be 7 columns of cards, with the correct number of cards in each. Note that it doesn't matter where in each column the cards appear, as long as they are in the correct column (e.g. the three cards in the middle column can be in any order as long as they are in the middle column).

4. The last step is to take the number which is typed on the back of each card and write that number into the correct column on the diagram given above. I would then use this diagram to work out how you set out the cards.

Once you feel completely comfortable with this Q-sort, you can start working on the Identity Q-sort.

### Q-SORT No 1: IDENTITY

Please follow these instructions very carefully - it is very important to the research that you do so. Also, please do not discuss the real Q-sorts with anyone until you have completed them.

READ THROUGH ALL THE INSTRUCTIONS BEFORE YOU BEGIN

1. Open the envelope marked Q-SORT NO 1, and take out the cards. Read through all the sentences printed on the cards. Don't worry about what I mean - decide what you understand by each sentence.

2. Now divide the cards into three piles:

PILE 1: Sentences which are true for me, now

PILE 2: Sentences which are not true for me, now

PILE 3: Sentences I don't understand, don't care about, don't know where to put, or which are not relevant to me

3. In the envelope with the cards is a long strip of paper. Put this out along the top of your work area - it will help you keep track of

## APPENDIX B (cont)

3

where to put the cards, and tells you how many cards there should be in each column.

4. From **Pile 1**, remove the 2 cards which are most true for you now, and place these on the left-hand side of your working space, under **Column 1**. Then from **Pile 2**, remove the 2 cards which are the most not true for you now. Place these under **Column 13**

5. Return to **Pile 1**, and from the remaining cards choose the 3 cards with which are the most true for you now, and put them under **Column 2**; then from **Pile 2** remove the 3 cards which are the most not true for you now, and place these in **Column 12**.

=> Your working space should now look like this (where each block is a card):

Column:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
(true)									(not true)				
...	□	□						□	□				
	□	□						□	□				
		□						□					

6. Carry on like this (Pile 1, then Pile 2, back to Pile 1 etc), placing the correct number of cards in each column. The number of cards appears on the strip at the top of your work area (e.g. Column 5 should have 6 cards). Remember to use the cards from Pile 3 if you run out of cards from piles 1 or 2. (Pile 3 really contains your "spare" cards.)

7. When you have used up all the cards the arrangement should look like the diagram on the paper headed Identity Q-Sort Results, which is in the Q-SORT NO 1 envelope.

8. Now look carefully at the way you have set out the cards, and see whether you agree with where you put each card. If not, move them around. Try not to worry if you feel that you are contradicting yourself - Q-sorts don't mind contradictions.! Just try to be as **honest** as possible about yourself right now. Carry on moving the cards around until you feel comfortable with them. Make sure that there are still the right number of cards in each column at the end, when you are satisfied with the cards.

9. Now, take the Identity Q-sort Results paper, and transfer the numbers from the **back** of each card onto the correct place in the diagram. Please do not change your Q-sort in any way from now on, and try to fill the numbers in absolutely correctly.

10. The final step in the Q-sort is to look at the **back** of the Results paper. There are a number of questions here, which you can answer if you want to (except number 1, which I would like you to please answer). This space is really yours for comments etc.

## APPENDIX B (cont)

4

Q-SORT No 2: WOMEN, MEN AND SOCIETY

Please do Q-SORT NO. 2 (Women, Men and Society) as soon as possible after completing the Identity Q-sort. Do this second Q-sort in the same quiet place as the first one.

The way this Q-sort is done is very similar to the way you did the Identity Q-sort, with a couple of differences.

Firstly, the sentences are not about you yourself, but are about what you believe. Therefore, separate the cards for Q-sort 2 into three piles in the following way:

PILE 1: I believe that these are true (agree)

PILE 2: I believe that these are false (not true) (disagree)

PILE 3: Sentences I don't understand, don't care about, or don't know where to put

Secondly, there are four less cards in this Q-sort. Therefore the columns will have different numbers of cards in them. The long strip of paper (found in the Q-SORT NO 2 envelope) which should be placed at the top of your work area will show you clearly how many cards should be placed in each column. **DON'T FORGET TO WORK FROM PILE 1, THEN PILE 2, THEN PILE 1 AGAIN ETC., USING PILE 3 WHEN YOU NEED TO. YOUR LAST 7 CARDS GO IN THE CENTRE COLUMN (COLUMN 7).**

Finally, don't forget to write the numbers from the back of each card onto the diagram on the Women's Q-sort Results paper (to be found in the Q-sort No 2 envelope).

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Having completed both Q-sorts, and completed the results sheets, feel free to talk about your Q-sort - but please do not make any changes!

**FINALLY, PLEASE RETURN THE TWO COMPLETED RESULTS PAPERS TO ME, AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.** I would appreciate it if you would also return the 2 sets of Q-sort cards (they are expensive, and I am running short of funds). The stamps on the return envelope are sufficient for the cards as well.

Many thanks for participating in my research. When I complete the work (sometime in 1989), I will send you a copy of my findings.

*Sue*

Sue Blyth

## APPENDIX B (cont)

Liewe Deelnemer

Baie dankie vir jou deelneming in die navorsing. Hierdie koevert sluit die sentrale deel van die navorsing in. Ek vra verskoning dat ek so lank gevat het om dié deel na baie van julle te stuur, maar dit het my langer gevat as wat ek beplan het.

Die koevert bevat:

Koevert 1: INSTRUKSIES

- @ Q-sort instruksies
- @ Oefening Q-sort kaarte

Koevert 2: Q-SORT Nr. 1: IDENTITEIT

- @ Identiteit Q-sort kaarte
- @ Identiteit Q-sort resultate papier
- @ Strook papier wat bokant jou werksgebied geplaas moet word

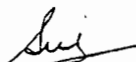
Koevert 3: Q-SORT Nr 2: VROUENS, MANS en die SAMELEWING

- @ Vroue Q-sort kaarte
- @ Vroue Q-sort resultate papier
- @ Strook papier wat bokant jou werksgebied geplaas moet word

=> 'n Geadreseerde koevert waarin die bogenoemde terug na my te pos (veral die votooide resultate)

Jy sal die Instruksies moet deurlees voordat jy die ander koeverte oopmaak. Moenie dat die instruksies jou afskrik nie - ek is seker dat as jy hulle deeglik deurlees, en die Oefening Q-Sort voltooi, sal hulle nie so erg lyk nie!

Alles van die beste



Sue Blyth



## APPENDIX B (cont)

2

=> Die finale rangskikking van die kaarte moet só lyk:

(saamstem)        (nie saamstem nie)

3. Kyk nou na jou rangskikking, en skuif die kaarte as jy wil. Onthou dat daar op die einde 7 kolome moet wees, met die korrekte getal kaarte in elke kolom.

4. Die laaste stap is om die nommer wat agter elke kaart gedruk is, in die korrekte kolom in die diagram (bo) te skryf. Ek sal dan die nommers op die diagram gebruik om jou *Q-sort* rangskikking weer saam te stel. Onthou dat dit nie op die einde saak maak nie waar in elke kolom 'n kaart lê nie, net solank die kaarte in die korrekte kolom is (bv. die 3 kaarte in die middel kolom kan in enige order wees, net solank hulle in die middel kolom bly).

As jy nou heeltemal gemaklik is met dié *Q-sort*, kan jy met die Identiteit *Q-sort* begin.

### Q-SORT Nr. 1: IDENTITEIT

Volg hierdie instruksies asseblief deeglik na - dit is belangrik vir die navorsing dat jy so doen. Jy moet ook asseblief met niemand anders oor die "egte" *Q-sorts* bespreek voordat hulle heeltemal voltooi is.

#### LEES AL DIE INSTRUKSIES DEUR VOORDAT JY BEGIN

1. Maak die *Q-sort* Nr 1 koëvert oop, en neem die "kaarte" uit. Lees al die sinne deur. Moenie probeer uitwerk wat ek bedoel het met die sinne nie - besluit self wat jy daarmee verstaan.

2. Rangskik nou die kaarte in drie hope

Hoop 1: Sinne wat nou waar is vir my

Hoop 2: Sinne wat nou nie waar is vir my nie [vals]

Hoop 3: Sinne wat ek nie verstaan nie, nie omgee  
nie, weet nie waar om te plaas nie, of wat nie  
toepas nie, ens.

3. In die koëvert is daar ook 'n lang strook papier. Plaas dit bokant jou werksgebied - dit sal jou help sien waar die kaarte geplaas moet word, en hoeveel kaarte daar in elke kolom moet wees.

## APPENDIX B (cont)

3

4. Neem nou van Hoop 1 die 2 kaarte wat die mees waar vir jou nou is, en plaas hulle op die linker kant van jou werksgebied, onder Kolom 1. Neem dan van Hoop 2 die 2 kaarte wat nou die mees nie waar is vir jou nie, en plaas hulle onder Kolom 13.

Gaan terug na Hoop 1, en neem van die orige kaarte die 3 wat die mees waar vir jou nou is, en plaas hulle onder Kolom 2. Neem van Hoop 2 die 3 kaarte wat nou die mees nie waar is vir jou nie, en plaas hulle onder Kolom 12.

=> Jou werksgebied behoort nou so te lyk (elke blok verteenwoordig 'n kaart):

Kolom	1	2	3	-	-	-	-	-	10	11	12	13	
<u>waar</u>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>									<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<u>nie waar nie</u>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>									<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
		<input type="checkbox"/>									<input type="checkbox"/>		

6. Hou so aan (Hoop 1, Hoop 2, dan terug na Hoop 1, ens.): Maak seker dat die korrekte getal kaarte in elke kolom verskyn. Die lang strook papier wys hoeveel kaarte in elke kolom behoort (bv. daar behoort 6 kaarte in kolom 5 te wees). Onthou om kaarte van Hoop 3 te gebruik as daar nie genoeg kaarte in Hoop 1 of 2 is nie (Hoop 3 is jou reserwekaarte).

7. Wanneer al die kaarte geplaas is, behoort die rangskikking soos die diagram op die IDENTITEIT Q-SORT RESULTATE papier te lyk. (Die Resultate papier is ook in die Q-sort nr 1 koevert.)

8. Kyk na jou Q-sort rangskikking, en besluit of jy nog saamstem met waar jy al die kaarte geplaas het. So nie, skuif hulle rond. Moenie bekommerd wees as jy voel jy het jouself teenspreek - Q-sorts gee nêe om oor teensprake nie! Probeer net so eerlik as moontlik oor jouself te wees. Skuif die kaarte totdat jy tevrede met die rangskikking is. Maak net seker dat daar op die einde die korrekte getal kaarte in elke kolom verskyn.

9. Neem nou die IDENTITEIT Q-SORT RESULTATE papier, en dra die nommers, wat op die agterkant van elke kaart is, oor na die die korrekte kolom van die diagram. Van nou af, moet jy asseblief die Q-sort nie verander nie, en probeer om al die nommers korrek oor te dra.

10. Die finale stap in die Q-sort is om die vrae op die agterkant van die Resultate papier te lees. Vraag 1 moet asseblief beantwoord word, maar die ander vrae kan jy beantwoord net as jy wil. Die ruimte is vir jou te gebruik soos jy wil (vir opmerkings ens.).

## APPENDIX B (cont)

4

Q-SORT Nr 2: VROUENS, MANS EN DIE SAMELEWING

Voltooi asseblief *Q-sort* Nr 2 so gou soos moontlik na die eerste *Q-sort*.

Die wyse waarop die *Q-sort* voltooi word, is amper dieselfde as dié waarop die eerste *Q-sort* voltooi is - met 'n paar verskille.

Eerstens: die sinne gaan nie oor hoe jy jouself sien nie, maar oor waarin jy glo. Verdeel dus die kaarte van die *Q-sort* in drie hope in die volgende wyse:

Hoop 1: Ek glo dat die waar is (saamstem)

Hoop 2: Ek glo dat die vals is (nie waar is nie - nie saamstem nie)

Hoop 3: Sinne wat ek nie verstaan nie, nie omgee nie, weet nie waar om te plaas nie, of wat nie toepas nie, ens.

Tweedens: daar is vier kaarte minder in die *Q-sort*. Die kolomme het dus verskillende getalle kaarte as in die eerste *Q-sort*. Die lang strook papier (in *Q-sort* Nr 2 koevert), wat bokant jou werksgebied geplaas moet word, wys hoeveel kaarte daar in elke kolom moet wees. Moenie vergeet om eers van Hoop 1, dan Hoop 2, dan weer Hoop 1 ens. te werk nie. Gebruik Hoop 3 wanneer dit nodig is. Die laaste 7 kaarte behoort in die middel kolom (Kolom 7).

Laastens: moenie vergeet om die nommers, wat op die agterkant van elke kaart gedruk is, op die diagram op die VROUENS Q-SORT RESULTATE papier te skryf. (Dis in die *Q-sort* Nr 2 koevert)

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~

As jy klaar met albei *Q-sorts* en die resultate papiere is, kan jy oor jou *Q-sorts* met iemand anders gesels - maar moet asseblief geen veranderzings maak nie!

Laastens, stuur asseblief die voltooide *Q-sorts* (en al die ander goed wat in die koeverte is) SO GOU SOOS MOONTLIK TERUG NA MY.

Baie dankie vir jou deelneming in my navorsing. As die werk klaar is, sal ek jou 'n kopie van my bevindings stuur.

Sue Blyth  
1989

APPENDIX B (cont)

WOMEN'S Q-SORT RESULTS

Column No:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	Column No.
<u>AGREE</u>														<u>DISAGREE</u>

P.T.O.

COMMENTS

1. (please answer) WHERE and WHEN did you complete this Q-sort?
2. (optional) Do you have any comments about any of the statements, or about where you chose to put them?  
Did you have any problems with this Q-sort? What were they?  
Do you have any other comments?



## APPENDIX C : FINDING PARTICIPANTS

## MAGAZINES APPROACHED FOR SUBJECTS

No response

Huisgenoot

Rooi Rose

Refused

Reason given by Editors

Garden & Home

"the magazine does not lend itself towards such a subject"

Bona

inappropriate as it is a "family-oriented magazine"

Personality

should not "appear to condone lesbianism by publishing it"

Published

De Kat

Drum

Fair Lady

Thandi

You

Exit

## APPENDIX C (cont)

## GROUPS/ORGANISATIONS APPROACHED FOR SUBJECTS

Cathgro (Johannesburg)  
Eastern Province Gay  
Association (Port Elizabeth)  
Friend 1000/Vriend 1000 (Pretoria)  
Gayline (Cape Town)  
GASA 6010 (Cape Town)  
GASA Goldfields (Welkom)  
GASA Natal Coast (Durban)  
GASA Northern Cape (Kimberley)  
GASA OES (Bloemfontein)  
Gay Advice Bureau (East London)  
Gay Association Inland Natal (Pietermaritzburg)  
Gay Association Ladies's Section (Pretoria)  
Gay Centre (Johannesburg)  
Gay Christian Community (Cape Town)  
Gay Christian Community (Pretoria)  
Jong Gays organisasie/Organisation for Young Gays (Pretoria)  
Outreach Rand (Johannesburg)  
Transfiguration (Bloemfontein)  
Wits Gay Movement (Johannesburg)  
Womenspace/Vrouetred (Johannesburg)  
Yachad (Johannesburg)

## APPENDIX D : INTRODUCTORY LETTER SENT TO PARTICIPANTS

Dear =name=

Thank you very much for answering my advertisement.

Firstly, perhaps I should tell you something about myself and my research. I am busy doing my Master's degree in research Psychology at the University of Cape Town; and this research will form the basis of my thesis. As a lesbian myself, I have previously also focused on various issues to do with lesbians. For example, I have looked at various ways in which lesbian women cope with Christianity (concluding that churches do not adequately meet the needs of lesbian Christians).

At present I am looking at what lesbian women say about themselves. For example, when a woman says "I am a lesbian" or "I am gay" what does she actually mean by this? How does she feel about it, where does it fit into her life, etc?

In order to answer this question I am using a particular type of research, called Q-methodology. The basic idea behind this is that it allows the women taking part in the research to express their own opinions, while putting the results in a form that I can cope with. It should - hopefully - be interesting, thought-provoking, and worth doing, for both of us. If you agree to take part in this research, I will obviously explain the process to you in greater detail.

In addition, I will also ask you to also fill in a short questionnaire about yourself. This will enable me to get an overall picture of the women taking part; a required part of research. Please complete the questionnaire in whichever way makes you feel most comfortable. I have enclosed a copy of the questionnaire with this letter.

The reason I placed an advertisement in a magazine, was that all research on lesbianism in South Africa so far has tended to concentrate on a very small sample of lesbian women (frequently those whom the researcher knows!). I felt that it was important to begin finding the lesbian women in South Africa who have not yet had the opportunity to speak for themselves.

I must stress at this point that whatever you tell me will be kept confidential - although the information given to me will be used in the research, it will be presented in such a way that you could never be identified through it. In addition, the name and

## APPENDIX D (cont)

address you have given me - whether it is your own or not - will be kept entirely confidential. I will treat whatever you tell me and whatever opinions you hold with respect; and nothing you say will be held up for ridicule. A brief summary of the final work will be sent to each participant, and responses, suggestions and criticisms will be welcomed.

Thank you again for writing to me. If you no longer wish to take part in the research, would you please return the uncompleted questionnaire to me as soon as possible. If you are willing to take part, please return the questionnaire to me as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely

Sue Blyth

## APPENDIX D (cont)

Beste

Baie dankie dat jy my advertensie beantwoord het.

Miskien moet ek jou eers iets van myself en my navorsing vertel. Ek is tans besig met my Meestersgraad in navorsing Sielkunde aan die Universiteit van Kaapstad en hierdie projek vorm deel van my tesis. Ek is self lesbies, en het al voorheen verskeie aspekte van homoseksualiteit onder vroue ondersoek en bestudeer. Ek het onder meer 'n studie gemaak oor lesbiese vroue en godsdienste/Christenskap en hoe hulle daarvoor voel en daarmee saam leef.

Die fokus van hierdie navorsing val egter op hoe lesbiese vroue oor hulle self voel en wat hulle van hulself dink. Byvoorbeeld wanneer 'n lesbiese vrou se: "Ek is lesbies" of "Ek is gay": wat bedoel sy daarmee, hoe leef sy met hierdie gewaarwording en hoe pas dit in haar leefwyse in?

Om hierdie vrae te beantwoord, maak ek van 'n tipe navorsing gebruik wat die Q-metode genoem word. Die basiese idee van hierdie metode, is om die vrou wat aan die projek deelneem, die geleentheid te gee om haar eie mening te lug op so 'n wyse dat dit dan ook vir my maklik is om die data te verwerk. Dit sal dus - hopelik - interessant wees en ook stof tot nadenke bied vir ons albei. As jy dus instem om deel van hierdie navorsingsprojek te wees, sal ek natuurlik die hele proses in meer detail aan jou verduidelik.

Ek vra nou aan jou om 'n kort vraelys oor jouself te beantwoord wat my die geleentheid sal gee om 'n algehele beeld van die vrou wat deelneem, te vorm. Vul asseblief die ingeslote vraelys in op enige manier wat jou op jou gemak sal laat voel.

Die rede waarom ek die advertensie geplaas het, was omdat die meeste navorsing wat tot dusver oor lesbiese vroue in Suid-Afrika gedoen is, slegs 'n klein groepie vroue betrek het. (En dit is gewoonlik vriende en kennisse van die navorsers!) Ek voel egter dat dit tyd geword het om die lesbiese vrou, wat nog nie die geleentheid gehad het om oor haarself te praat nie, nou die geleentheid te gee.

Ek wil dan sommer ook nou duidelik stel dat alle inligting aan my verskaf, vertroulik hanteer en gehou sal word. Die inligting sal wel deel van my navorsing uitmaak, maar dit sal aangebied word op welke wyse dat geen deelnemer se identiteit openbaar sal word nie. Die naam en adres wat jy vir my verskaf, hetsy dit jou eie of 'n skuilnaam is, sal ook as uiters vertroulik hanteer word. Wees dus asseblief verseker dat alle inligting wat jy aan my gee, van watter

**APPENDIX D (cont)**

aard ook al, deur my gerespekteer sal word. 'n Kort opsomming van die voltooide tesis sal aan elke deelnemer gestuur word en enige navrae, voorstelle of kritiek op die werk, sal waardeer word.

Weereens baie dankie dat jy aan my geskryf het. As jy om een of ander rede nie meer aan die projek wil deelneem nie, stuur asseblief die vraelys so spoedig moontlik aan my terug.

Beste groete

Sue Blyth

APPENDIX E : QUESTIONNAIRES

QUESTIONNAIRE

Please complete this in whichever way you wish, and return it to me as soon as possible. I have provided a stamped addressed envelope. If you no longer wish to take part in the research, please return the questionnaire to me uncompleted.

Thanks

POSTAL ADDRESS: .....  
.....  
.....

NAME/PSEUDONYM: ..... AGE: .....

HOME LANGUAGE: .....RELIGION (if any): .....

CULTURAL or OFFICIAL "RACIAL" GROUP: .....

NATIONALITY: .....  
(If not South African, how long have you lived here? .....

LIVING ARRANGEMENT (e.g. with parents, in rented flat with friends):  
.....

WHERE WERE YOU BORN (city/town): .....

WHERE DID YOU GROW UP? .....

WHAT KIND OF SCHOOL DID YOU ATTEND? .....

EDUCATION RECEIVED: .....

PRESENT OCCUPATION(S): .....

FATHER'S OCCUPATION(S)\*: .....

MOTHER'S OCCUPATION(S)\*: .....

\* Previous occupation if retired or no longer alive.

WHEN DID YOU REALISE THAT YOU WERE GAY/LESBIAN? .....

"I prefer to use the term(s) .... LESBIAN \_\_\_ GAY \_\_\_ DYKE \_\_\_  
HOMOSEXUAL \_\_\_ OTHER ....."

If you have a lover/girlfriend at the moment, how long have you been together? .....

How would you describe this relationship (e.g. serious, casual etc):  
.....

If you are single/celibate, is this because of circumstances \_\_\_ or choice \_\_\_

Have you ever been married? .....

If so, why did you marry? .....

Are you still married? .....

## APPENDIX E (cont)

WHERE DID YOU READ/HEAR ABOUT THIS RESEARCH? .....

"I read the following newspapers fairly frequently (that is, at least 1 out of every 5 or 6 issues)":

"I read the following magazines fairly frequently (at least 1 out of every 4 issues)":

Have any gay/lesbian/women's books been very important to you? Which ones?

Do you read any gay/lesbian/women's magazines published overseas (e.g. Spare Rib)? Which ones?

Have you seen any lesbian/gay films? Which one(s)? Did it/they have a strong impact on you?

HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE YOURSELF (very briefly)?

## APPENDIX E (cont)

VRAELYS

Voltooi asseblief hierdie vraelys op enige manier wat jou gemaklik laat voel en stuur so spoedig moontlik aan my terug in die gefrankeerde koevert (verkieslik voor die einde van die maand). As jy nie meer aan die projek wil deelneem nie, stuur asseblief die voltooidde vraelys aan my terug.  
Dankie

NAAM/SKUILNAAM: ..... POSADRES: .....

OUDERSOM: ..... .....

HUISTAAL: ..... .....

GODSDIENS (indien enige): .....

KULTURELE OF AMPTELIKE "RASBEGROEP": .....

NASIONALITEIT: ..... (Indien nie Suid-Afrikaans nie, hoe lank bly jy al in die land?).....

HOE WOON JY? (bv. met ouers, in 'n gehuurde woonstel met vriende ens.)  
.....

GEBOORTE PLEK (dorp/stad): .....

WAAR HET JY GROOT GEWORD? .....

WAAR HET JY SKOOL GEGAAN? (bv private meisies skool) .....

.....

ONDERRIG/OPVOEDING ONTVANG: .....

BEROEP (TANS): .....

VADER SE BEROEP(E) \*: .....

MOEDER SE BEROEP(E) \*: .....

\* Vorige beroepe indien afgetree of oorlede.

WANNEER HET JY BESEF JY IS GAY/LESBIES? .....

"Ek verkies die term(e) ...LESBIER \_\_\_ GAY \_\_\_ DYKE \_\_\_  
HOMOSEKSUEEL \_\_\_ ANDER \_\_\_\_\_

INDIEN JY TANS 'n VRIENDIN HET, HOE LANK IS JULLE AL SAAM? .....

HOE SAL JY DIE VERHOUDING BESKRYF? (bv ernstig) .....

AS JY ENKEL/SELIBAAT IS, IS DIT DEUR OMSTANDIGHEDDE \_\_\_ OF EIE KEUSE \_\_\_

WAS JY OOIET GETROUD? .....

INDIEN WEL, WAAROM HET JY GETROU? .....

IS JY STEEDS GETROUD? .....

## APPENDIX E (cont)

WAAR HET JY VAN HIERDIE NAVORSINGSPROJEK GEHOOR? .....

"Ek lees die volgende koerante redelik gereeld (ten minste een uit 5 of 6 uitgawes)":

Ek lees die volgende tydskrifte redelik gereeld (ten minste een uit 4 uitgawes):

Was daar enige gay/lesbiese boeke wat baie belangrik vir jou was. Watter boek(e)?

Het jy al enige gay/lesbiese/vroue tydskrifte van oorsee gelees? (bv Spare Rib) Watter tydskrift(e)?

Het jy al enige gay/lesbies rolprente gesien? Watter film(s)? Het hulle enige sterk invloed/inpakt op jou gehad?

BESKRYF KORTLIKS HOE JY JOUSELF SIEN.

Stuur na:

## APPENDIX F : GUARANTEE OF CONFIDENTIALITY

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN



## Department of Psychology


University of Cape Town · Rondebosch 7700 · South Africa  
Telephone: (021) 650-9111  
Fax No: (021) 650-3726

I am a Master's student at the University of Cape Town. The study with which I am busy will examine ordinary aspects of gay/lesbian women's ideas about themselves.

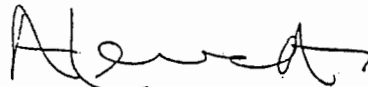
The questionnaire and Q-sorts which you will be asked to complete will form the basis of my thesis in research psychology. Each participant's data will receive a code label. Only I will have access to the participants' identities.

I guarantee that all identifying information (names, addresses, etc.) will be kept entirely confidential. This information will be separately and privately filed by me. In addition, all information in my thesis and in any articles which may emerge from the thesis will be presented in such a way that it will not be possible to identify any participants.

Your participation is entirely voluntary, and you are free to withdraw from the research at any point.

Signed: 

Sue Blyth



Supervisor: Ms A Levett

15 August 1988

**APPENDIX G : SECOND LETTER SENT TO PARTICIPANTS**

Dear

Thank you very much for returning the questionnaire so promptly.

It will take a little while for the next stage of the research to get to you. This is because the Q-sort (the next stage) will be based to a certain extent on the letters and questionnaires I receive - this means that I have to wait to hear from more women.

I hope to get back to you within the next month or two. If you have any questions in the meantime, I would be glad to answer them.

Sincerely,

Sue

**APPENDIX G (cont):**

Beste

Baie dankie dat jy die vraelys so vinnig beantwoord en aan my terug gestuur het.

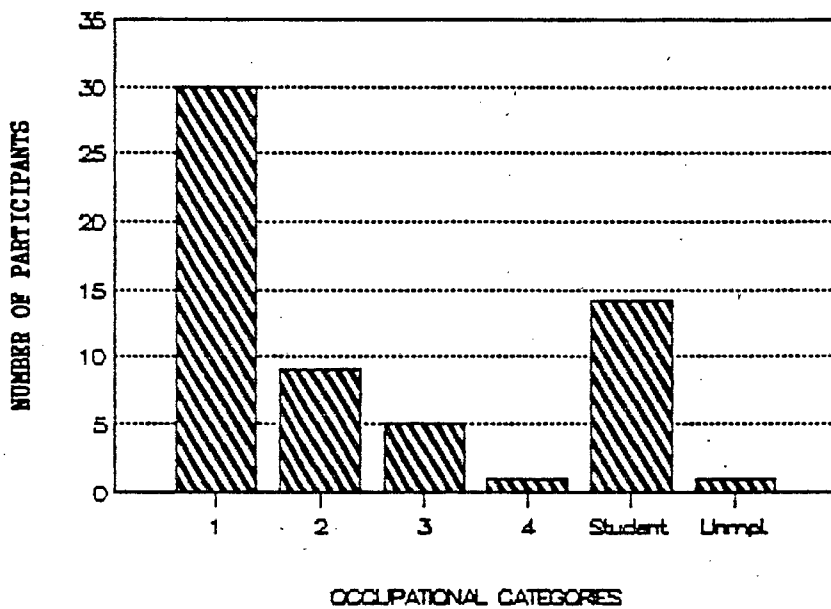
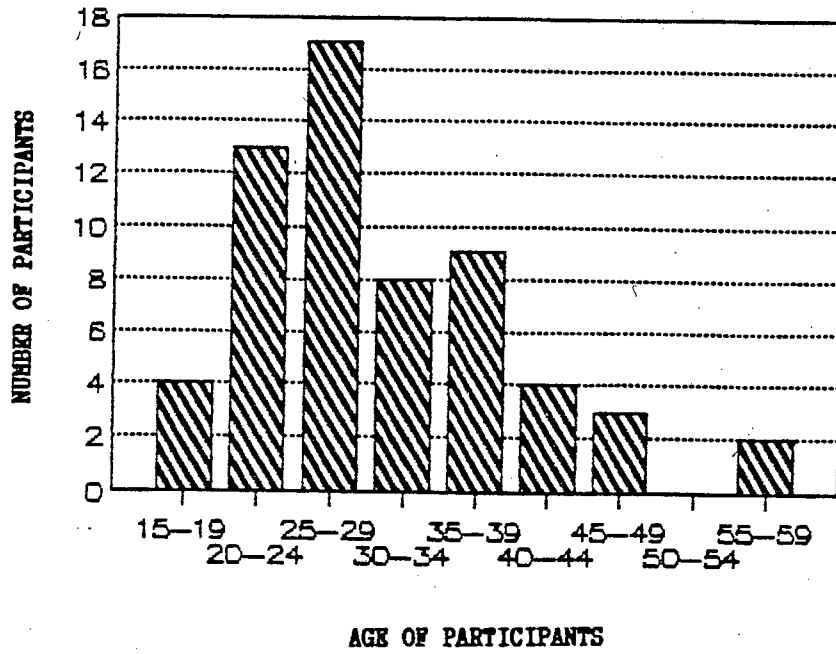
Dit sal nou 'n tydjie duur voor die volgende stap van die projek jou bereik omrede die Q-metode [die volgende stap] hoofsaaklik op die reaksie van die deelnemers gegrond is. Ek moet dus vir soveel moontlik vraelyste en briewe wag, voordat ek voortgaan.

Ek sal egter binne 'n maand of twee na jou toe terug kom en as daar intussen enige vrae is, sal ek die met die grootste plesier beantwoord.

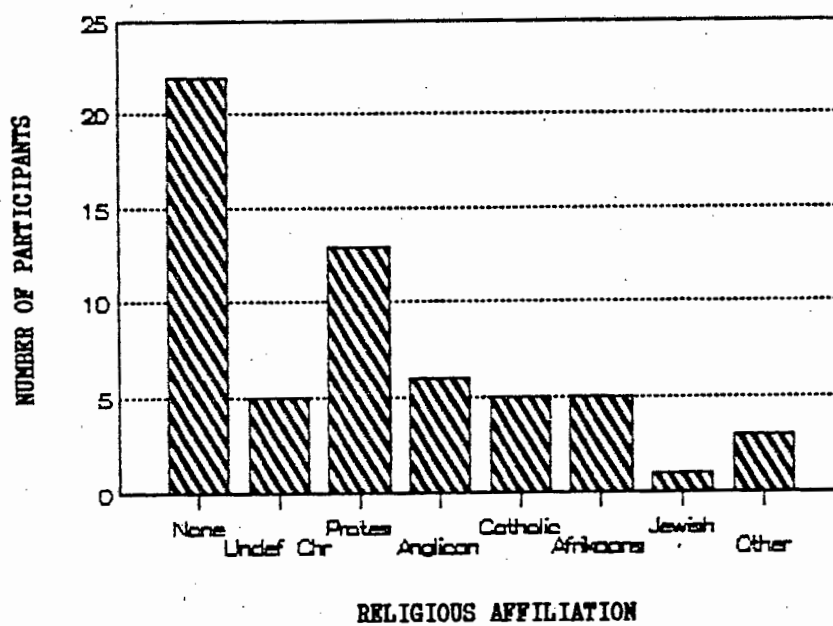
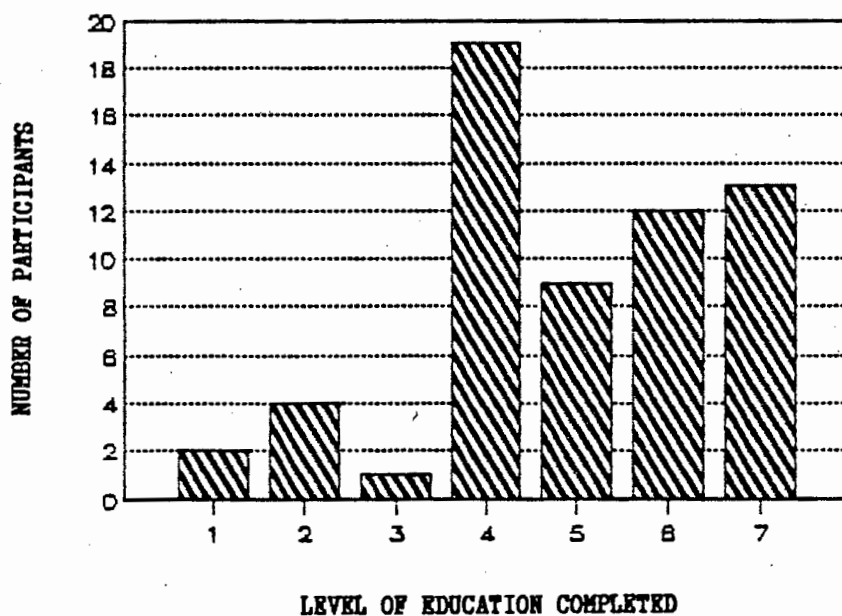
Groete

Sue

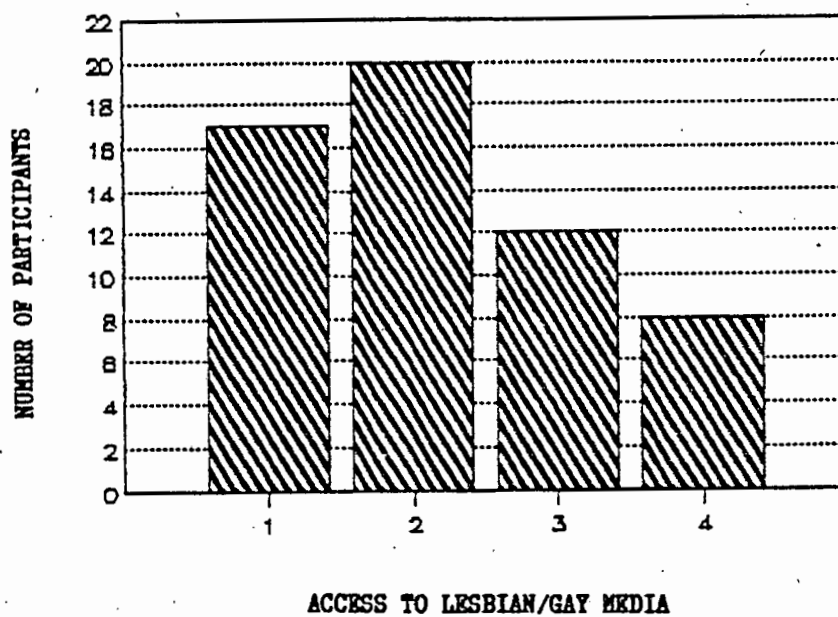
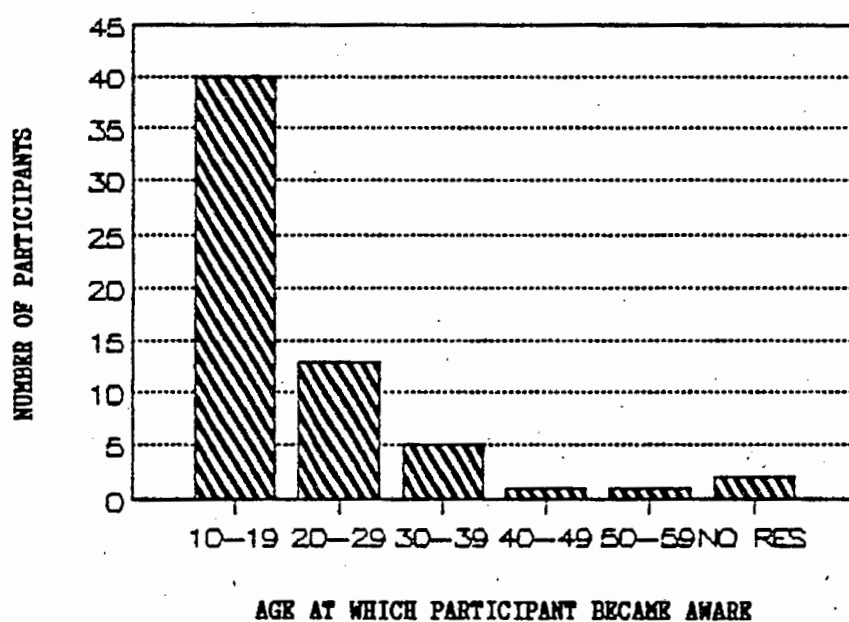
APPENDIX H : GRAPHICAL REPRESENTATION OF PARTICIPANT VARIABLES



## APPENDIX H (cont)



## APPENDIX H (cont)



## APPENDIX H (cont)

