Points of Unity

-the Nature of Coalition among South African Women

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Abstract

This paper suggests that pre-transition mobilisation and collective bargaining creates post transition success. It also examines how the fragility of a gender identity often results in fragmentation of crosscutting women’s organisations once democracy is established, resulting in poorer cooperation between women and effectively poorer struggle for gender equality. It is a case study that takes us through the history of South African women’s organisations, up till today. Evidently, different groups of South African women, divided by class, ethnicity and party belonging were subject to different forms of discrimination under apartheid rule. Nevertheless, they managed to form a united front under the parole of “womanness”, resulting in collective bargaining and participation in the negotiation process, leading up to a more gender sensitive constitution and greater participation in government. Thereby, through a time limited point of unity, women managed to reform gender insensitive institutions. However, as South Africa started to democratise the unity experienced prior to the transition to democracy weakened and women again began to organise around their original identities, based on class and ethnicity and also party membership, and no more points of unity have since occurred. In conclusion, this thesis focuses on the strength of collective bargaining in civil society under authoritarian rule and the weakness non-collective bargaining in a democratic society, and tries to find various reasons for fragmentation.

Key words: women’s mobilisation, points of unity, South Africa, democratisation, fragmentation, collective bargaining
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1 Introduction

The democratisation of South Africa has been frequently reviewed by scholars all over the world. The great interest in the transition and consolidation of South Africa might depend on factors such as the fairly recent history of apartheid, strong economic development compared to other African countries and also the multiethnic society that has created a multitude of political parties. Due to its position as the “African Tiger” the country has also played a significant role in the development of other African countries. Above factors have certainly influenced the democratisation of South Africa in more than one way. However this paper will focus on the role of the women. The women’s movements played a differential role in the transition to democracy, as they managed to unite women deriving from different ethnicities, class, age and race. They formed an umbrella organisation, WNC, which worked for the emancipation and including of women in the politics of South Africa.

1.1 Problem Discussion

The topic of our bachelor thesis is the role of South African women’s movements in the transition from apartheid rule to democracy in South Africa. Our aim is to describe various problems they have been faced with in translating their combined strength from civil society to the new democratic society, and give a general explanation to why fragmentation between women’s organizations may occur and has occurred in South Africa.

In the process of transition to democracy, South African women’s organizations gathered under a narrow but mutual sense of “womanness” with shared goals, namely democracy, women’s participation in the constitution writing process and gender equality in the new democratic state, but also with a mutual ”enemy” – the oppressive apartheid rule. After the transition to democracy, this co-operative “womanness” split into its original multitude of identities and interests. Consequently, the powerful umbrella organization, the WNC, lost its former strength, and collective bargaining became individual bargaining in new domains. Effectively, the mutual strength the South African women had in civil society weakened as they reacheded their goal of democracy.

Compared to South American countries like Brazil and Argentina where women’s movements like the Mothers of La Plaza de Mayo and were active and successful in democratising the state, the South African women were successful also in the growing number of women in government. Now remains the work of
implementing the gender sensitive constitution that was reached in the time of transition.

The title of our bachelor thesis is: “Points of Unity – the Nature of Coalition Among South African Women”. The questions we aim to answer are: Which role did women’s movements play in the transition from apartheid rule to democratic rule (in ensuring women’s rights and citizenship)? Can we speak of collective bargaining? How can a mutual goal and identity strengthen women’s organisations on the road to democracy? What happened in South Africa in terms of shared goals and identity when South Africa moved from a state of authoritarianism to democracy? Is fragmentation inevitable after a transition from authoritarian rule to democratic rule? What reasons were there for fragmentation? How does fragmentation harm implementation?
2 Theoretic Framework

‘...every single one of us is more than whatever race we represent or embody and more than whatever gender category we fall into’ (Rai, 1996, p 226, cited in Amos and Parmar, 1984)

We have built our own theory from works of Shirin M. Rai and Waylen and Taylor, who share our idea that women’s movements in civil society get their strength from a common identity based on gender, crosscutting class and ethnicity. In addition, Rai claims that problems often occur after transition when the goal of women’s participation and democracy has been accomplished (Grugel, 2002, p 101). To understand why fragmentation occurs between civil society actors, we have added to the theory, an element of rational choice, which we think, could be interesting in explaining the South African case. Our aim is to, through this element, explain the strategic decision, interests and gains behind collective bargaining and likewise when speaking of individual bargaining. In addition, party structures and the political environment in general seem to have played a large part in the unity as well as in the fragmentation. Our perspective is therefore both structural and actors oriented, meaning that actors act rationally according to their identity and societal structures, whether it is collective or individual. The fact that we have not included feminist theory may seem surprising. We have made this decision based on our common understanding that there are other ways of explaining why fragmentation occurs in a democratic society, and why fragmentation can be harmful for the way towards gender equality. Were we for example to analyse the same phenomenon within Solidarity in Poland we would not see the actors as men, but individuals with personal preferences.

2.1 Civil Society

The South African civil society movements we examine are women’s movements who have been working as a counterweight to the state. They are a part of what “Foley and Edwards” define as civil society II, that is a sphere autonomous from the state and the market, working to reform the state. As Foley and Edwards put it, the definition of civil society II “lays special emphasis on civil society as a sphere of action that is independent of the state and that is capable-precisely for this reason-of energizing resistance to tyrannical regime”. Foley and Edwards have mainly focused on civil society in Latin America and Eastern Europe, but
evidently this definition is also applicable to the recent development in Africa (Foley & Edwards, 1996, p 38-52).

2.2 Fragmentation

“There is an essential woman created where none exists” (Rai, 1996, p 226)

As Jean Grugel argues in Democratization. A Critical Introduction, civil society movements are said to be most effective under authoritarian rule because of their strong unification. Furthermore, during transition to democracy women tend to mobilise on the basis of their gender identity for increased participation and gender reform. During this phase, so called points of unity are observable. The most evident cases of this phenomenon have been South American countries and especially Argentine where groups like the Mother of la Plaza de Mayo have successfully challenged oppression of the military regime. Nevertheless, the strong unity achieved by women before transition to democracy tends to fragment because of the fragility of the gender identity (Grugel, 2002, p 101-102). Thus the fall of women’s organizing is not unique for South Africa and ‘has been accompanied by the seemingly inevitable tendency (of women’s movements) to fragment in the post-transition period’ (Waylen, 2007, p 24). Gender identity can easily be unravelled by class and or other types of crosscutting social identities because as Rai points out “there is no essential woman or womanness that can be isolated when we scrutinize their lives under any type of regime”. On the contrary, women carry within them a multitude of identities grounded in class, ethnicity and race, however under certain conditions, under transition or aggregation; women may be erased of all other details and be perceived simply as women. As Rai puts it “There is an essential woman created where none exists” (Rai, 1996, p 226). Difference marks all women, something that in some cases becomes more evident after a transition to democracy than during the struggle for democracy and participation within parts of civil society II.

2.3 Rational Choice

What pre-conditions are needed to suggest that it is rational to take part in any collective action, such as the women’s movement, and perhaps more importantly – what causes fragmentation from a Rational Choice Theory (henceforth RCT) - point of view. In this thesis we will partly be using RCT to explain women’s behaviour in the transition from apartheid to democracy. To execute an analysis of this kind, a few assumptions have to be drawn, and defining Collective Action and Rationality will provide the foundation of the assumptions necessary for the
analysis. As Ward claims in *Theory and Methods in Political Science*, we neither consider RCT to be free-standing in any way; however a useful tool when analyzing human behaviour in i.e. collectives (Ward, 2002, p 65).

2.3.1 Rationality

In this theory, every human being is considered to be rational. Rationality, however, comes in many different disguises; rational arguments for instance, are those who refer to the rule of logic. Rational decisions and rational preferences however, might need a more ingoing description (Colman, 2003, p 140). Even though Colman describes these elements thoroughly, we will not give an as fully technical account for the concepts. The meaning of rational preferences is simply that we place preferences in order of precedence, that we in a situation of two alternatives either prefer \( A_1 \) to \( A_2 \), or prefer \( A_2 \) to \( A_1 \), or are indifferent between the alternatives; rational decisions are then made upon our preferences. Rationality is often associated with egoism, based on the nature of the assumption, which is that rational human beings are always trying to maximise their utility. In this sense rationality is indeed very similar to egoism. It is however necessary to differentiate rationality and egoism. An action is rational in the sense that the individual acting have prior to the action considered multiple alternatives, all with different outcomes, and hereby made a choice to carry out on one of the different set of alternatives. Egoism is however, a choice of action based *only* on the level of personal gain (maximising utility), the outcome of the action will produce. Furthermore, each actor has a unique set of preferences that affect rational decisions, which direct our actions. These sets of preferences are in turn both stimulated and limited by the structure in which we are acting. This paper suggests that is may be rational to take part in collective action, that participation may be a strategic decision. People join organization because they expect a high level of impact and a positive outcome.

2.3.2 Rationality in Collective Action

In a collective or a group, it is easy to imagine how the individual preferences are subordinated to the collective’s preferences. The rationality here lies within the decision to participate in a collective action. Collective agents (groups or organisations) act through their members, in the way that the individual members all understand and act for the collective’s preferences and intentions (Gilbert, 2006, p 12-13). Since the beginnings of time, people have been faced with the problems of social dilemmas and collective action – leading to decisions affecting war and peace or mere everyday-life decisions as whether or not to keep a promise (Ostrom, 1998, p 1). Since collective actions are those who affect the lives of a collective, the incentives of individuals to participate, is an important factor in achieving successful collective actions. In Mancur Olson’s *The Logic of Collective Action*, two ways of organizing collective action was posited; selective
incentives and political entrepreneurs (Ahn, Ostrom and Walker, 2003 p 295). Selective incentives indicate a way of organizing the collective action so that the preferences of the individual as well as those of the collective are met. Individuals joining a collective commitment may still make decisions in accordance to their own preferences, settle on their own goals – in short have the capacity to act as singular agents as opposed to collective agent. In order to execute a successful collective action, as the women’s mobilization in South Africa, the incentives of the individuals to join the collective action must be in order of the ones of the collective (Ahn, Ostrom and Walker, 2003 p 300). As collective actions rarely have a straight course to success, the capacity to reason and deliberate are often deranged by the fact that people tend to act on more salient factors instead of considering the “big picture” (Gilbert, 2006 p 13). Limiting possible differences in preferences can thus be achieved by limiting the desired collective achievement. By doing so, the individuals in a collective can easier find mutual incentives to cooperate in order to achieve a common goal – a goal that will benefit the collective and thereby the individual.
3 Method

This paper is outlined as a case study in which we will combine a theory on civil society fragmentation that focuses on women's movements with Rational Choice Theory. The hypothesis, which is a result of the two, will be tested, and discussed throughout the paper. Our aim is to find variables that explain why fragmentation occurs. These variables are based on our choice of theories and the empirical material that will consist of scientific articles and various books on women and democratisation, and most importantly- telephone interviews. When the researcher chooses to develop existing theories through a case study, it is always preferable to use a large quantity of information from a small quantity of sources (Esaiasson-Gilljam-Oscarsson-Wängnerud, 2004, p 122-123). Through this type of research the possibilities to do a detailed examination of the field is enhanced, which is very suitable for our expected result.

3.1 The Interviews

Interviewing former and present members of different South African women’s organizations will produce rather interesting, up to date, and vivid material. In addition to South African women politicians, we will interview researchers that are indeed very dedicated to the South African case, namely Hannah Britton, assistant professor of political science and women’s studies at the university of Kansas and author of a series articles on the South African transition and gender as well as the book Women in the South African Parliament, and Professor of law at the University of Johannesburg and head of the Legal Department of the Commission on Gender Equality, Liesl Gerntholz. Due to Britton's and Gerntholz academic knowledge in this field, we believe that they will contribute and guide us through our own research. Through these interviews, and through a so called rolling-rock-method, we hope to receive names of centrally situated women and organisations who will contribute to our work, by sharing their points of view and experiences. The rolling-rock- method is particularly suitable in this type of case study, where the sources of the wanted material are unknown. It allows the interviewers to come in contact with new interviewees using the prior source’s information and recommendations (Esaiasson et al. 2004, p 212). Interviews are to a great extent helpful in the work of gathering material for a paper, since the beforehand knowledge is limited. They may give the writer a hint of what is interesting to examine, and since there is a limited amount of literature on the recent development if South African women’s organisations it may be necessary
to receive a large part of our material through interviews. In addition, interviews provide good opportunities to register unexpected answers (Esaiasson-Gilljam-Oscarsson-Wängnerud, 2004, p 279). The interviews will be conducted via telephone. There is however always a risk that the interviewees will turn out to be a rather homogeneous group of people, encompassing a similar point of view of the topical phenomena. To minimize the risk of having a homogeneous group of sources, we have deliberatelly chosen to interview women of different age, class, party belonging and ethnic belonging, who were active in the democratisation process or/and are working with politics today. The most important question of the interview form will be so called grand tour questions, which will create opportunity for the interviewees to develop the elements in the topical situation that they feel are the most important (Esaiasson-Gilljam-Oscarsson-Wängnerud, 2004, p 290). By providing this space, we hope to form a vivid conversation with the interviewee.
4 Apartheid

South Africa’s apartheid regime was formally created in 1948, and differed from other authoritarian regimes because of its overt salience of race. As Georgina Waylen argues in “Women’s Mobilisation and Gender Outcomes in Transition to Democracy: the Case of South Africa” this made South Africa “an oligarchic society organised around extreme social, economic and political inequalities enshrined in a tripartite racial structure that privileged the white minority at the expense of the black majority”. The National Party (NP) was in power until 1994 and dominated the all white parliament that lacked an effective opposition. Among other things, the National Party created the infamous pass laws that controlled where different communities lived and worked, thereby creating an extreme case of segregation (Waylen, 2006, p 7-8).

4.1 Women and Apartheid

Because of its racist core, apartheid did not have the same impact on all groups of women. White women had been given the right to vote whereas black women had not, but were not equal to white men in for example tax and property laws. In addition access to abortion was not forbidden but very much restricted and there were no effective laws against domestic violence. Apartheid had within it a very conservative vision of gender relations that saw white women as mothers within traditional families. While white women were seen as mothers, black women were denied adult status, which effectively separated them from their children. Under apartheid rule, they could not own or inherit property and rights over children remained with men (Waylen, 2006, p 7-8). A Commonwealth Observer Mission to South Africa (COMSA) had visited South Africa before the elections of 1994 to consider violence in the South African society. They found that South African women, 53% of the population, were among the worst victims of the apartheid system and violence. According to their figures, approximately half of the female population was likely to be raped within her lifetime, and it was estimated that about one in six women was battered by her male partner (Deegan, 1999, p 84). In our interview, Swat illustrates a general situation for South African women before the transition to democracy;
“Prior to 1994 there was a situation whereby women were not a part of decision making processes. Women were kept somewhere at home to raise kids and carry instructions from their husbands. A lot of them were not working, especially in the rural areas. A lot of them were not even educated, but a lot of things have been done since democracy…”

This pre-democracy situation had clear effects on women’s rights and abilities to be active in the political arena. Swat also mentions that women had one main, shared obstacle for political participation, namely that they were not in any way viewed as potential political leaders (Interview, Swat).

4.2 Two societies living in one country

“We are two societies living in one country – there is one developed and one underdeveloped. You cannot suddenly mix people – it doesn’t work.” (Interview, Ravenhill)

The apartheid system effectively created a divided South Africa, with two societies within the country, one developed and one underdeveloped (Interviews, Ravenhill, Sonti, Britton, Swat). However, the division between the two societies is not static, but evolutionary. During the apartheid era, the division was strictly founded in the system’s racist institutions, and in South Africa today there is a growing black middle class, and it is evident that the reasons for the division are no longer strictly racial, but rather class oriented. In lieu, class seems to matter more than ethnicity. Britton; “the question becomes if there’s a racial bias because there’s a slowly growing black middle class and the formally know as the coloured population has increased… people [in the United States] think it has to be about race but I keep saying no, it is also about class…” (Interview, Britton). During our interviews on the subject of the apparent societal division, the question of race has never come up and white women as well as black women believe that the division between the underdeveloped and the developed society is founded in socio-economic factors, such as wealth and education. Thus, even though these factors are founded in the legacy of the former apartheid rule and somewhat in post-colonial structures, the line that divides the two societies is too complex to be said to be based on race alone. Yet still, the distribution of income between black and white citizens is among the most unequal in the world and over half of the black population lives below the poverty line (Todaro & Smith, 2003, p 771). As cited by Todaro and Smith: “If white South Africa were a separate country, it would rank 24th in the world (just after Spain). Black Africans would rank 123rd in the
world (just above Congo). Not just two different peoples, these are almost two different worlds.”¹ (Todaro & Smith, 2003, p 771).

5 Women’s mobilisation against apartheid

There was a strong women’s resistance against the apartheid system long before the transition period of the early 1990s, and several points of unity have been recognized. With the creation of the FSAW in the 1950s, women first gathered under a sense of “womanness” and “an essential woman was created where none existed”. In the 1980s women again came together to take part in the liberation struggle, with the aim to make the new democratic state more gendered in legislation and also in the minds of the South African people. During the transition period, women came together under the umbrella organization WNC, at the initiative of the ANC Women’s League. Britton mentions that “there’s been such an history within the women’s movement in South Africa, different types of women’s movements, that collective strength is important for them...” (Interview, Britton).

5.1 The Federation of South African Women

“You have tampered with the women; you have struck against a rock!”
(Silkstone, 2006, p 4)

The FSAW was an umbrella organisation that included women’s organisation from a number of ethnic-based organisations. It was formed in 1954 “for the purpose of uniting all women in common action for the removal of all political, legal, economic and social disabilities” (Silkstone, 2006, p 1). With the creating of the FSAW followed a new way of organising around gender issues. At the time, a majority of women who were active in civil society organizations experienced that their organisations were male dominated and that they did not sufficiently meet women’s needs. The FSAW showed that women’s organizations did not have to be auxiliaries to male dominated bodies, rather they could work independently. This model and experience was perceived successful and constituted the model for the UDF-aligned women’s organisations in the 1980s and the Women’s National Coalition (WNC) in the 1990s (Geisler, 2000, p 608). The FSAW organisation drafted a Women’s Charter that viewed equality between men and women as important as equality between blacks and whites, and as a
crucial part of national liberation. It organised mass resistance of extension of the pass laws, with a first big protest in 1955. Protests grew all over the country and peaked in the march of 20,000 women at the Union Buildings in Pretoria in 1956 (Waylen, 2006, p 8-9, Silkstone, 2006, p 4).

5.2 The ANC Women’s League and ANC’s Women’s Section

“The common exploitation and oppression of men and women on the basis of colour has led to a combined fight against the system instead of a battle against men for women's rights.” (ANC 1980).

The ANC Women’s League (ANCWL) was formed in 1943, the same year that women were welcomed as full members of the ANC movement. The aim of the Women’s League was to defend and advance the rights of women’s rights against all forms of national, social and gender oppression, inside and outside the ANC. Nevertheless, because of the close links to the ANC, women lacked the autonomy to pursue independent actions. The ANCWL had its own regulations, constitution and rules but they could not act in conflict with the constitution of policies of the ANC (Deegan, 1999, p 42-50). The limitations of the party structure resulted in small if any changes to gender equality within ANC as well as within the South African society. In the 1980’s, ANC leaders recognised the inequalities within its own ranks and called the Women’s Section to ‘liberate us men from antique concepts and attitudes about the place and the role of women in society’ (Tambo 1981, cited in Geisler, 2000, p 609). The creation of the Women’s League and the ANC Women’s Section, was important for the success of the following women’s movements, such as the Women’s National Coalition, since it created structures necessary for other women’s organizations to act and accomplish goals outlined throughout the struggle for gender equality when the democratisation process was under way. The Women’s League was, for instance, one of the initiators and coordinators of the Women National Coalition.
5.3 WNC

“The WNC was a coalition that allowed a ‘triple alliance’ of women academics, politicians and activists—many of whom were feminists—to act strategically to articulate gender issues at a crucial point during the transition.” (Waylen, 2007, p 5)

Following the Malibongwe Conference in 1990, the idea of a national women’s organisation that embraced non-ANC members was raised in a number of forums across South Africa. In September in 1991, representatives from a wide range of women’s organisations met in Johannesburg at the invitation of the ANC Women’s League to discuss the possibility of a nation-wide multi-party coalition based on gender across racial and ideological divisions. Two years after the Malibongwe Conference, in April 1992, the Women's National Coalition (WNC) was nationally launched. By then the negotiation process was well under way (Silkstone, p 8). The WNC recognised the importance of united action across the ethnic and social spectrum that was so obvious within South Africa. At its peak, the umbrella organisation consisted of approximately 90 women’s organisations that represented about two million South African women (Zulu, 2000, p 171). The aim of the WNC was to create an environment where women could discuss mutual interests and launch campaigns for women’s issues and participation. The ‘Women’s Charter for Effective Equality’ was drawn up in 1993, and constituted one of the WNC’s most important tasks. It was a document that would give expression to the diverse experiences, visions and aspirations of all South African women (Zulu, 2000, p 171-172). The Charter Campaign prioritised the needs of poor and economically vulnerable women and demanded that women’s socio-economic needs be considered (Silkstone, 2006, p 8). The organisations within the umbrella were aware that the struggle was time limited and that the work with the women’s charter would only last for a year. The Women’s Charter campaign was to continue until 1993, but because of its success it was decided to prolong it until 1994 (Hassim, 2003, p 82-83).

5.4 Transition

Though political parties tried to exclude women from the negotiation process, women refused to be marginalised. As an effect of the activities within the WNC, The Women’s Charted was created and women were recognised as an important part of the transition and the democratic development, especially with the ANC (Zulu, 2000, p 170-172). The new constitution that was drafted before the first
democratic election after apartheid rule states that:

"Everyone is equal before the law and has the right to equal protection and benefit of the law. Equality includes the full and equal enjoyment of all rights and freedoms. To promote the achievement of equality, legislative and other measures designed to protect or advance persons, disadvantaged by unfair discrimination may be taken" (Bill of Rights in the South African Constitution, cited in Zulu, 2000, p 167)

For South African women this meant participation through a gender quota and further important legislative and institutional gains (Zulu, 2000, p 166-167). The Common Law rule, whereby a husband obtained marital power over his wife and her property, was repealed by the General Law Fourth Amendment Act in December 1993, and the Guardianship Act of 1993 that gave married couples equal guardianship rights over minors came into effect in January 1994 (Deegan, 1999, p 83). Furthermore, as Hanna E Britton writes in her article 'South African Women's Struggle for Parliamentary Transformation', “South Africa's negotiated transition promised significant gains for gender equality as women acquired one-third of the seats in the national parliament, secured constitutional protection, and began a process of legislative and institutional reform” (Britton, 2002, p 1). 111 women entered Parliament after the 1994 elections, moving South Africa from number 141st to seventh in the world, in number of women in the national parliament (Giesler, 2000, p 606, Britton, 2002, p 1). It pushed South Africa from almost the bottom of women in national parliaments to close to the top. This was a phenomenal step from the previous history of parliaments in South Africa, where the total number of women never exceeded eight and was often was lower (Giesler, 2000, p 606). This increase was further enhanced in the 1999 elections, which brought the percentage of women in the South African parliament from 26 percent to 29.8 percent (Britton, 2002, p 1). Through collective bargaining and cross-party mobilisation, women gained a remarkable presence in national office and gender equality through gender sensitive legislation could be reached (Britton, 2006, p 85).

5.4.1 Points of Unity

“The South African model demonstrates that, unlike many other similar situations in the international context, cross-party collaboration is possible and may be successful given the right context... Additionally, such coalitions seem to function best when there is a shared identity of subordination and/or a shared belief in the necessity of group mobilization.” (Britton, Africa Today, p 56-57)

When asked about the ability for women to unite and struggle for a common purpose, Britton stated that there have been points of unity among South African women. They have been time limited due to the fact that to unite, women have to
put individual preferences aside to struggle for the collective through various multi-party coalitions. Given the South African context, individual preferences and identities of women are highly diverse. Eventually, fragmentation has occurred because of the diversity within the group. Unity is possible but time limited. Knowing that there is a time limitation, and perhaps a forthcoming fragmentation may work as a driving force and may therefore intensify the struggle. As this paper, Britton mentions two points of unity: the struggle against the pass law, fought within the FSAW and the gendered liberation struggle within the WNC: “They [South African women] have been able, at strategic moments to come together across different identities such as the pass law protests, even the Women’s National Coalition in the 90ies…” (Interview, Britton). The strength of the WNC lay in its size and diverse membership, its leadership and in the fact that women had always been in the forefront of apartheid. However, there are other important variables to its success as well. Apart from the united strength within the WNC, a combination of factors such as lessons learnt from other countries in transition, the equality goals of the ANC and the post-conflict situation in which the negotiations took place is also believed to have had positive outcomes for the WNC. Had the transition occurred twenty years earlier, the WNC would probably not have had the same impact as it did (Interview, Britton). It is also evident that the strength of the WNC also lay within its leadership and women like Frene Ginwala who had great rhetoric and mobilising skills and who could gather women under the identity of “womanness”. This identity was vivid but at the same time tenuous and questions such as the abortion question were effectively put aside to avoid conflicts and fragmentation within the organisation (Hassim, 2003, p 82-83).

5.5 Transition and Aftermaths

“I think I had already started to see some split happening with the women who were leaving Parliament voluntarily to go back to the grassroots versus the people who are now attracted to Parliament... There is an exile difference, urban bias and there is certainly an educational bias…” (Interview, Britton).

During our research, we have tried to find out the reasons for fragmentation and realized that a sort of fragmentation, deliberate or not, has occurred among women, both within parliament and civil society organisations and between the two sociatal spheres. The first six variables derive from the one division of the society that we call the developed society. As will be clear, the assumptions about rational actions are easier to make when actors have a wider range of alternatives to choose from. In contrast to the underdeveloped society, actors in the developed society have better preconditions and are therefore in a position where they can make different choices. By this we add yet another dimension of rationality i.e.
actors are more likely to act rationally when there is a greater diversity of outcomes depending on their decisions.

- The Women's National Coalition- a Time Limited Project? A Leadership Perspective
- Decreasing Discipline and Lack of Time
- Career Oriented Mindsets
- Gatekeepers – women working against women
- Party Loyalty
- Lack of Education

5.5.1 The Women’s National Coalition- a Time Limited Project? A Leadership Perspective

‘Let us … say: I am woman; my concerns, my problems, my difficulties, my achievements are an integral part of our new society. No-one will succeed in marginalising them or me. I am woman, I am South African, I am me. I go to Parliament but I am woman’ (Frene Ginwala, speech at the national conference of the Women’s National Coalition, cited in Hassim, 2003, p 81).

These optimistic words by Frene Ginwala well describe the atmosphere within the WNC at the time of transition. In 1994, Ginwala was the leader of the WNC and one of the women behind the organisation’s strong rhetorical and mobilising skill. As a consequence of the WNC’s success, Ginwala was elected Speaker in South Africa’s first democratic parliament. For Ginwala, moving into Parliament was not a break with the women’s movement but a continuation of the long going struggle for gender equality in a new domain (Hassim, 2003, p 82-83). It has however been suggested that the leaders’ move from civil society to government, has had an harmful effect on the struggle for gender equality, that it was more effective during the transition, when women were were united for a common cause, and because the state needs a counterweight. Gisela Giesler writes:

"Yet, the success has come with the price of a women's movement that has lost its strong leaders to government, and women politicians who lack the support of a strong women's movement. Thus, in the moment of greatest victory South African women lack the mass movement that propelled them to success, suggesting that the struggle is not done with yet.” (Giesler, 2000, p 1)

In our interview, Ginwala stressed that the WNC was a time limited project. Its goal was to gather women in the critical moments of transition. The diverse organizations in the umbrella organisation put their agenda on hold to work for the WNC’s gender equality goal, and there was a mutual understanding that once
the negotiation process was over, all organization would go back to their individual agendas. Ginwala also states that one cannot speak of a fragmented movement since the WNC was more of a point of unity than a clear women’s movement:

"I think you have misunderstood the coalition. Firstly, it was a coalition; it wasn't a women's movement. We didn't bring women together into one organization. We very deliberately took a decision that they must stay in the organizations to which they belong, because we knew there was no way we could form one organization, and so the coalition was a co-operation of organizations with a very limited objective, which was simply making sure that the constitution made fundamental changes for women... Some people tried to say it was a women's movement but it never was; it was never intended to be... So some parties left it and there was a debate whether to continue the coalition or not... And the general view was no, we cannot continue it because the objective for which it was formed has been achieved...” (Interview, Ginwala).

Thus, within the former leadership, the idea of the WNC was that it would eventually dissolve and that women’s issues would be dealt with in other domains, and by its subordinate organisations.

To this day, the points-of-view of what the coalition was seem to differ. Doris Ravenhill is of a different opinion than Frene Ginwala. During one of our interviews, Ravenhill expressed disappointment with the WNC and its leadership of today. “From being an enormous national coalition to being a tiny little office that they cannot even afford… so the situation is dire when it comes to coalition and when it comes to gender commission...” (Interview, Ravenhill). Nevertheless, Ravenhill also expresses the difficulty of women of different cultures and classes to co-operate, and that a co-operation of organizations as a long-term commitment would be very hard to achieve (Interview, Ravenhill). One of the reasons for fragmentation may therefore be the vastly different opinions of what the WNC was and what it should be. Was it, as Ginwala stresses- a success or was it as Ravenhill states- a failure in that it fragmented? There are in other words different views of how to best implement gender equality; through an umbrella organization such as the WNC or through individual organizations and electoral strategies, ie if there is a need for a counterweight as the WNC was.

5.5.3 Decreasing Discipline and Lack of Time

The distribution of time varies along the individual’s set of preferences, and with the transition to democracy came further ways of organising around political issues. Women politicians may choose not to work in support of broad organisations, or they may not have sufficient time to do so. It has however been claimed that some women MPs slowly lost touch with women’s organizations
outside the electoral arena with which they once had had close contact (Waylen, 2007, p 19). And an explanation to this has been that the workload of new women MPs decrease the ability to engage in disciplined cross-class and cross-ethnic work. Along with women MPs, other women politicians may find it uneffective and too time consuming to organize around women’s issues. As Britton mentioned in our interview: “For many people, it is not rational to get involved in social movements because of the time commitment and the actual promise of impact is so low that they may not do it…” (Interview, Britton). As such, lack of time may also lead to decreasing discipline. Due to the rapid transformation of the South African institutional framework after the transition to democracy, people now expect changes to continue in at least a similar pace. However, drafting a new constitution is relatively less time consuming than consolidating it (Interview, Sonti). Once the legal framework had been written, post-tiredness struck the umbrella:

“The people… they relaxed after we had this democracy. And those who were the revolutionary, they had a relaxed mood… and they forgot about the battle of women’s organisations before democracy… We have to bring them back, piece by piece; developing structures… We have to make them [the women] see that there is still a need to pursue a unity of women; even after democracy…” (Interview, Sonti).

These words by Sonti define the essence of the lack of discipline problem. Noted in our other interviews is that there is a common understanding that the enormous progress in the transition period, and the sense that the mission of the WNC has been accomplished, resulted in the fact that women in general are no longer as motivated as during and before the transition. During the conversations with our interviewees, the notion that the pre-transition civil society movements accomplished all it wanted to accomplish is pretty clear. This may have resulted in tiredness, because with the success followed a great burden implementing such things as gender equality. The lack of discipline may also derive from the sense of fulfilment, i.e. the goal has been reached and the human resources have been emptied.

5.5.4 Career Oriented Mindsets

Women of South Africa today tend to prioritize their careers to a larger extent than before the democratization and the emancipation of South African women. This obviously leads us to consider the impact of a capitalist market-oriented society on people’s lives. In order to engage in civil society movements and organizations people must have the time and energy. A career-focused mindset amongst women in South Africa has led to less time as well as energy, which in turn have resulted in a decline of civil society engagements. The phenomenon is unmistakably more evident in urban areas where people are more affected by the capitalist values. As the South African society has developed, a number of new
opportunities have arisen and therefore, more strategic decisions have to be made (Interview, Sonti). This is a phenomenon that is common for all modern societies living in a market economy. With more alternatives, women have greater opportunities to choose with consideration to their personal preferences. In South Africa today women tend to value their career higher than voluntary work (Interview, Ravenhill). Notably, this category coincides with both the discipline and lack of time aspect as well as education.

5.5.5 Gatekeepers – Women Working Against Women

In the interviews that make up an important part of Hannah Britton’s book, *Women in the South African Parliament*, Britton came across so-called “gatekeepers”. Gatekeepers are women who make it difficult for other women to participate, by focusing primarily on achieving individual political gains or preserving their political prominence. These gatekeepers are often women with high education and high socio-economic status, belonging to the elite, who have lost touch with the grassroots and with women in the parliament with lower socio-economic status who lack higher education. They plan to maintain their status by preventing other women from entering. For example, these women claim that women with young children should not gain access to parliamentary work. All of these women that Britton came across were white women, belonging to the opposition parties with the means to hire domestic workers and childcare workers. Instead of working to eradicate obstacles based on race, class and gender they often reinforced barriers between them. This category is intertwined with both the education aspect as well as the career-oriented mindset of certain women in South Africa today. It may be perceived as damaging because it creates an image of the features of a good woman parliamentarian. Furthermore, it creates a distance between parliamentary and civil society work and enhances polarisation and fragmentation between women (Britton, 2005, p 104-105).

5.5.6 Party Loyalty

Interviewing Liesl Gerntholz, the significance of party loyalty in general came up and the loyalty to the ANC in particular. Since the first democratic election in 1994 women have organized around party lines, as they did before the creation of the WNC. Effectively questions that concern all women have been sidelined in favour of party preferences. Gerntholz recognized that there were occasions when women needed to unite across party lines in order to reform certain areas such as poverty and HIV/AIDS, areas which affect women differently than men. Because of ANC's strong majority in Parliament and the fact that they are perceived as the party that liberalized South Africa from the apartheid rule, they have not felt the same pressure to deliver well-needed reforms, compared to other parties in a more competitive environment. Gerntholz identified this phenomenon to be decreasing but still believed that it has had a negative effect on the implementations of gender
equality, poverty eradication and the combating of HIV/AIDS (Interview, Gerntholz). The strong connection many parliamentarians as well as other politicians feel to their respective party does not in itself have a negative impact on implementations of reforms. The unique case of South Africa however, were the ruling party by great majority is seen as more than just a political party, provide settings that does not work in favour of a vivid democratic society. A strong and autonomous civil society as a counterweight to the government could provide the atmosphere needed to deal with sensitive areas such as HIV/AIDS, poverty and class structures.

5.5.8 Lack of Education

The variables discussed in the previous headings reflect the two-society-problem. For example, the lack of time aspect states the lack of education within the working class (often the underdeveloped society). During the analysis and interviews, the education aspect was frequently mentioned and seems to be a key-issue to solve the two-society-problem. In addition, it explains fragmentation across socio-economic groups. Women from the underdeveloped society who lack education find it difficult to adjust to formal politics, and as such the majority of South African women are not well represented. Women who were elected into Parliament in the first elections have had a hard time adjusting to parliamentary work, and one group in particular has had to educate themselves on the side of their parliamentary duties, namely the working class women who represent the majority of South African women. Dealing with parliamentary work and education at the same time is of course very time consuming, but also necessary for women to be able to perform well in Parliament. As such, lack of education within the group of working class women has lead to difficulties adjusting to formal politics, and a large number of the women who ran for office in the first election have chosen to not run in the following elections (Britton, 2006, p 85).

Britton on the situation in Parliament:

“I think I had already started to see some split happening with the women who were leaving Parliament voluntarily to go back to the grassroots versus the people who are now attracted to Parliament… There is an exile difference, urban bias and there is certainly an educational bias… and it is rational for these [uneducated] women to work on another level to get more impact…” (Interview, Britton).

Clearly, lack of education is an obstacle for women to work in formal politics, in Parliament and so on. Doris Ravenhill, who is active in The Women's Lobby, expresses the difficulty for women of different classes, cultures and levels of education to work together:

"You see, you are dealing with two societies in one country, there's a developed and there's an underdeveloped. You can't suddenly mix
people, it doesn't work.. You are dealing with certain levels of knowledge and education and the big thing about the women's movement was that we had one issue that cut across race, class religion and whatever and that was equality... but now, we want it in different ways... There is mixing going on but we have to be honest and say that we are not the same people. We come from totally different cultures... We are a vast illiterate country... The majority is illiterate..." (Interview, Ravenhill).

Ravenhill continues, and underlines the problems of cultural differences, illiteracy and low levels of knowledge, ie that it is hard for women of different levels of education and knowledge to work together, because of different perception and understanding of societal problems (Interview, Ravenhill). One way of applying rational choice here, is to say that is may be more rational and effective to cooperate with women from the same class and culture, with the same level of education as you. To work across the societal division may be more time consuming and less effective, at least that is how is seems to be perceived by certain women.
6 Future Challenges

“Life for the majority of South African women, however, continues to be marked by socio-economic hardship, patriarchal domination, and gender violence” (Britton, 2002, p1)

Clearly, the idea of coalition work, and an umbrella organization, is not as close at hand as it was during the transition to democracy. However, there are still issues that cut across class, ethnicity and party belonging, issues that affect all women, directly and/or indirectly, that could be dealt with through a co-operation of women's organizations, such as the WNC. If they were to be resolved, the gap between different societal groups would decrease and co-operation among women’s groups would perhaps be more likely, even though certain obstacles would still remain. What remains is the implementation of the gender sensitive constitution, which is a very hard and time consuming quest. As Frene Ginwala mentioned in our interview with her:

"Just because we have a gender sensitive constitution, doesn't make changes necessarily for women… It’s not just implementation; it's the transformation of society…" (Interview, Ginwala)

In South Africa today, there are signs of certain unity, not of the size of the WNC or the FSAW, but organisations do come together and co-operate on objectives that are shared among them:

"So if there is a need for one [a new coalition], for a particular purpose, women will come together, but one shouldn't expect artificially that woman will come together, or anyone will come together... I think women come together because they share objectives... and do they come together regularly… particularly one the question of violence against women, on trials and child abuse... not everybody, but particular organizations work together, and they cut across religion, politics and so on...." (Interview, Ginwala)

The biggest future challenge in terms of women’s rights is however recognised to be the implementation of the new gender sensitive democratic constitution. In order to implement the success of the transitional women’s coalitions, incitements need to be created for stronger co-operation across ethnicity, class, and party-membership. The WNC still exists but it is no longer as strong, diverse in membership and large as during the early 1990s. The ANCWL is a rather strong organisation but it is dependent on the ANC. There are however a wide range of
issues that a coalition such as the WNC could handle to bring women together in order to achieve collective strength and collective bargaining, and function as a counterweight to the state.

6.1 Education

One of the major concerns in South Africa is that of the ‘lost generation’, which refers to the youth. The dislocated schooling during the apartheid era and have put education at the top of the governments priorities (Deegan, 157-158). In addition, the government recognises the two-society problem, and the polarisation of the rural and urban communities. A high, predominantly female population live in the rural areas, which are in need of socio-economic resources (Deegan, 158-159). The rural population and women in rural communities are less likely to have received education. Under the apartheid system, schools were segregated and the quantity and quality varied across racial groups. The laws that segregated the schools have been abolished but the process of reconstructing the school system has just started. Among black people the illiteracy rate is estimated to be 33 % and three-quarters of the black teachers are unqualified for their jobs. This creates a vicious circle of deprivation and discrimination. One of the challenges is to reduce the failure rate of the black population, 51 %, compared with 3 % for the white population and the government aims at creating a single non-discriminatory system that offers the same standard for all people (Todaro & Smith, 2003, p 770-771). The education aspect has been underlined by many women we have interviewed and somewhat constitutes the foundation for the other problem areas and an obstacle for for women to co-operate more effectively. A large part of the population does not or has not taken part in any education, especially women living in the rural areas. These women represent a large part of the South African society but because of their illiteracy, they are not qualified for working in formal politics or obtaining strong leadership positions in this domain (Interview, Sonti).

Under apartheid rule women in general and black women in particular did not have the opportunity to educate themselves, furthermore those who did, often valued the struggle for liberalisation higher than education.

“Some of the women did give their life over to the struggle… and those who have given their life over to the struggle and have managed to get out South Africa, those ones at least received education in exile… but those who were struggling at home are not educated even now, some of them because they were chased out of school and they had to run away and stay in the rural areas because they were afraid of the apartheid system… and some of them are not educated so far because of traditions. Some think women should not go to school.” (Interview, Sonti).
Education is believed to create respected leaders and also awareness of women’s rights. Furthermore, education may work as a prosperous circle in which women with education feel respected and may thereby gain confidence to interact with other women in formal or informal politics.

6.2 Violence

As an effect of the struggle for gender equality, rights for women are today guaranteed by the constitution and promoted by the constitutionally mandated Commission on Gender Equality. Laws such as the Maintenance Act and the Domestic Violence Act are considered to protect women in financially inequitable and abusive relationships. However, these laws lack structures necessary for implementation. The Criminal Law (Sexual Offences) Amendment Bill, introduced to parliament in 2003, seeks to widen protection for sex-crimes victims, but human rights groups say that it does not go far enough (Freedom House). Discriminatory practices in customary law remain common, as does sexual violence against women and minors (Freedom House). Forty percent of rape survivors are girls under 18 and the incidence of rape and battery in South Africa is extremely high. It is projected that one in two will be raped in her lifetime (Freedom House, Zulu, 1998, p 149). Many women state that they do not engaging in political activities such as women’s empowerment programs because they are being threatened by their male partner. They live in constant fear of violence and abuse even although political violence has subsided in most areas (Zulu, 1998, p 149).

6.3 Poverty

Poverty is the most prominent enemy threatening the new South African democracy and poverty affect women and men differently. In the major cities the majority of women live in shacks, without water, proper sanitation and schools for their children. Compounding the situation is the high unemployment rate and more than one-half of the unemployed are women. In addition, unemployment affects women more, because of the gender division in labour and for women’s responsibility for the household welfare (Zulu, 1998, p 148). As such, poverty is an issue that women that could be dealt better and more effectively through collective bargaining and a united front. The issue directly affects the majority of women in South Africa, because the majority live in poverty, and it affects the rest of the population and the democratic system indirectly, through the negative effects of poverty.
HIV/AIDS is one of the most urgent issues that South Africa and the entire sub-Saharan region have to struggle with. The disease affects women and men differently and there is a need for women to unite across fragmenting differences, not only in South Africa, but across all African countries that are affected by the virus. The UNAIDS declares in a recent report that as much as three quarters of HIV positive Africans between the ages 15 and 24 are estimated to be women. In South Africa, the total infection rate among women is estimated at 35% compared to 29% among men, with women becoming infected at considerably earlier ages than men (LeRoux, 2006). The HIV/AIDS problem is an urgent and important feature of the development issues for the South African society. The government has been faced with strong critique for not dealing with this problem more effectively and there is as an effect a growing number of civil society organisations, taking the matter in own hands, informing and educating vulnerable groups in the society (Interview, Germholz). There is in South Africa today a network of women who is actively pushing for a change. They have a history of organising and that has helped to keep their communities together. However, these kinds of civil society organisations need resources and support both from each other as well as the government.
7 Concluding Remarks

‘Many people assume that there is natural unity among women. This is just not so – women are 'only homogenous as a biological category. Factors such as class and race make women’s lived experiences vastly different. Despite this, South African women have a proud tradition of resisting the discriminatory legislation and practices that were inflicted on the majority of South Africans.’ (Silkstone, 2006, p 1)

During the 1990s, women of South Africa managed to unite for the good of all groups of South African women under two different umbrella organisations- the FSAW and the WNC. Individual preferences were put aside to promote the preferences of the collective. Points of unity like these that have changed the situation for many South African women have been identified throughout the years. However, after the transition from apartheid to democracy there has been a fragmentation among South African women's organisations and the possibility of a new point of unity does not seem as likely as before. The motivation to unite has been split into the members' original identities based on class and ethnicity and party membership.

So why do groups, from a rational choice theory perspective, join a collective? As the theory states, it is more rational to work on a broad front on issues that are cross-cutting and that need to be resolved before each individual group can work on its own agenda. Joining a collective may therefore, according to rational choice theorists, be a strategic decision, something that the group expects to gain from, and the 90 different women's organisations that joined the WNC did gain from it – a more equal number of women in government and constitutional change. This paper suggests that the founding of the WNC was a strategic decision, and that the fragmentation of it was just as rational. It also suggests that rational decisions are made in groups, and in most cases according to societal structures. Women from the "developed society", it seems do however have more ways to choose from.

Furthermore, there is a number of reasons for fragmentation and change of preferences, such as lack of time and lack of discipline. Reasons that may be perceived as a result of societal structures that change actor's behaviour. Structures that have changed for the better may create a post-transitional fatiguensness, and motivation and discipline may have decreased due to the fact that change will happen more slowly, and that is to be gained from a coalition is vaguer. Lack of time may be a result of both new and old structures and may derive from the fact that women work more and in more diverse domains than before the transition. The fact that a lot of women have to receive education along with their work duties is however more a result of old structures that did not
enable all women to receive proper education or political schooling, areas that are crucial to the democratic structure in South Africa.

Fragmentation means that there has to be fragments. The South African society must be diverse in its culture. We have found that the most important differences in identity are class, ethnicity and party belonging, differences that the WNC managed to organise across. Class may have split the collective because it somehow determines women's strategic decision and preferences. All domains, such as Parliament, may not sufficiently represent women from all classes, which make collaboration harder. Ethnicity is somewhat linked to class, but not sufficiently to call South Africa a ranked to society, where ethnicity determines class belonging. The choice of party belonging is in its turn linked to both class and ethnicity and determines what questions each woman or group of women organise around. There are questions that affect all women that could be dealt with through co-coalitional work, instead of in each party's women's group, and organisations do come together, but not in the same scale as during the transition from apartheid rule. Additionally there is the question of party loyalty and differences between parties that are believed to be hard to pass through co-coalitional work, and coalition building.

Clearly, there is no “womanness” that can be scrutinised under any type of regime. There have however been points of unity among South African women, and they have occurred during certain critical points and around issues that directly have affected all women. There are still issues that affect all women indirectly or directly, however there is no longer a mutual enemy or one major issue that unites women from different societal groups. It is arguable that mutual enemies and a common sense of oppression is the single largest incitement for cooperation among women, like the one we have seen in South Africa. Once formal democracy has been established, motivation decreases. Today, there are both further ways to choose from and a wider spectrum of issues to organise around. Women from the developed society may promote one set of issues and women from the underdeveloped society another.

The individual views of what the WNC actually was, seems to be crucial as well. While some women viewed the WNC as a short term engagement, others saw it is an on-going struggle that would last throughout the transition and beyond. The very fact that there is a disagreement on whether an umbrella organisation like the WNC or the FSAW is needed or not must be taken in consideration. Some women prefer to work for gender equality within their party, while others prefer multi-party and collective action. If all groups of women in question no longer agree that a multi-party coalition is the best way of implementing gender equality or even consider it possible, then it is very hard to rebuild an umbrella, and the very fact that the coalition is no longer as active as during the transition may not be as surprising, rather natural. Thus, the very first reason for fragmentation may be that the very idea of what the WNC was, and still is, as diverse as its members.

These diverse points-of-view suggests that the WNC can be viewed as a successful, time-limited coalition or a fragmented women's coalition that has yet to reach its final goal of implementation of its transitional achievements. This
thesis suggests that a multi-party coalition may be needed to implement the WNC's success, while others may say that there are other ways of doing so. As Frene Ginwala stated, the coalition was very successful, because it had a goal which it fought for and reached, and according to Ginwala, one cannot speak of fragmentation because the WNC was a time-limited project that would only last throughout the transition. Furthermore, the very success may have derived from the fact that there was a time-limitation that enabled women to put aside diverse ideological backgrounds. It should, however, be noticed that the preconditions and topical circumstances in South Africa during the transition was also favourable elements in the successful democratisation. Increasing international pressure on the apartheid regime to resign from its ethnic/racial segregation policies created winds of change that swept over the country. Observing neighbouring countries become victims of one authoritarian regime after another, made the national pressure for a democratic change. Civil Society movements and coalitions like WNC succeeded in giving a voice to the people of South Africa because of its ability to unite around comprehensible argumentation but also because of the point in time – the ones that we call points of unity.

Whether the coalition fragmented or not, lessons learnt from this thesis, is that groups like la madres de la plaza de mayo and the WNC, may be very powerful when faced the a mutual enemy and a common goal. That may be the very essences that make them successful. One goal that is important to reach to be able to reach other subordinate goals. The goals the WNC reached have made it easier for women with questions that concern them, in other domains than in a coalition or even a civil society organization. Better access to parliamentary work for instance, may have lessened the will to organise in oppositional, civil society organizations. Thus, with the WNC's success followed less incitement for cooperation among women organisations.

Party loyalty has also proven to fragment groups of women and complicate the implementation of gender equality. Since the by far biggest political party ANC is seen as the “saviour” and “liberator” of South Africa as well as the fact that they are virtually unchallenged, a counterweight to the state is of outer importance. Such a counterweight is by no means absent in South Africa, since there is still a rather large and vivid civil society working to implement and educate the South African societies. Thus our experience from this thesis and the empirical evidence on the yields from a coalition of the size of WNC leads us to the conclusion that collective bargaining is in a along perspective always better than individual bargaining. Women would gain from collective action in the issues presented above. Also, through different types of reforms, the government can lessen the workload for working women, and so forth create time to engage in civil society and grassroots organisations, ie organization that are not auxiliaries to male dominated bodies. Last but not least, as long as women feel structurally subordinated choices will be made to preserve individual status, and may lead to gatekeeping on one hand and resignation on the other.

This paper also shows that rational choice theory is more applicable on the developed society than the underdeveloped. The chapter on future challanged show that there are obstacles for women from the underdeveloped society than for
women of the developed society, to participate in political organisations. It is a very complex matter. Would poverty and what follows of it be taken care of, the gap between women would decrease and participation would be more even. Furthermore, if the two societies would grow closer, it would be easier for women to work together.
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For summarized interviews see Appendix 1