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Where have all the feminists gone?

**Searching for New Zealand's women's movement in the
early 21st century**

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Abstract

Since the 1980s, New Zealand has seen few visible feminist protests and the issue of gender has been ‘mainstreamed’ by neoliberal government policy. Consequently, it has been argued that the women’s movement is dead or, at best, in abeyance. Yet, this thesis investigates contemporary feminist activities in New Zealand at the micro- (individual), meso- (organisational) and macro- (state) level and finds that they together constitute an active, if somewhat, transformed women’s movement.

Informed by a feminist methodology, the thesis uses Sawer’s (2010) definition of a women’s movement to analyse data from semi-structured interviews with a diverse group of women engaged in various feminist activities, content from women’s organisations’ websites and key government documents. At the individual level, findings show that the women share an understanding of feminism as a critique of and challenge to gender inequalities but believe feminism should incorporate an intersectional analysis, acknowledging women’s diverse experiences based on ethnicity, age and other identities. Alongside neoliberalism’s focus on individual choice and responsibility, this leads many women — particularly those who are younger — to largely participate in individualised feminist activities expressed through everyday practices. At the organisational level, the work of women’s organisations is also shaped by a neoliberal contractual funding regime, limiting opportunities for advocacy organisations and reorienting work priorities. Yet, organisations continue to provide crucial, feminist services, even if they are not explicitly labelled as ‘for women’. Finally, state feminist institutions, such as the Ministry of Women’s Affairs (MWA), are also constrained by neoliberal politics. Yet, the MWA’s persistence in keeping *some* women’s issues on the political agenda can be regarded an achievement in itself within this context.

On all three levels of feminist engagement, women have struggled with the challenges of neoliberalism, but also with the difficulties of creating spaces for different groups of women. Intergenerational differences have additionally challenged feminist cooperation. The women’s movement is thus constituted differently to movements of the past and much feminist activity is ‘hidden’ in institutions, organisations and private lives. Yet, this thesis provides sufficient evidence to demonstrate that New Zealand women’s movement nonetheless continues to exist.

This thesis is dedicated to all the strong women in my life
who taught me that giving-up is not an option.

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List of abbreviations

AAAP	Auckland Action Against Poverty
ACC	Accident Compensation Corporation
Afem	Anarcha-feminist
ALRANZ	Abortion Law Reform Association
AWC	Auckland Women's Centre
CEDAW	United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CFC	Campus Feminist Collective
CfP	Call for Participants
CPAG	Child Poverty Action Group
CREDS	Central Region Eating Disorder Services
DIY	Do it Yourself
EDEN	Eating Difficulties Education Network
EEO	Equal Employment Opportunities
FPP	First-past-the-post representation
HLFS	Household Labour Force Survey
KLWV	Kapiti Living Without Violence
LGBT/Q	Lesbian, gay, bi-, transsexual/queer
LWC	Labour Women's Council
MBIE	Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment
MMP	Mixed-member-proportional representation
MoH	Ministry of Health
MPIA	Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs
MSD	Ministry of Social Development
MVS	Maximum variation sampling
MWA	Ministry of Women's Affairs
NACEW	National Advisory Council on the Employment of Women
NCWNZ	National Council of Women
NGO	Non-government organisation
NZNO	New Zealand Nurses Organisation
NZPC	New Zealand Prostitute Collective
NZWIMA	NZ Division of Women's International Motorcycling Association
OMWWL	Māori Women's Welfare League (Opotiki)
PACIFICA	Pacific Allied (Women's) Council Inspires Faith in Ideals Concerning All

List of abbreviations (continued)

PIS	Participant information sheet
RWNZ	Rural Women in New Zealand
TPK	Te Puni Kōkiri; Ministry of Māori Affairs
WCTU	Women's Christian Temperance Union
WHA	Women's Health Action Trust
WSA	Women's Studies Association
WYFC	Wellington Young Feminist Collective
YAFA	Young Asian Feminists Aotearoa

Chapter 1

An introduction

The vote is not enough

PhD students tend to spend much of their spare time talking about their own research projects. Over the last three-and-a-half years, I was one of them. Nearly every person who talked to me for longer than ten minutes would eventually hear about my project (that is not my fault, most people actually asked about my research!). When I explained the topic of my thesis in such situations, many people would respond along these lines:

What's the point of researching New Zealand's women's movement? This is the first country in the world that gave women the vote and women can become Prime Minister here! There is no gender inequality in New Zealand, that's why there is no women's movement — it is as simple as that.

Among the people who reacted in this way were university professors, science and arts students, professionals, workers and artists. Some were young and some were old, but *all* of them were men.

Women's reactions were different. Many seemed curious to see the results of my study and others were excited to hear about contemporary feminism in New Zealand. Some appeared indifferent and uninterested, but not one woman I met over this period of three-and-a-half years — not even one of the few who thought all feminists were frustrated and crazy harpies — argued that contemporary New Zealand does not need a women's movement. Of course, I had many positive male responses too. Some of them were very encouraging and by no means do I want to downplay their support. However, the overall impression I received through these conversations enforced my understanding that many women in New Zealand did not think they had equal opportunities in life compared to men. The existence of gender equality seemed to be a belief held only by (some) men. These experiences encouraged my perseverance in this project because not only did they reassure me that there is an interest in my project among New Zealand women, they also increased my curiosity: what happened to New Zealand's women's movement when it is obviously needed?

Of course, such subjective perceptions of gender inequality alone do not form the sole basis for my research interest in finding New Zealand's women's movement. But there is empirical evidence to support my observations. Before I delve into explaining the specifics of

my research project, I briefly draw attention to such evidence in order to dismiss the apparently widespread argument that New Zealand’s women’s movement disappeared because the First and Second Wave movements defeated all gender discrimination. However, it is not my aim to describe the nature of New Zealand’s gender discrimination in all its depressing facets — many more indicators would be needed for such an endeavour and the following list is not exhaustive. My aim is to illustrate the *need* for New Zealand to have a contemporary women’s movement and by extension the relevance of my research to ‘search’ for it. Thus, Table 1.1 provides a number of selected statistical indicators of gender inequality in New Zealand.

Table 1.1: Indicators of gender inequality in New Zealand

Year	Indicator	Women	Men	Unit
2013	Employment rate	58	70	in % of working age population
	Unemployment rate	7	6	
2013	Full-time median earnings	901	1,016	in NZ\$ per week
	Part-time median earnings	312	270	
2013	Full-time employment	65	89	in % of wage/salary earners
	Part-time employment	33	11	
2011	Protection Order Applications	91	8	in % of applications
	Respondents of Protection Orders	11	88	
2012	Feel (very) safe at night	52	82	in % of respondents
	Feel (very) unsafe at night	48	18	

Sources: Statistics New Zealand: Household Labour Force Survey (HLFS) March 2013 quarter; Statistics New Zealand: Income Survey June 2013 quarter; Family Violence Clearinghouse: Data Summaries June 2013; Statistics New Zealand: General Social Survey 2012

Table 1.1 shows that New Zealand women¹ face disadvantages on a number of social levels. Women are less likely to be part of the labour market (that is, neither employed nor unemployed) and when they are employed, they earn less money than men — because women’s median income for full-time work is lower than men’s and because more women than men work part-time. But women are not only economically disadvantaged. Applications for protection orders (following instances of domestic violence) in 2011 were mostly submitted by women who sought protection and it was mainly men who were subject to these orders. Accordingly, the most recent United Nations Human Rights Universal Periodic Review for New Zealand (2014) heavily criticised the high rate of family violence experienced by New Zealand women and children. Finally, Table 1.1 shows that women are also more likely than men to feel unsafe when walking home at night. Although ‘stranger danger’ is a statistically low *real* risk (Meyhew &

¹ While the binary categorisation of sexes into ‘men’ and ‘women’ can be problematic, statistical data restricts discussion to these two categories.

Reilly, 2006), *feeling* unsafe in one's own neighbourhood is a serious restriction of daily routines and activities (Herbert, Hill, & Dickson, 2009).

This brief discussion serves as a reminder of structural inequalities between women and men in New Zealand. In the interest of succinctness, I have not taken into account differences based on ethnicity, which would have shown stronger discrimination against Māori and Pacific women than for Pākehā (Statistics New Zealand, 2005). Given the disadvantages that New Zealand women face today, it cannot be argued that the women's movement is redundant. The question, therefore, remains: What happened to New Zealand's women's movement?

In this introductory chapter of my thesis I explain how my research project satisfies this curiosity. I first provide an overview of the literature in this field, which offered valuable insights to the broader research area. I then explain how my study contributes to this body of literature. This is followed by an explanation of my research interest, in which I introduce my research questions and the key arguments this thesis uses to answer them. The second half of this chapter is dedicated to clarifying my use of a number of concepts that are central to my project but tend to evoke misunderstandings within academic debates. I close this introduction by outlining the content of the remaining chapters of this thesis.

Situating the research

My thesis aims to identify whether a contemporary women's movement exists in New Zealand. This endeavour is embedded in a widespread intellectual discussion within the literature. Since the 1980s, when the peak of the Second Wave women's movement ended, feminist scholars have debated the status of women's movements internationally. For instance, Staggenborg and Taylor (2005, p.37) wanted to know *Whatever Happened to the Women's Movement* in the United States, Einhorn (1991, p.16) asked *Where Have All the Women Gone?* in East Central Europe, Nash (2002, p.311) inquired *Is There a Women's Movement in England Today?* and Grey and Sawyer (2008) collected accounts of several women's movements from Canada to South Korea, questioning whether they were *Flourishing or in Abeyance*. Such debates were also apparent in New Zealand. Coney (1993b, p.54) declared in the early 1990s that 'it is hardly possible to talk of a [women's] "movement", as the term implies breadth, activity and some commonality of purpose'. However, one year later, Hyman (1994, p.31) stated 'there is still a feminist movement in New Zealand and elsewhere. Many areas of work [...] continue, and many young women are active recruits'. Later, during the early 2000s, the movement's state was described as a 'trough' between waves but still ongoing (Munro cited in Grey, 2008a, p.64). But towards the end of the

most recent decade, Grey (2008a, p.77) investigated New Zealand's women's movement once more and, while she acknowledged the existence of feminist activism, she concluded that these activities had become problematically invisible and 'a new movement may be needed'.

Thus, debate about the existence of New Zealand's women's movement has been ongoing since the early 1990s. It is puzzling that the presence of an entire social movement can neither be clearly confirmed nor denied. Of course, the literature offers explanations for these scholarly disagreements. Such explanations highlight that women's movements and feminist activism in many Western countries changed to such an extent over the past 20 years that they have become largely 'invisible' to the public (Maddison, 2004b; Sawer, 2004; Walby, 2002). While feminist and social movement scholars demonstrated that this invisibility did not necessarily equate with nonexistence, the question arose whether an invisible women's movement is in fact a movement that has the potential to ignite social change.

The reasons for the women's movement's apparent invisibility are complex. As I explain in Chapter 2, political and economic leaders in New Zealand adopted a neoliberal ideology during the 1980s that changed the political opportunities for women's movements significantly (Maddison & Jung, 2008; True, 2008), and created a hostile environment for feminist activism similar to developments in Australia and Canada (Andrew, 2008; Maddison & Martin, 2010; Rosas & Wilson, 2003). Following these changes, many activists moved from the streets to careers in government, unions, professional women's organisations and other institutions that gave them the opportunity to challenge patriarchal structures from within 'the system' (Andrew, 2010; Grey, 2008a, 2009; Hill, 1994; Maddison & Martin, 2010; Sawer, 2004; True, 2008). This institutionalisation of feminist work and the rise of state feminism (see Chapter 2) was characterised by the replacement of visible forms of mass protests with less disruptive, less radical and more defensive efforts that are often slower moving in their promotion of women's rights (Andrew & Maddison, 2010; Coney, 1993b; Grey, 2009; Maddison & Jung, 2008). Such work is not only 'hidden' inside institutions and government bodies as opposed to being out on the streets, it also gets less media coverage than loud and (from a media perspective) potentially conflictual protests and rallies (Bagguley, 2010; Staggenborg & Taylor, 2005; Walby, 2002).

Moreover, Schneider (1988) argued that the popular media tended to interpret single issue losses of feminist struggles as significant failures of the entire women's movement. Consequently, the media predicted the movement's imminent death and announced the rise of postfeminism². Similarly, the successes of individual women were (and are) interpreted as signs

² Here, I am referring to the mainstream understanding of this term that suggests feminism is outdated. For a differentiated discussion of the term see Chapter 3.

that feminism is no longer needed. While Schneider referred to the United States, the achievements of New Zealand's former Prime Minister Helen Clark (1999–2008) are often presented in a similar way (for example, see McLeod, 2013).

Much research shows that many young women value gender equality but do not identify as feminist (Budgeon, 2001; McRobbie, 2007; Olson et al., 2008; Rich, 2005). This means that feminist values are still alive among the young generation, but without the label of 'feminism' they are harder to be recognised as such. Moreover, those young women who still identify as feminists often do so in an individualised way (see Chapters 3 and 6): they reject essentialist perceptions of 'women' to such an extent that shared understandings of feminist aims are difficult to define among large and/or diverse groups of women. Thus, feminist activities have become increasingly private — and 'invisible' (Maddison, 2002).

Much of the literature discussing the decline of women's movements and feminist identification is situated within a broader discussion of the impact of neoliberalism on political activism. In Australia, where the Howard government (1996-2007) embraced the neoliberal project, the impact of neoliberalism on the women's movement has been researched extensively (e.g. Maddison & Martin, 2010; Sawer, 1996, 2007). Canada's shift towards neoliberalism and its consequences for women's political representation and feminist activity has also been well documented (Dobrowolsky, 1998; Dobrowolsky & Jenson, 2004; Teghtsoonian, 2005).

In New Zealand, Grey (2008b) has discussed the impact of neoliberalism on social movements and political activism by explaining the political climate that led to the police raids³ under the Terrorism Suppression Act in 2007. She has also argued elsewhere (Grey, 2008a, 2009) that the increasing institutionalisation of women's organisations in neoliberal times has seen the overall women's movement adopt a more formalised approach, focussed less on grassroots activism. Hyman (1994) also documented the influence of neoliberal policy on feminist activity in her account of the women's movement from 1984 until the early 1990s.

My endeavour to investigate New Zealand's current women's movement takes a broader approach than such research. As discussed above, the literature identifies multiple dynamics that have increased the invisibility of feminist work in New Zealand on several levels, and I intend to address them all: the micro-level of individual feminists, the meso-level of women's organisations and the macro level of state feminism. Such an approach does not allow a detailed examination of each of these levels but that is not the intention of this project. Other authors have already provided useful in-depth studies of various aspects of New Zealand's contemporary

³ Applying the new terrorism legislation, police raided homes of Māori-rights and anarchist activists across New Zealand on October 15th 2007. For more information see Small (2011).

women's movement. For example, Grey (2008a, 2009) explored recent developments of feminist grassroots activism and Vanderpyl (2004) and Aimers (2011) explained women's organisations' struggle to maintain autonomy in neoliberal times. New Zealand's state feminism has been discussed by Hyman (2010) and Curtin (2008; 2010) who provided insight to the work of the Ministry of Women's Affairs and the importance of the Labour Women's Council, by Teghtsoonian (2004) who analysed the opportunities of gender mainstreaming and Simon-Kumar (2011a) and Kahu and Morgan (2007) who investigated the feminist character of neoliberal policy. While McMillan, Leslie and McLeay (2009) offered an insightful account of women's political involvement ranging from activism to representation in parliament, they primarily focussed on the institutionalised side of feminism.

My contribution to this body of literature is to provide a comprehensive perspective on New Zealand's women's movement that discusses individualised, organisational and state feminism in a single study. Previous research has offered little explanation as to how feminist activities on the three levels complement each other. However, my approach of investigating the macro-, meso- and micro-level simultaneously allows discussion of the different roles that these levels have in the women's movement. As I show, feminist activities on all three levels are shaped by challenges and opportunities within their specific contexts and only a perspective that examines all three levels can unpack how they, together, constitute a women's movement.

Another strength of my study is the way it presents the diverse voices of feminism in New Zealand. For example, I include Māori, Asian and Pākehā⁴ perspectives and address the different viewpoints of younger and older feminists. Challenges for feminism based on women's diversity and issues of intersectionality have not only received significant attention within the feminist literature of the last decades (McCall, 2005) but have also had a practical impact on New Zealand's women's movement throughout its history (see Chapter 2). Thus, I suggest that research on contemporary women's movements needs to take into account diverse perspectives of the women involved. I am not aware of previous research on New Zealand's women's movement that has taken such an approach and my study contributes to filling this gap in the literature.

Overall, my thesis provides a wider and more inclusive picture of the contemporary women's movement in New Zealand than offered in the existing literature. The reasons for this movement's 'invisibility', its difficulties to survive in a neoliberal environment and the

⁴ Pākehā is the Māori term for New Zealanders of European descent, commonly used in New Zealand. All English translations of Māori terms are taken from the Māori Dictionary Online (<http://www.maoridictionary.co.nz/>; retrieved 2-25 March 2014).

contradictions within Third Wave feminist thought can only be sufficiently explained by examining all three levels of the women's movement.

The research endeavour

I approach my 'search' for New Zealand's women's movement by exploring the kinds of feminist activities in which New Zealand women engage and by subsequently evaluating whether these activities combined constitute a social movement. For this evaluation I use Sawyer's (2010) conceptualisation of women's movements (see Chapter 3).

In order to identify the range of feminist activities in New Zealand, it is necessary to first establish the criteria by which certain activities are characterised as feminist. For this reason, I extend my research interest to exploring who identifies as feminist and what feminism means to them. I acknowledge that feminist activities exist on several levels of society — the individual, the organisational and the governmental — and, therefore, I include all three levels in my investigation and ask how these levels complement each other. Since neoliberalism has been identified as a significant factor contributing to changes in women's movements internationally (Andrew & Maddison, 2010), I place particular emphasis on exploring the impact of neoliberalism on feminist activities at the three levels.

Furthermore, I am interested in generational differences among feminists because the shift from a vibrant women's movement to one that is said to be in abeyance coincided with the emergence of the Third Wave generation. The literature often depicts members of the Second Wave as the mother-generation of these Third Wavers but their intergenerational relationship is complicated and conflictual (see Chapters 3 and 5). Thus, I ask how do feminists of both generations understand feminist work, do these understandings differ significantly and if so, do such differences contribute to explaining the invisibility of the women's movement?

One more question underlines my research endeavour: how important are differences *among* women (for example, based on their ethnic and sexual identity) in the women's movement? This interest reflects the increased focus on intersectionality and inclusiveness issues within the feminist literature overall, but in particular in the Third Wave literature (see Chapter 3). In addition, this interest acknowledges that New Zealand's women's movement has faced serious historic challenges based on differences between, for instance, Māori and Pākehā or lesbian and heterosexual feminists (see Chapter 2). These challenges have contributed to the decline of the movement in the early 1980s. I am, therefore, interested in how feminists deal with them today.

Overall, the research interest of this thesis can be summarised in the following research questions:

- How are individualised, organisational and state feminist activities in New Zealand characterised?
- How do these three levels of feminist activity relate to each other?
- Do these together constitute a women's movement according to Sawyer's (2010) definition?

To fully explore these questions and to consider how the women's movement may differ from the past, this thesis also asks:

- How has neoliberalism shaped feminist activity?
- How do differences among women (e.g. according to ethnicity, sexual identity) shape feminist identities and activities?
- How do feminist perspectives differ between generations of feminists?

To answer these questions, I use empirical evidence based on qualitative interviews and content analyses of key documents and websites (see Chapter 4). As I show over the following chapters, this evidence allows me to argue that a contemporary women's movement exists in New Zealand. Individual, organisational and state feminist activities create a synergy that meets all criteria by which Sawyer (2010) conceptualised women's movements. However, because this movement's characteristics are significantly different to its previous manifestations (e.g. of the Second Wave movement), it often does not get recognised as a cohesive women's movement and is assumed to be in abeyance or non-existent.

Moreover, I argue, the contemporary women's movement struggles to withstand both the challenges posed by a neoliberal political environment and difficulties from within feminist circles. The former limits feminist agency and advocacy mainly at the meso- and macro-levels of the movement (e.g. restricted funding and outcome-specific government contracts silence the political voice of women's organisations). The latter refers to challenges based on the acknowledgement of differences among women, which, despite the benefits of addressing essentialism and relative privilege among women, created considerable anxiety within feminist circles as women strove to live up to high standards of political correctness. This, in turn, has encouraged individualised approaches to feminist engagement. Intergenerational misunderstandings among feminists add to these challenges feminists in New Zealand are facing. In conclusion, I suggest that the contemporary women's movement in New Zealand is

fragmented and appears to be ‘invisible’. However, these challenges do not necessarily threaten the general existence of the movement.

Clarifying key terms

A number of theoretical and ideological concepts are used in this thesis that are highly contested and have been applied in different ways within the literature. It is therefore necessary to clarify my understandings of these concepts and to position my perspectives on them within academic debates.

Explaining feminism

I understand feminism as the ideology⁵ that guides New Zealand’s women’s movement. But what is the content of this ideology? The literature often uses the plural of feminism, signalling that not one but many different *feminisms* exist (Coleman, 2009; Lal, McGuire, Stewart, Zaborowska, & Pas, 2010; Scharff, 2012). This plurality refers to two different dimensions: first, feminism encompasses culturally dependant aims and perspectives, explaining why ‘Western’ feminism, for example, is not a global phenomenon and is arguably not even homogenous within the Western world itself (Lal et al., 2010). Given New Zealand’s culturally diverse society, feminism cannot be assumed to be one consistent ideology among its feminist population. Second, while some authors conceptualise feminism as strictly focusing on issues related to the subordination of women to men, others explicitly incorporate the recognition of marginalisation based on other forms of discrimination (e.g. racism and classism) into their understanding of feminism. Such an anti-essentialist approach acknowledges that women are not a one-dimensional social group with all members being equally affected by gender disparities (Ferree & Mueller, 2003). For these reasons, any conceptualisation of feminism needs to take into account that numerous approaches to this ideology exist.

One additional difficulty with the term feminism is that concepts relating to gender equality have many names in different cultures and often refer to similar but not equivalent ideas. For example, the Māori term ‘mana wāhine’⁶ (also) addresses women’s empowerment but to

⁵ I understand ‘ideology’ as a shared set of ideas and beliefs that support and justify certain activities and interests of individuals, groups and organisations.

⁶ The Māori term ‘mana’ is often used in a similar way as ‘power’ and ‘wāhine’ means ‘women’. However, the translation ‘women’s power’ does not capture the complex ideas behind ‘mana wāhine’. See Simmonds (2011) for more details.

translate this concept into ‘Māori feminism’ falls short of its broader and further reaching implications.

Thus, finding an overall valid definition of feminism has been acknowledged to be difficult (Ferree & Mueller, 2003). I argue that it is not only difficult but also undesirable to rigidly define feminism, at least for this thesis. Given that my project revolves around issues of differences among women, any specific conceptualisation would need to take into account *all* cultural perspectives present among my participants, if not among New Zealanders. Such a task would be impossible to manage and bound to fail. Alternatively, a definition could be framed in such a broad way that ‘it is spread so thin that it dis-integrates altogether, coming to mean nothing at all, since it cannot possibly mean everything’ (Kinser, 2004, p.145).

However, I do not argue against the use of the term ‘feminism’. Having a Western (European) background myself, feminism is the concept that, from my perspective, best captures the ideology of those women’s movements that are of interest to this project (see Chapter 3). Moreover, feminism is a political term and I agree with Kinser (2004) and Dahlerup (2004) who argue that feminism needs to be given tangible meaning, otherwise its political relevance vanishes.

Consequently, I suggest an ‘open’ definition that explains a core requirement for what feminism is, but which acknowledges that this requirement needs to be extended according to the respective context of its application. Drawing on Gray and Boddy (2010) and Dahlerup (2004), I characterise the core of feminism as a concern with gender-based disadvantages: feminism critiques any form of discrimination that systematically affects a group of people who share a certain gender-identity (this not only includes women but all genders). I acknowledge that other forms of discrimination usually intersect with gender-based marginalisation but I do not find it necessary to address these intersections in my conceptualisation of feminism. It is not necessary because every issue that reflects gender as one variable of discrimination — no matter how many other variables are relevant as well — becomes a concern for feminism. The inverse also applies. If gender is not an issue then, no matter how important the cause, a feminist analysis is not the required approach.

By keeping this conceptualisation ‘open’, I imply that feminism should always have the potential to extend its analysis to anti-racism, anti-classism and so forth. However, these extensions should not be default ‘one size fits all’ requirements, but need to depend on the respective context of discussing feminism. Not all forms of discrimination are *practically* relevant in all contexts. Feminism is only a useful ideology for social change if it remains possible to translate its values into action. Thus, it is important to avoid a conceptualisation of

feminism that is at odds with practicalities. Having to address all conceivable forms of discrimination in a feminist analysis by default creates a risk of ‘analysis paralysis’⁷ among activists and academics who struggle with the feasibility of inclusiveness and intersectionality (see Chapter 5). While I emphasise the obligation of feminism to scrutinise context-related intersections of gender with race, class and other variables of discrimination, I advocate for an understanding of feminism that does not inhibit practical engagement.

Identifying feminists and feminist engagement

In Chapter 5, I discuss in detail that some of the, mainly young, women interviewed argued that self-identification as a feminist was the only criteria that determined who was a feminist. I disagree with such an approach. My reasons are similar to my arguments as to why feminism as an ideology needs to have tangible content: if we cannot conceptualise the characteristics of a feminist, then any individual self-identification would reflect a meaningless and hollow label.

Therefore, within this study, I conceptualise feminists as people who reflect feminism — as conceptualised earlier — in (some of) their practices. Consequently, I believe anyone who actively challenges social gender inequalities, even if on a small scale, is a feminist. According to this conceptualisation, I consider all 40 of my interview participants to be feminists, even though not all of them chose such a self-identification (see Chapter 5).

However, the participants engaged with feminist issues in different ways that I categorise as feminist activism, activities and/or work. While these three forms of engagement are similar in character and overlap in their meanings, I do not use these terms interchangeably. Before explaining their differences, I want to clarify that, in alignment with my conceptualisation of feminism, I understand activism, activities and work to be *feminist* if they are motivated by a concern about gender-based discrimination and with intent to challenge such discrimination.

I derive my understanding of feminist *activism* from Inglehart and Norris’ (2003) conceptualisation of political activism as having three dimensions: traditional political activism (e.g. voting, party membership), civic activism (e.g. through voluntary organisations, community associations) and protest politics (e.g. demonstrations, strikes). This categorisation broadly reflects my approach of analysing whether there is a New Zealand women’s movement by considering the three levels of state, organisational and individual feminist engagement. Thus, I understand feminist activism to be a form of political activism that is feminist.

⁷ This is an expression used among political activists to describe the feeling of being overwhelmed by a concern with political correctness that can discourage individuals from activist participation. The fear of being criticised for ‘othering’ and patronising disadvantaged social groups prevents engagement or leads to extended planning phases of engagement, which is referred to as ‘analysis paralysis’ (see Ralston & Keeble, 2009).

I am aware that this classification is imprecise because of difficulties in defining what ‘political’ means (Conge, 1988; Miller, 1980). Therefore, my use of the term feminist *activities* acknowledges the debate within the literature that questions the political character of some forms of individualised feminism (Kinser, 2004). I address this debate in Chapter 6. Thus, feminist activities are not necessarily political.

Finally, when I refer to the feminist *work* of my participants, I imply that some of the interviewed women are employed by institutions or organisations that allow these women to engage in (paid) work that fulfils the above conceptualisation of being feminist. Thus, feminist work can usually also be categorised as activism or activities but not all forms of activism/activities are (paid) work.

While the distinction between these three forms of feminist engagement is helpful in many instances, I emphasise that because of the complex realities of women who engage with feminism in multiple ways and due to disagreements about definitions of *political* participation, these categories should be understood as flexible.

The problem with waves

The history of New Zealand’s women’s movement is discussed in this thesis in terms of periods of feminism that have been characterised as three ‘waves’ (see Chapters 2 and 3). This approach is useful for my project because it eases the comparison of present and past characteristics of feminist activities. While the use of the ‘wave’ metaphor to refer to periods of feminist activity is common in the literature, it is also problematic and has received much criticism. One critique is that the meaning of the wave metaphor depends on national and cultural context (Lotz, 2003; Springer, 2002). The waves are usually defined around political developments, such as gaining the vote for women (‘First Wave’), the political uprisings of 1968 (‘Second Wave’), and neoliberal individualisation (‘Third Wave’), all of which are key events and developments in *Western* societies. By applying the wave metaphor to feminism and/or women’s liberation movements in general, feminist achievements from other parts of the world, or even by women with different cultural backgrounds living within Western societies, are undervalued in feminism’s history (Springer, 2002; Staggenborg & Taylor, 2005). Mann and Hoffman (2005) further argue that the notion of a wave suggests that these periods of feminism are unified and homogeneous, obscuring more radical streams within one wave. Another criticism addresses the way the waves metaphor falsely implies that there was no (or hardly any) feminist activity between the waves (Bulbeck, 2006; Harnois, 2008; Howie & Tauchert, 2004; Mann & Huffman, 2005). Other critics see the metaphor failing because they do not understand the Second Wave

movement as being entirely over. It is thus often argued that Third Wave feminism is not sufficiently distinct from its preceding generation to be called a new wave (Bailey, 1997).

I am confident that the use of the wave metaphor has its place when the time period and cultural context of feminism to which it is applied is clear. I agree with Dahlerup (2004, 2013) and Grey and Sawyer (2008), who read the wave metaphor as symbolising continuity in the women's movement, including periods of specific strength. I propose that this metaphor should not be over-interpreted and in this project I understand the wave metaphor simply: the waves describe periods of time during which feminism in New Zealand has been especially strong and vocal. I do not suggest that feminism paused between these waves. However, the movement was arguably *strongest* during the three waves and, therefore, it is a reasonable approach to focus on these periods in order to examine how New Zealand's women's movement has changed over time.

In addition to the wave metaphor, I also refer to feminist generations. These two ways of addressing different periods of feminism are related but represent slightly different concepts. My understanding of waves refers to feminist ideologies, ideas and aims developed in a certain time period. Generations refer to feminists of certain age groups. Usually, the older generation of feminists is associated with Second Wave feminism and the younger generation with Third Wave feminism. However, as I explain in Chapter 5, this categorisation is more complex than it seems.

Intersectionalities and categories

One of the personal motivations behind this research was my fascination *and* frustration with the tensions created by a demand from within feminist circles for a unified women's movement that incorporates diverse perspectives, identities and levels of privilege. This thesis therefore pays attention to differences among women. The concept of intersectionality is currently one of the most-used tools within feminist theory to address this dilemma. It discusses power imbalances between women who are differently affected by intersecting forms of social discrimination. By exploring how dynamics of racism and sexism interact and reinforce each other, Crenshaw (1989) first presented the relevance of intersectionality for black women living in the United States. Since then, this concept has been theorised and discussed by a large number of scholars interested in feminist, postcolonial and queer studies (e.g. Brah & Phoenix, 2004; Eng, Halberstam, & Muñoz, 2005; Mohanty, 2002; Parent, DeBlaere, & Moradi, 2013; Yuval-Davis, 2006) and it developed in several directions, causing much disagreement among authors (e.g. Knapp, Pühl, & Vinz, 2008; Soiland, 2008). This large body of intersectionality literature not only covers different manifestations of intersectional discrimination (e.g. in legislation - Skjeie

& Langvasbråten, 2009; in institutional structures - Verloo, 2006) but also develops and critiques theories and methodologies used in inequality research (Choo & Ferree, 2010; Davis, 2008; J. C. Nash, 2008). While intersectionality theory is not the guiding framework for my research, ideas of intersectionality inform at least two central aspects of my work.

Most importantly, I draw upon insights from intersectionality theory regarding the use of categories for describing women's experiences. McCall (2005) usefully classified intersectionality research projects and literature according to the way social categories (e.g. gender, class, race) are used in their theoretical and methodological frameworks. In this classification, the 'intercategorical complexity'⁸ approach refers to research that uses social categories as independent variables to define dimensions of inequality. For instance, this approach is used in studies that contrast experiences of 'black women' with those of 'white women' and 'black men'. Such studies mainly investigate power imbalances between these social groups. However, Degele and Winter (2007), Knapp (2006) and McCall (2005) criticise this classification, saying it does not specify how many and which categories need to be included for an exhaustive analysis of inequalities. Therefore, a second branch of intersectionality research follows the approach of 'anticategorical complexity'. These studies aim to deconstruct categories altogether, assuming that they can never capture the complexity of social lives. Consequently, any use of categories can only fail to describe reality and contributes to the reproduction of inequalities between them. Finally, the 'intracategorical complexity' approach acknowledges that while social categories such as 'women' or 'black women' are socially constructed, they have real implications for people who face discrimination based on their attribution to these categories. Thus, intracategorical research on intersectionality advocates for an ongoing re-definition of categories according to the realities of (women's) lives.

I position my research project within this last group. I regard the use of categories to describe social realities as suitable for feminist research, because I see value in political categories such as 'women', 'Māori women' and 'young lesbian Asian women with disabilities' for instance. These categories signpost structural power imbalances between these groups. Importantly, however, being *political* categories they do not imply homogenous identities among individual members of such groups. Also, in alignment with my conceptualisation of feminism, the number and types of categories that should be considered in research needs to be adjusted to the respective context and aim of a specific research project. The meaning and relevance of categories such as 'white', 'young' and 'queer' can change over time because their social construction is subject to continuing changes.

⁸ Also called 'categorical intersectionality' by Cole (2008)

The terminology of intersectionality found a second important way into this thesis. As I explain in Chapter 5, many of my interview participants not only used the term ‘intersectionality’ but showed significant awareness of issues regarding relative privilege and multiple discrimination based on differences among women. Therefore, intersectionality theory played an important role in both the design of this project (through determining the use of categories) and the content of the analysis (through the perspectives of the participants). These two layers, however, should not be confused.

Neoliberalism and social movements

In the following chapters, I explain many changes to feminist activity in New Zealand since the mid-1980s by referring to developments associated with neoliberalism. The literature offers many definitions of neoliberalism. Harvey’s (2005, p.2) approach is one of the most cited and he defines neoliberalism as:

a theory of political economic practices that proposes that human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets, and free trade.

This definition emphasises the value of individual responsibility and promotes deregulation of economic institutions for human well-being. Such an approach declares neoliberalism to be incompatible with most social movements and to reduce political opportunities for effective activism (Andrew & Maddison, 2010). Generally, this incompatibility is caused by neoliberalism’s characteristic subordination of justice orientated values, such as human rights and equity, to the accumulation of capital and profit (Maddison & Martin, 2010). Neoliberal thought thus promotes individual responsibility, which down-plays or ignores structural power-imbalances between social groups.

Larner (2005) views neoliberalism as primarily a political project. As such it does not monolithically determine the impact neoliberal governance has on the market and political opportunities for community engagement, for example, but is flexible to specific contexts. While acknowledging that neoliberal challenges to political agency are serious, Larner (2005) and Newman (2012, 2013) argue that neoliberalism is not a static concept. Both authors call for academic research that explores possibilities within a specific neoliberal context rather than focussing on its limitations. While my thesis aims to contribute to the discussion of such possibilities, it also acknowledges the restricted political opportunities for feminism as significant factors determining its possibilities.

Outline of the thesis

This thesis is divided into nine chapters. Following this introduction, Chapter 2 is devoted to exploring the history of feminism and the women's movement in New Zealand. For this purpose, I focus on three periods of feminism, reflecting the three waves of the women's movement. Within this discussion I summarise historic events, draw attention to the role of Māori and lesbian women within these movements, and explain the importance of state feminism within the Third Wave movement. Overall, this historic account is intended to contextualise more recent developments of the women's movement with its history.

The theoretical underpinnings of this study are explored in Chapter 3. By discussing several possible ways to theorise social movements and women's movements in particular, I argue that the political opportunity structure model and Sawyer's (2010) conceptualisation of women's movements are most suitable for my study. The chapter also introduces Third Wave feminism as characterised by the international literature. In sum, this chapter provides the theoretical context for the empirical study that follows.

Chapter 4 offers an in-depth discussion of the methods and methodology applied in my empirical research. It explains the purpose of a feminist methodology, standpoint theory and the concept of situated knowledge and describes my data collection process based on interviews and content analyses. The chapter further presents the ethical considerations related to the research process and provides reflections on my personal impact as a researcher on the project.

Chapter 5 opens the discussion of my empirical findings with a presentation of my participants' approaches to and understandings of feminism and feminist identities. This chapter further explores the extent to which my participants identified with Second and Third Wave feminism and analyses the intergenerational relationship among feminists.

The sixth chapter investigates what I call the micro-level of the women's movement: the individualised feminist practices among my participants. Exploring the meaning that feminism has in the women's interpersonal relationships and daily lives, I draw attention to the debate as to whether individualised feminism can be regarded as political.

In Chapter 7, I shift the focus towards the meso-level of women's movements and discuss the role of women's groups and organisations. This chapter first characterises *women's* and *feminist* organisations and debates the strategies organisations use to choose such labels. This is followed by a presentation of the approaches women's organisations take when faced with challenges relating to differences among women. The chapter further discusses the impact of state funding on the political agency of women's organisations.

Chapter 8 is the last chapter to present empirical findings. It is devoted to the women's movement's macro-level, which I identify as the level of state feminism. I discuss how the Ministry of Women's Affairs, as the major institution of New Zealand's state feminism, has limited opportunities to initiate policy for women and thus does not receive much support from individual feminists. However, I argue that state feminism contributes significantly to feminist work in New Zealand.

Finally, Chapter 9 presents the conclusion of this thesis. By relating my empirical findings to the theoretical underpinnings of this study, I argue that sufficient evidence has been provided to demonstrate that a contemporary women's movement exists in New Zealand. However, as I explain, this movement is dissimilar to its previous manifestations (e.g. in the 1970s).

Chapter 2

The story so far

Introduction

Any attempt to investigate New Zealand's contemporary women's movement needs to account for the colourful history of feminist activity and the differing waves within the movement. This history is long and complex and I do not claim to provide a full narrative of events. Grimshaw (1962, 1987, 1994, 2000) and Hutching (2010) offer excellent summaries of New Zealand's suffrage movement and the history of the Second Wave movement has been well documented by Dann (1985). Several authors have also analysed more recent developments with a focus on state feminism (e.g. Curtin & Teghtsoonian, 2010; Hyman, 2010).

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a historic context for contemporary feminism in New Zealand that will help to explain why its present characteristics developed the way they did. For instance, the following discussion will show that challenges to feminist organising based on women's diversity have their roots in the history of the women's movement. By presenting the historical narratives of various groups of women involved with feminism, this chapter highlights that New Zealand's women's movement has never been homogenous and entirely united. It will also illustrate that the women's movement has adopted a number of different methods in the past to pursue its aims as it has adapted to the political environment in which it has operated. These insights will be important for understanding the contemporary characteristics of feminism in New Zealand discussed in later chapters.

While this chapter focusses on the three waves of New Zealand's women's movement, I do not suggest that the movement stopped between those waves (see Chapter 1). However, my summary of events starts with the First Wave of feminism in New Zealand leading to women's suffrage. This is followed by an account of the Second Wave movement of the 1970s and early 1980s. The subsequent section describes the Third Wave movement. The discussion of this last wave is divided into a narrative about state feminism and a brief summary of feminist activism outside state authorities. It is the task of my empirical research to provide further information about contemporary developments in feminist activity.

The First Wave movement

The international literature usually locates the First Wave of the women's movement between the mid-nineteenth and early twentieth century (e.g. Edelman, 2001). More specifically, Bailey (1997) defined the First Wave in the United States as starting in 1848 with the Seneca Falls Convention and ending with the introduction of women's suffrage in 1920. Similarly, the Australian 'Woman Movement' emerged in the 1880s, formed the Victorian Women's Suffrage Society in 1884 and won the vote for women state by state between 1894 and 1908 (Magarey, 2001). During this era, internationally and in New Zealand, a significant number of women gained education and entered the wage-economy, which created new opportunities for women's political agency, independence and feminist ideas (Grimshaw, 1987). The name 'First Wave feminism' has been assigned retrospectively to women's movements that aimed to achieve formal equality between sexes and political rights for women, most prominently manifested in suffrage movements in many (mainly Western) countries (Edelman, 2001). Overall, the focus of First Wave feminism was to influence policies and legislations so that they recognised women as independent human beings and not the property of their husbands and fathers (Gray & Boddy, 2010).

The long fight for suffrage

On 19 September 1893 — earlier than in any other country⁹ — the Electoral Act granted New Zealand women the right to vote in national elections. This achievement was part of a broader expansion of women's rights throughout the late nineteenth century (Hutching, 2010). The political engagement of women (and supportive men) to gain these rights has been retrospectively referred to as the First Wave women's movement.

Some of the initial achievements of this movement were in the field of education. In 1877, comprehensive primary education was granted for girls (Grimshaw, 1987; Orange, 1993) and Kate Edger graduated as the first woman from a New Zealand university. During this time, women's suffrage became a prominent demand among women interested in political engagement. A major initial motivation for women to gain the right to vote was their aspiration to be involved in referendums on the issue of prohibition. Given the quantities of alcohol consumed by men at this time, a large number of women were exposed to physical violence by regularly drunk husbands and had ongoing concerns about whether the week's wages would be

⁹ The United States *territories* Wyoming and Utah, however, introduced women's suffrage in 1869 and 1870 respectively.

spent in the pub. Additionally, women were significantly disadvantaged by marriage and divorce laws. They did not have legal control over the property they brought into marriage and, when filing a divorce, they needed to be able to *prove* that they were subjected to serious physical abuse by their husbands. Consequently, achieving prohibition became a feminist goal, which could only be reached by women having the right to vote in referendums (Grimshaw, 1987; Hutching, 2010). First attempts to achieve this goal were made in 1878 and 1879, when the suffragists introduced bills to give women ratepayers the right to vote in general elections. However, both bills were dismissed (Hutching, 2010). The suffragists needed more support.

In 1885, Mary Leavitt, a representative of the United States Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU), arrived in New Zealand with the aim of establishing a WCTU branch. The WCTU demanded that women should be allowed to vote to increase the moral and reforming character of new laws. Many New Zealand women welcomed this principle and soon branches were established throughout the country. Many well-known women joined the WCTU, including Kate Sheppard, Kate Edger, and Harriet Morison (leader of the Tailoresses' Union) (Hutching, 2010).

The WCTU was not the only organisation of the temperance movement. The Good Templars Order and the Sons and Daughters of Temperance, for example, were equally supportive of the cause of prohibition. However, there were differences between individual groups regarding their support of women's suffrage and feminist ideals. The Good Templars, for instance, allowed women to vote for and stand on committees from early on (Hutching, 2010). Therefore, most women involved in the temperance movement left male-dominated organisations and joined societies such as the WCTU and the Good Templars (Grimshaw, 1987).

Because these organisations encouraged women to engage with feminist ideas, many women became interested in the enhancement of women's rights and political participation that extended beyond the suffrage issue (Grimshaw, 1987). The WCTU consequently expanded its agenda, raised funds for homeless shelters, ran soup kitchens, supported female prisoners and provided education on food and nutrition. It also helped to organise pre-school childcare services, which were needed as an increasing number of women joined the workforce. The Union was involved in lobbying for several law changes including the raising of the age of consent for girls, the alteration of the prostitution law, and the pursuit of equal divorce rights for men and women. In 1884, the New Zealand Parliament also granted the right for married women to own property and by the end of the 1880s a woman's right to sit on a committee was extended from schools to liquor licencing committees and charitable aid boards (Grimshaw, 1987).

However, the struggle for franchise for women continued. Kate Sheppard became a leading figure in the campaign (Orange, 1993). She embraced a humanitarian ideology, stating: ‘All that separates, whether of race, class, creed, or sex, is inhuman, and must be overcome’ (Sheppard cited in Orange, 1993, p.122). She wrote and produced a number of pamphlets (e.g. *Ten Reasons Why Women of New Zealand Should Vote*), as well as letters to politicians and media statements to lobby for the vote. She organised several petitions to parliament and gave public speeches to promote the suffrage cause.

In 1887 and 1890, two further attempts to pass the Women’s Suffrage Bill were defeated in Parliament; however, both efforts witnessed growing support among parliamentarians (Hutching, 2010). In turn, the liquor lobby began an intense mobilisation against the suffragist movement. It initiated a petition to oppose the franchise for women that collected 5,000 signatures. The WCTU, however, increased its efforts and answered with its own petition, signed by over 20,000 women who supported the Electoral Bill 1892. This bill got through to its third reading and produced much discussion both inside Parliament and amongst the public (Hutching, 2010). Opponents of the women’s franchise raised concerns that women would not be safe on the way to the voting booth and, if they insisted on voting, they would be neglecting their domestic responsibilities. For instance, it was assumed that on election day no good mother would leave a sick child at home in order to go out to vote and, therefore, it was argued that all sensible women would stay at home while only ‘the worst examples of their sex, the harsh, unsexed, “advanced” women’ would exercise such legal right (Grimshaw, 1987, p.77). Ultimately, the bill’s opponents were successful as the bill was once again dismissed but in June 1893, another Electoral Bill was introduced to Parliament. Again, the bill caused much discussion, but was finally passed in mid-September and succeeded in granting all adult women in New Zealand the right to vote in national elections (Grimshaw, 1987; Hutching, 2010).

Of course, feminism and the involvement of women in politics did not stop once the vote was gained. The National Council of Women, for instance, only *started* its work in 1896 (R. Nicholls, 1993) and it was not until 1919, when women gained the right to stand for Parliament, that women gained full citizenship rights (Wilson, 2001). Coney (1993a) provided a detailed documentation of women’s political struggles from the mid-1880s onwards. However, the First Wave of feminism is commonly understood to have ended with the gaining of the vote.

Māori women and the vote

As presented in the literature, the leading suffragists in New Zealand seemed to be almost exclusively European women, many from middle-class families (Dalziel, 1994; Orange, 1993).

Class-based differences among women were partly addressed by the WCTU through maintaining contacts with the Tailoresses' Union (Hutching, 2010). Thus, many women from the working class also supported and engaged with the suffrage movement (Grimshaw, 2000). The role of Māori women in the First Wave of feminism was more complex.

Little is written about the initial involvement of Māori women in the suffrage movement and the WCTU (Rei, 1993). Meri Te Tai Mangakāhia, who belonged to the iwi¹⁰ of Te Rarawa and was a strong voice in the struggle for Māori women's rights, and her supporter Akenehi Tomoana are often the only Māori women named in this context (Ballara, 1993; Orange, 1993). However, many Māori women owned land and shared problems with European women concerning alcohol abuse of men (Grimshaw, 1987). Thus, it is not surprising that Māori women's signatures have been found on the franchise petitions of 1892 and 1893 (Rei, 1993). Evans (1994, p.56) reported that Māori women 'joined the Union in droves' once it was clear that an alliance between Māori and European women would be the best chance to get the vote. However, this alliance was dominated by European standards to which Māori women had to subscribe if they wanted to join European-led organisations (which included, for instance, the rejection of tā moko, traditional tattoos).

Moreover, accounts of New Zealand's women's suffrage movement often neglect to elaborate on the parallel campaign for suffrage that happened at the same time: Māori women sought the right to vote for, and to be elected as members of Te Kotahitanga, the Māori Parliament (operating 1892-1902). This institution was established in response to increasing concern within Māori communities about land alienation and other consequences of colonial domination by Europeans (Rei, 1993). One of the major political concerns of Māori women at that time was the European law that turned land formerly owned by Māori women into the property of their husbands (Rei, 1993). They thus had a major interest in gaining political representation. Additionally, Māori women knew that they were more likely to gain such representation within Te Kotahitanga than within the European system (Rei, 1993). Accordingly, their political interest was arguably more focused on the women's franchise within Te Kotahitanga than on supporting the cause of the European-led suffrage movement (Daley & Nolan, 1994).

Initially, women who were given authority by their iwi (tribe) were allowed to speak in Te Kotahitanga, a right that women did not have in the New Zealand Parliament. In 1893, Meri Mangakāhia made use of this right and requested that women be given the franchise, including the right to vote and to stand as members. This request was initially refused but Māori women

¹⁰ Iwi is the Māori word for tribe or group of people who descended from a common ancestor.

continued to organise themselves and developed Ngā Komiti Wahine, a strong national network of local Māori women's committees. It maintained relationships with several newspapers that reported on their work and publicised their demands. Following another unsuccessful attempt in 1894, by 1897 Māori women had gathered enough support to succeed in Te Kotahitanga and were granted both requests by Meri Mangakāhia (Rei, 1993).

The reasons why Māori women were included in the franchise in New Zealand relatively early when compared to other indigenous peoples in the colonised world have been analysed by Grimshaw (2000). She argued that European settlers in New Zealand feared the increasing political power of Māori and can be assumed to have had an interest in keeping indigenous participation in elections low. However Māori men had already gained the franchise with the Constitution Act of 1852. Thus, enfranchising European women strengthened the political position of Europeans but there seemed to be only slight political advantage in denying Māori women the right to vote. Such a potential but small advantage was ultimately outweighed by European fears of further cultural conflicts that the exclusion of Māori women might cause within the population. Therefore, New Zealand's early success of the women's suffrage movement was arguably facilitated by previous cultural negotiations which ensured that European men had already lost their main incentive to keep women out of the voting booth (Grimshaw, 2000).

Māori women's political engagement did not stop or pause after women's suffrage was gained. However, for reasons explained earlier, my narrative continues with the Second Wave movement.

The Second Wave movement

Internationally, the start of the Second Wave movement is commonly dated around 1968, a time known for its political uprisings and the manifestation of the New Left in Europe and the United States (Holmes, 2000; Whelehan, 1995). Second Wave movements across the Western world characteristically demanded equity in the labour market and the domestic sphere, criticised and raised awareness for the gendered impact of social and political structures on personal lives, pursued reproductive rights and educational opportunities for women and demanded access to public childcare services (Edelman, 2001; Gray & Boddy, 2010).

Compared to the suffragists, women of the Second Wave generation had (on average) fewer children, lived longer and were confronted with higher costs of living. Therefore, a smaller part of their adult life was devoted to motherhood while female participation in paid work had

increased. Moreover, by this time more women accessed higher education and had become critical of the existing social and/or familial orders (G. Duncan, 2004; Nevitte, 2000). These developments provided new opportunities for women's movements to grow and develop in many Western countries.

From sisterhood to fragmentation

In the 1960s and early 1970s, New Zealand's low level of unemployment and relative prosperity facilitated the expansion of education. Material affluence provided many citizens with the time to engage critically with global and national politics. Consequently, public protest developed as a way of communicating public concerns, with anti-war and anti-racism issues nurturing the growth of activist communities. Frustrated with male dominance in these left-wing activist groups, and inspired by emerging North American and European women's groups, New Zealand's women began to organise their own meetings and developed an increasingly feminist perspective (Cahill & Dann, 1991; Dann, 1985; Holmes, 2000). The Second Wave women's movement fully arrived in New Zealand with the emergence of the first women's liberation groups (e.g. Wellington and Auckland Women's Liberation Front, Women's Movement for Freedom) in 1970.

Apart from the franchise, the issues concerning New Zealand's Second Wave feminists were largely the same as those driving their First Wave predecessors: women's education, employment and health, as well as violence against women. More specifically, women's liberationists criticised girls' overrepresentation in high school subjects such as typing and domestic science, which channelled them into poorly paid jobs. They also questioned why women academics were under-represented in all university faculties. A further feminist concern was the gender pay gap that existed despite the Equal Pay Act of 1972. Regarding women's health issues, Second Wave feminists disapproved of male medical practices and demanded control over their own fertility by promoting free contraception and access to abortion services. There were also some 'new' issues on the Second Wave's agenda, including pornography, sexism in advertising and other media-related issues (Cahill & Dann, 1991; Dann, 1985). Overall, the Second Wave women's movement focussed on challenging the mainstream social consciousness about gender and sexuality norms (Ackerly & True, 2010a; Grimshaw, 1962).

Within a few years of its existence, the movement was vibrant and multidimensional, offering space to 'black', socialist, Marxist, liberal, radical and lesbian feminists (Grey, 2008a, 2009; Holmes, 2000). While the first Women's Liberation Conference in 1972 attracted 200 women (Cahill & Dann, 1991), the biannual New Zealand's United Women's Convention

organised from 1973 to 1979 was attended by around 1,500 to 2,000 participants. Feminists produced a variety of magazines such as the Auckland-based *Broadsheet* (1972-1990s), the more radical *Bitches, Witches, and Dykes* by the Dunedin Collective for Women and the increasingly lesbian feminist magazine *Circle* (Holmes, 2000). In 1977, the Women's Studies Association was formed in Hamilton and held its first conference in the following year (Dann, 1985).

Over the course of the early 1970s, the number of women's groups and organisations grew, covering a diversity of interests (Aimers, 2011; Vanderpyl, 2004). However, these groups were constituted predominately by middle-class Pākehā women (Coney, 1993b; Vanderpyl, 2004) who shared an understanding of constituting 'a sisterhood of women, different from, oppressed by and opposed to men' (Jones cited in Lerner, 1996, p.164). Much emphasis was put on valuing the shared experiences of women as a political group.

Organisations within this 'sisterhood' rejected hierarchical structures as a male form of organising (Coney, 1993b). Instead, they formed decentralised, loosely networked organisations (Vanderpyl, 2004) that were rather anarchic in character (Grimshaw, 1987). Despite the adoption of different ideological perspectives (ranging from liberal to radical), the groups and organisations maintained strong networks with each other. Their sense of community was facilitated by New Zealand's small population, whereby feminists easily got to know each other (Holmes, 2000).

The largely unstructured way of organising was, however, less suitable for the legal and institutionalised pathways for social change as adopted by First Wave feminists (Grimshaw, 1987). Although the Second Wave movement also applied some formal tactics, such as petitions and letters to Members of Parliament, the prevailing strategies to draw public attention to their causes were often dramatic and disruptive grassroots activism and mobilisation through visible and large events such as conferences (Grey, 2009; Grimshaw, 1987). Suffrage Day, the International Women's Day and Reclaim the Night marches marked annual feminist events, and issue-based demonstrations for safe abortions and in opposition to beauty pageants were common (Coney, 1993b; Grey, 2008a, 2009).

During the mid-1970s, women's groups started to change in character and to shift their focus from protesting women's discrimination to providing services 'by women for women', including women's centres, refuges and health centres. They were mostly run by volunteers and funded by community fundraising activities, although some groups obtained financial support from government institutions and through the Department of Labour's temporary employment schemes (Vanderpyl, 2004). The radical character of some of these groups started to fade.

The 1978 Women's Liberation Conference in Piha constituted a 'turning point for New Zealand feminism' (Simpkin, 1994, p.235) which some authors understand as the beginning of the end of the Second Wave movement (Coney, 1993b). This conference was marked by severe conflicts between different divisions of the women's movement. Lesbian women blamed heterosexual women for being privileged, working class women criticised middle-class women for taking part in their oppression, Māori feminists accused Pākehā feminists of racism and radical feminists fought ideological battles with socialist feminists (Coney, 1993b; A. Jones & Guy, 1992; Simpkin, 1994). In an attempt to explain this crisis, Coney (1993b) argued that unsuccessful efforts to achieve one major goal during the 1970s — improving abortion rights — frustrated many feminists and made the movement more prone to internal conflicts. Additionally, many feminist aims of the Second Wave movement were developed in the early 1970s by predominantly young, middle-class Pākehā women and this agenda had not been sufficiently re-negotiated to reflect the experiences of other groups of women. This neglect provoked increasing disagreements within the movement which escalated at Piha. The 'structurelessness' of the women's movement enabled some confident women to dominate these arguments and silenced many other voices. Such an environment was not helpful for solving conflicts and further entrenched the divisions between the factions of the movement (Coney, 1993b).

Following the Piha conference, the vibrant and public activism of the women's liberation movement declined (Grey, 2009) and the movement arguably turned into a 'fragmented conglomeration of groups' (Coney, 1993b, p.60). While feminist communities continued to exist, the large-scale movement that challenged societal norms disappeared (Devere & Scott, 2001). This development was also reinforced by women's organisations becoming increasingly reliant on state funding, which they received for employing staff in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Most women's organisations perceived such relationships with the state as empowering, but they also raised concerns about co-option, de-radicalisation and the silencing of the organisations' political voice (Grey & Sedgwick, 2013b; Vanderpyl, 2004).

As I explain later in this chapter, New Zealand's overall political climate changed significantly in the mid-1980s and caused further changes to the nature of feminist engagement. Therefore, my narrative of the Second Wave movement draws a line at this point. I will continue to discuss developments starting with the second half of the 1980s in my account of the Third Wave movement.

Diversity within the Second Wave movement

When the assumption that all women belonged to one 'sisterhood' was challenged in the mid-1970s (Coney, 1993b), disagreement over the collective identity of the women's movement started to grow (Grey, 2009). Although organisations representing different groups of women interacted intensively in New Zealand (Holmes, 2000), different perspectives increasingly demanded recognition.

For instance, in 1971 the Auckland Chinese Women's League started with about 50 members, building a community for Chinese immigrant women and their families. However, this league remained a largely apolitical organisation. In 1975, PACIFICA, a network for Pacific Island women in New Zealand was established and, together with later organisations such as the Pacific Island Women's Project Aotearoa¹¹, created an important space for articulating Pacific women's demands (Devere & Scott, 2001; Else, 1993). Sole mothers also started to organise separately but received much input, support and involvement from the mainstream women's movement (Dann, 1985). Two major political interest groups, however, developed strong and (more or less) independent networks: Lesbian women and Māori women.

Many lesbian feminists joined the Gay Liberation Movement formed in 1972. Others questioned the goal of striving for equality with men, promoting separatism and forming lesbian communities such as 'Picadilly Street' in Christchurch (Dominy, 1986). However, a large number of lesbian feminists also remained active in the mainstream women's liberation movement (Vanderpyl, 2004). In the early years of the Second Wave movement, heterosexual feminists were hesitant to engage with lesbian women because they were afraid the media would depict feminists as aggressive, man-hating lesbians (Curtin & Devere, 1993). But at the 1975 United Women's Convention, lesbian women aimed to increase their visibility. For that purpose they put up a banner that declared a 'Lesbian Nation' and organised lesbian workshops attended by 200 women (Dann, 1985; Holmes, 2000). Their voice was also evident in the *Circle* magazine, which adopted an increasingly explicit lesbian perspective and was renamed the *Lesbian Feminist Circle* in 1977 (Dann, 1985).

Over the following years, lesbian feminists shifted their focus from achieving more visibility to seeking better representation within the women's liberation movement. They did not want to be viewed as feminists who happened to be lesbians but demanded recognition of the lesbian identity as a political perspective and a threat to patriarchy. This demand was often articulated in a confrontational tone that some heterosexual feminists took as an insult (Holmes, 2000). Consequently, a 'lesbian-straight-split' (Krahulik, 2009) was evident at the United

¹¹ Aotearoa is the Māori name for New Zealand.

Women's Convention in 1979, which provided a separate lesbian room, separate meetings and workshops. Until the early 1980s, New Zealand's lesbian community was strong and offered numerous services such as social and sports clubs, the Lesbian Mother Defence Fund and the Lesbian Line phone helpline (Dann, 1985). Thus, the lesbian faction of feminism was an important part of New Zealand's Second Wave women's movement.

Māori women meanwhile had organised themselves on a nation-wide institutional level as early as 1951 when the Māori Women's Welfare League was founded. When the mainstream Second Wave movement formed 20 years later, relatively few Māori women joined its women's liberation groups because they were already organised. Moreover, the connectedness of Māori women's empowerment with the broader Māori community (including Māori men) and Māori sovereignty issues was incompatible with some Western approaches to feminism (Simmonds, 2011). Therefore, other political struggles, concerning land ownership for example, were a higher priority for many Māori women (Te Awekotuku cited in Lerner, 1996; Mohanram, 1996; Simmonds, 2011). Events such as the Māori Land March (1975), the occupation of Bastion Point (1977 - 1978) and the protests to reclaim the land of the Raglan golf course (1977), all involved strong leadership by Māori women such as Dame Whina Cooper and Eva Rickard (Evans, 1994; Mohanram, 1996).

The visibility of Māori women in the mainstream women's movement increased in the late 1970s and early 1980s. For instance, at the 1979 United Women's Convention Māori and Pacific Island feminists protested against the Pākehā dominance at this event. One year later, the first National Black Women's Hui¹² was organised, followed by the first National Māori Women's Hui. During the 1981 Springbok tour¹³ Māori women led feminist protest and were joined by Pākehā feminists (Dann, 1985; Thompson, 1988). Around the same time, Māori women increasingly used *Broadsheet* to voice their demand for Māori self-determination. This included Donna Awatere's (1984, first published in 1982) essay collection *Māori Sovereignty*, in which she criticised Pākehā women for abusing their relative power to define what feminism is supposed to mean for all women in New Zealand. Not all Māori women agreed with the uncompromising tone of Awatere's critique (e.g. Szaszy, 1993) and to discuss Awatere's ideas, an anti-racist group called Women for Aotearoa formed, including women of various ethnic groups (Simpkin, 1994). Since the last years of the Second Wave movement (and beyond) there has been

¹² The Māori word hui describes a gathering, meeting, assembly, seminar or conference.

¹³ The South African Rugby team 'Springboks' was invited to New Zealand for a 57 day tour in 1981. While many New Zealanders criticised South African apartheid, others did not want politics to interfere with sports. Consequently, the tour caused significant conflict within the population which resulted in violent protests (Thompson, 1988).

considerable cooperation between Māori and Pākehā feminist groups but this has often been accompanied by struggles and misunderstandings (Dominy, 1990; Simpkin, 1994).

A Third Wave movement?

As Chapter 3 explains in more detail, the international literature usually labels those women's movements that started or gained strength in the 1990s as 'The Third Wave' (Edelman, 2001; Heywood & Drake, 2007). During the 1990s in New Zealand, however, public debate about feminism declined, the magazine *Broadsheet* disbanded and visible feminist activism disappeared substantially (Grey, 2008a, 2009). Moreover, feminists increasingly engaged with institutionalised forms of politics and moved into local government, unions and civil society organisations (Aimers, 2011; Devere & Scott, 2001; Grey, 2009), turning 'state feminism' into the main form of feminist activity (Holmes, 2000). Therefore, little of the literature explicitly discusses the Third Wave of New Zealand's women's movement and instead focusses on feminist activity within state institutions. Almost uniquely, Coleman (2008, 2009) addressed New Zealand's Third Wave feminism by questioning its potential for social change and Hyman (2009) briefly mentioned how her own perspectives might differ from those of young Third Wave feminists.

Because I use the wave metaphor for the women's movement mainly to mark periods of time (see Chapter 1), I subsume the work of state feminism under the Third Wave. Therefore, the following discussion presents this particular aspect of New Zealand's feminist work as beginning in the late-1980s and becoming increasingly important in the 1990s. As I will show, state feminism is significantly determined by political opportunities offered by the government-of-the-day and, thus, I integrate an analysis of New Zealand's broader political developments in this account. I also provide a brief discussion of how issues of women's diversity were considered by state feminism. The final part of my elaboration on the Third Wave movement, however, turns to more recent forms of feminist activism outside the state, demonstrating that state feminism is not the only arena of New Zealand's Third Wave feminism.

Neoliberalism and state feminism

The years leading up to the rise of neoliberalism in New Zealand were shaped by Britain joining the European Economic Community and the global oil price shock of the 1970s. During that time, New Zealand's economic growth slowed considerably and unemployment rose (Craig & Porter, 2006; Peet, 2012). When the Fourth Labour Government was elected in 1984, it

introduced significant social and economic reforms that presented deregulation and privatisation as solutions to this economic recession. The resultant shift from a heavily state-regulated system to one that was highly deregulated has received much international attention for its rapid and radical character (Larner & Butler, 2005; Nagel, 1998).

During this early period of Labour's new neoliberal agenda, New Zealand's Labour Women's Council (LWC) was a major driver behind Labour's policies for women, covering economic, social and legal issues (Curtin, 2008). Additionally, Labour Members of Parliament such as Helen Clark, Ann Hercus, and Margaret Shields ensured the presence of strong female voices within the government (Hyman, 2010). Most critically for emerging state feminism, Labour established the Ministry of Women's Affairs (MWA) in 1985. It could not (and still cannot) develop legislation itself, but it was tasked with advising on the gender impact of policies and legislation drafted by other government departments and institutions (Hyman, 2010). Ann Hercus and Mary O'Regan, the MWA's first Minister and Chief Executive Officer (CEO), enabled the ministry to adopt an explicitly feminist approach in its practices (Curtin & Teghtsoonian, 2010; Hyman, 2010). This made the MWA a welcomed and promising new institution for many feminists in New Zealand. Its first successes included contributions to a law reform recognising rape within marriage as a crime, additional financial support for women's refuges, and it contributed to a policy which introduced *permanent* part-time positions in government (Curtin, 2008; Curtin & Teghtsoonian, 2010).

In 1988, the MWA's CEO position was assigned to Judith Aitken, a self-identified feminist (Hyman, 2010) who was also an economic rationalist (Sawer, 1996). Causing 'disquiet among many feminists in the community and some MWA staff' (Hyman, 2010, p.34), she restructured the ministry, placing more emphasis on performance indicators and the MWA's accountability to the government, and reducing MWA practices of community-consultancy (Curtin & Teghtsoonian, 2010). Despite this reduction of the MWA's feminist agency, some significant political successes for women were achieved during this time. For instance, the Employment Equity Act 1990 was shaped by the MWA's input and promoted pay equity and equal employment opportunities. Unfortunately, it was immediately repealed by the incoming National government (1990-1999).

National extended the neoliberal project by introducing the Employment Contracts Act of 1991, which enhanced flexibility in the labour market, cut state spending on child care and the Domestic Purpose Benefit, and repealed the universal Family Benefit. These innovations affected economically vulnerable groups including women, Māori and lone parents more than the rest of the population (Curtin & Teghtsoonian, 2010; Sawer, 1996; Uttley, 2000). National

also threatened to abolish the MWA but Minister of Women's Affairs, Jenny Shipley, intervened (Hyman, 2010).

Coney (1993b) claimed that in the early 1990s the women's movement had disintegrated into pockets of separate women's refuges, centres and groups and a few longstanding networks, such as the Māori Women's Welfare League and the National Council of Women, all of which represented liberal rather than radical perspectives. Many women's organisations further adopted increasingly hierarchical and centralised structures and bureaucratic working styles (Grey, 2009; Vanderpyl, 2004). Such changes were consequences of a shift in the nature of government funding for women's organisations that occurred at this time. The dominant view in the 1990s (shaped by the State Sector Act in 1988) was influenced by public choice theory¹⁴ and a public management approach that encouraged the separation of funding from the delivery of social services to avoid bureaucratic 'capture' and to improve bureaucratic efficiency through choice and competition (Cheyne, O'Brien, & Belgrave, 2008; Grey, 2008b; Teghtsoonian, 2004). In this context, community and voluntary organisations across all sectors were contracted by government to deliver social services. To become eligible for such contracts, organisations had to meet standards of professionalism and be able to deliver defined outputs efficiently. Moreover, such funding was only available for services, not for advocacy relating to marginalised groups. Not only did this restrict the work content of the contracted organisations, it also further silenced the political voice of women's organisations (Grey & Sedgwick, 2013b; Vanderpyl, 2004). Despite such constraints on feminist advocacy at this time, political successes for women included the MWA contributions towards the Human Rights Act 1993 and the Domestic Violence Act 1995, as well as the change of New Zealand's electoral system from a first-past-the-post (FPP) to a mixed-member-proportional (MMP) representation electoral system in 1993, which increased the percentage of women in the House of Representatives.

In 1996, *The Full Picture: Guideline for Gender Analysis* (MWA, 1996) was published by the MWA. This document explained how 'gender mainstreaming'¹⁵ across government can implement a routine gender lens for all policy. Theoretically, this approach acknowledged *differences* between men and women and thus varied from anti-discrimination policy seeking to establish *equality* with men (True, 2003). However, the successful integration of a gender analysis in policy making was limited. The dominant public management approach made

¹⁴ Public choice theory assumes political actors (including Ministries) to be driven by self-interest (e.g. of maximising their departmental budgets) rather than a concern for the common good (Boston, Martin, Pallot, & Walsh, 1996).

¹⁵ According to True (2003, p.369), the concept of gender mainstreaming refers to 'Efforts to scrutinize and reinvent processes of policy formulation and implementation across all issue areas and at all levels from a gender-differentiated perspective, to address and rectify persistent and emerging disparities between men and women'.

ministries primarily accountable to their Ministers who had no interest in policy advice if they perceived it to have been ‘captured’ by women’s interests and thus to be a potential interference with the performance of their policy units (Teghtsoonian, 2004). Moreover, staff of most government departments usually had little training in gender analysis (Teghtsoonian & Chappell, 2008). Therefore, responsibility for gender issues was not taken on by all governmental departments but rather by none (Aimers, 2011) and gender mainstreaming in New Zealand resulted in the adoption of a policy language that largely ignored gender. This dismissal of gender mainstreaming was also increasingly facilitated by an emerging Third Way politics (Teghtsoonian, 2004).

This Third Way approach — also named ‘roll out neoliberalism’ (Peck & Tickell, 2002, p.384), the ‘social investment state’ (Giddens, 2000, p.99), and ‘inclusive liberalism’ (Porter & Craig, 2004, p.394) — was adopted by Labour who, in 1999, formed a coalition with the Alliance and the Green Party. Helen Clark became Prime Minister (1999-2008), seven women held ministerial positions (Curtin & Teghtsoonian, 2010) and the roles of the Speaker of the House, the Chief Justice and the Governor-General were filled by women associated with the 1970s feminist movement (Simon-Kumar, 2011b). Thus, initially, feminists across the country had high hopes for the Fifth Labour-led government.

The Third Way was this government’s response to the social effects of the neoliberal agenda promoted by the previous National government and it was intended to ease ‘social exclusion’ and increase community involvement. Indeed, some authors argued that this Labour-led government moved New Zealand into a ‘post-neoliberal’ era (Challies & Murray, 2008; Simon-Kumar, 2011a) because it increased its focus on partnerships with community organisations (which I explain below) and strategic social investment (e.g. improving childcare services and implementing paid parental leave). However, because such investments were motivated by national interests and economic growth (Lister, 2006; Simon-Kumar, 2011a), other authors have argued that instead of ending neoliberalism, the Third Way approach ‘resulted in a more deeply embedded form of neoliberalism’ in New Zealand (Kelsey as cited in Teghtsoonian, 2004, p.280).

As indicated, the Third Way approach modified the relationship between the state and community organisations, moving its focus from contractualism to ‘partnerships’. This new form of contractual arrangements between central government agencies, local authorities, iwi (tribes) and community groups (including many women’s organisations) aimed to achieve community development through ‘bottom-up’ approaches. Unlike previous ‘top-down’ contracts dictated by the government, partnerships were supposed to build on the knowledge of the communities

(Larner, 2005; Larner & Butler, 2005; Larner & Craig, 2005; Panelli & Larner, 2010). Thus, the partnership model arguably offered more political agency to organisations than contractualism and addressed social issues that were not responsive to top-down solutions (M. Taylor, 2006). However, the contractual relationships dominating such ‘partnerships’ still meant the state held considerable control to define the outputs and services offered. Thus, in reality, the new approach did not indicate equality between the state and community organisations as the terminology of partnerships suggested (Grey, 2008b; Grey & Sedgwick, 2013b).

A further interest of the Labour-coalition at this time was a commitment to ‘closing the gaps’ between Māori and non-Māori by investing in Māori capacity building. This contributed to an existing phenomenon whereby inequality was largely framed in terms of ethnicity, not gender or class (Humpage, 2005, 2006). Thus, non-government organisations (NGOs) competing as service providers for government funding had to align their work with government priorities (that is, ethnicity issues rather than gender issues). Overall, the dominance of ethnicity in discussions of social justice made it increasingly difficult to advocate for political women’s interests and a focus on ‘gender’ and ‘women’ was often absent from or marginal in policy.

Children, by contrast, received increasing attention both in New Zealand and internationally (e.g. Blaiklock et al., 2002; Dobrowolsky, 2002; Elizabeth & Larner, 2009; Lister, 2006). They were portrayed as future citizens, workers and consumers (Dobrowolsky, 2002; Dobrowolsky & Jenson, 2004; Elizabeth & Larner, 2009; Simon-Kumar, 2011a) and the social investment perspective of the Third Way saw a major focus placed on education and erasing inequalities among youth who would grow up to be (hopefully) equal citizens (see Jenson, 2008). The focus on children can arguably be conceived as an attempt to keep some issues relevant to women’s lives on the political agenda when explicit women’s interests were perceived as incompatible with a neoliberal perspective. However, new policies designed to be supportive only of *some* children — those whose parents engaged in paid work — suggested that the state’s concern lay not only with the well-being of children but also with the disciplining of parents relying on benefits (Dobrowolsky, 2002; Elizabeth & Larner, 2009).

Supporting children based on their parent’s employment status reinforced parental responsibilities to participate successfully in the labour market to enable their children a positive future (K. Clarke, 2006; Elizabeth & Larner, 2009). At the same time, the Labour-led government’s approach of focussing on supporting children (not their families) decoupled them from their mothers (and fathers), as if child poverty existed independently from the poverty of their parents (e.g. Elizabeth & Larner, 2009; Lister, 2006). In this way, poverty among sole mothers was not a political issue, while child poverty became increasingly framed as such

through the 2000s. Child-focussed policies failed to acknowledge that peoples' chances of raising children to become mature and successful citizens are highly gendered, class-based and racialised (see Curtin & Teghtsoonian, 2010; Lister, 2006; Simon-Kumar, 2011a). In New Zealand, Māori and Pacific women, who were over represented among the sole mothers receiving the Domestic Purposes Benefit (Uttley, 2000), became especially 'morally obliged' to participate in paid work to ensure their children's well-being, while the likelihood of their success in the labour market was and remains significantly lower than for most other social groups (Elizabeth & Larner, 2009, p.152).

The MWA maintained a commitment to consult with women's organisations across the country, documented in its *Action Plan for New Zealand Women* (MWA, 2004). Yet, this document was criticised for prioritising the interests of women in paid work over the interests of women who chose different life paths (Kahu & Morgan, 2007). Such a hierarchy was evident in many policies of this era but important gains made for women in paid work included the paid parental leave introduced by the Fifth Labour government in 2002.

National won the election in 2008 and, with the support of the Māori Party, ACT and United Future, National's John Key became Prime Minister. National's first term coincided with the beginning of a global recession, which led to short-term austerity measures, tax cuts that privileged upper income groups and welfare reforms that were critiqued by several social justice groups (K. Nicholls, 2011). The previous government's policy focus on ethnicity had already been weakened and outweighed by a discourse around economic need. National further manifested its disinterest in women's issues by using the 2011 election to hold a referendum asking whether New Zealand should keep the MMP electoral system or re-introduce the previous FPP. While this referendum resulted in a vote for MMP, it was criticised for gambling 'with the gains we have made in women's political representation' (Gilling & Grey, 2010, p.17).

Since then, continued welfare reforms of the National Government have further challenged the lives of many New Zealand women. For instance, the work-testing of recipients of the Domestic Purposes Benefit or Jobseeker Support¹⁶ and constraints placed on the entitlements of beneficiaries who have additional children while on the benefit were all changes that disproportionately impacted sole mothers. National also rejected the Equal Pay Amendment Bill in 2011 and is likely to veto the private members bill that seeks to extend paid parental leave to 26 weeks¹⁷.

¹⁶ In July 2013, the Domestic Purposes Benefit was abolished and beneficiaries with children under 14 were moved to Jobseeker Support.

¹⁷ When this thesis was submitted, this Paid Parental Leave Amendment Bill was yet to enter its third reading.

The Ministry of Women's Affairs and women's diversity

Since its emergence in the mid-1980s, state feminism has seemed to struggle with addressing New Zealand's women as a diverse group. There are some indicators suggesting that institutions such as the Ministry of Women's Affairs *tried* to recognise different perspectives, experiences and living conditions of women through their work, but had limited success in translating these attempts into practices and experienced constant drawbacks. The MWA's gender mainstreaming guideline *The Full Picture* illustrates this dilemma well. It explicitly stressed, for instance, that Māori women had specific needs and generally recognised that 'women's lives are not all the same' (MWA, 1996, p.7), but the guideline's ability to create differentiated policy was limited — not least because the translation of this guideline into actual policy depended on other government departments. Because of such difficulties, the Ministry of Women's Affairs and its publications and guidelines for policy makers, overall, have often been criticised for siding with women active in the labour market and neglecting the experiences of other groups (Kahu & Morgan, 2007; Teghtsoonian, 2004).

During its first years of existence, the MWA saw itself as a 'transmission belt' between women in the communities and the government (Curtin & Teghtsoonian, 2010, p.552). As such, it made an effort to consult with diverse women's interest groups and iwi (tribes) by holding meetings throughout the country (Sawer, 1996). Moreover, in its commitment to biculturalism, the Ministry initially established Te Ohu Whakatupu, the Māori Women's Secretariat, as an autonomous unit. However, only a few years later, when public management and public choice theory advanced the separation of service delivery from funding of services, CEO Aitken diminished the Ministry's emphasis on community involvement. She also restructured the Ministry with the aim of enhancing its efficiency and eliminated the autonomy of Te Ohu Whakatupu (Curtin & Teghtsoonian, 2010).

Nevertheless, in the 1990s the Ministry demonstrated a commitment to acknowledging women's diversity by hiring a policy analyst who specifically focussed on the interests of Pacific women. Further, Te Ohu Whakatupu was involved in many important initiatives (in cooperation with Te Puni Kōkiri, the Ministry of Māori Development) to develop a policy analysis framework that recognised the interests of Māori women (Curtin & Teghtsoonian, 2010). When the Ministry of Women's Affairs increasingly struggled to justify its existence, the Ministry itself managed to survive; however, in 2000 Te Ohu Whakatupu became subject to further restructuring plans and was merged with the Policy Unit (Curtin & Teghtsoonian, 2010).

Addressing differences among women according to their sexual identities was never a priority for the Ministry of Women's Affairs. However, in its early years, some staff tried to

establish a routine analysis of policy with regards to lesbian women's experiences and created a lesbian consultation group. While they achieved some success (for example, the 1991 Census included categories about 'living arrangements' that were also applicable to lesbian relationships), overall, lesbian issues were not given much attention in the work of the MWA (Hyman, 2010).

The efforts of the Ministry of Women's Affairs to account for women as a diverse group often seemed to be outweighed by the Ministry's ongoing struggle to survive as an institution. The neoliberal project tended to neglect the interests of women, which made it difficult for the MWA to attain its goals at all. Thus, the even more marginalised interests of sub-groups of women (e.g. lesbian and/or Pacific women's interests) were less likely than broader 'women's interests' to be incorporated in any policy agenda. Moreover, supporting such minority interests arguably jeopardised the Ministry being perceived by government as a useful institution. Thus, I argue, the Ministry's hesitation to address women as a diverse group reflects this dilemma.

Third Wave activism

Reducing the Third Wave of New Zealand's women's movement to state feminism does not acknowledge feminist activism that occurred outside this domain. Although visible feminist activism has declined since the 1970s and 1980s (Grey, 2008a), feminists have not entirely retreated from the public sphere. Dean (2012) argued that British feminist activism started to increase again around 2006 and Newman (2013) also believed that the financial crisis starting in 2008 initiated a new upsurge of political street protest. The emergence of Occupy¹⁸ and a series of student protests starting in 2011, for instance, confirmed the presence of such developments in New Zealand. Moreover, a number of noteworthy feminist events have also taken place in most recent years. Since I discuss some of these events in more detail throughout this thesis (e.g. SlutWalk, Bust Rape Culture), here I offer only a brief summary of some events that exemplify that New Zealand's Third Wave activism is not bereft of activism.

SlutWalk (see Chapter 6) is a series of protest marches from 2011 to 2013 with a similar aim to earlier 'Take Back/Reclaim the Night' events. The Bust Rape Culture march 2013 was a response to the 'Roast Busters case' (see Chapter 6). Both were successful street protests: SlutWalk 2011 brought about 900 protesters to the streets of Auckland and Wellington (Johnston

¹⁸ The international Occupy movement was inspired by the Spanish Indignados movement and started in September 2011 with 'Occupy Wall Street' in New York, occupying public places symbolising economic wealth. Protesters demanded economic equality and social justice for the '99%' of the people (in contrast to the '1%' representing the rich). New Zealand activists occupied spaces in several cities, including Auckland, Wellington, Dunedin and Christchurch from October 2011 on, lasting for several months. See Benski, Langman, Perugorria, and Tejerina (2013) and Castañeda (2012) for more details.

& Robinson, 2011) and Bust Rape Culture had ‘thousands’ of participants throughout the country (TVNZ, 2013). Feminists also employed forms of activism other than street protests. For instance, in February 2012, Feminist Action, an Auckland-based activist collective, started to engage in a debate with the company DB Breweries about its sexist television advertising for Tui beer. This debate was facilitated by media statements and included an *Open letter to Tui* published in the Auckland Women’s Centre newsletter (AWC, 2012). One month later, the activist collective The Queer Avengers protested at Germaine Greer’s book-signing in Wellington by throwing a ‘glitter bomb’ at the Australian author who, in some feminist circles, is heavily criticised for promoting transphobic theories (The New Zealand Herald, 2012a).

New Zealand’s feminist activism further demonstrated that raising awareness about an issue through online tools can reach a wide audience. For instance, the Law Revue Girls, a group of University of Auckland law students who shared their video *Defined Lines* via YouTube parodied the sexist pop song *Blurred Lines* by the American-Canadian singer Robin Thicke and criticised the normalised misogyny of pop music. In its first weekend online (in August 2013) it was viewed 180,000 times and received national and international media coverage (Tait & Tan, 2013; The Independent, 2013).

Given that the Third Wave of feminism arguably began in the 1990s and is ongoing¹⁹, it is not surprising that the movement has not kept a steady level across these 24 years. Most accounts of New Zealand’s ‘declining’ feminist activism refer to the 1990s (e.g. Coney, 1993b; Hyman, 1994) and Grey’s (2008a) quantitative analysis of feminist events reported in New Zealand newspapers from 1995 to 2005 also showed almost doubled numbers in the second half of this period. Increased feminist activity, however, does not automatically constitute a women’s movement. Accordingly, this thesis investigates contemporary feminist activities more closely and asks whether they, together, constitute a women’s movement.

Conclusion

This overview of the three waves of New Zealand’s women’s movement has not only described how feminists fought for their goals in the past but has shown that the women’s movement has passed through different phases and adopted different methods at different times.

These varied feminist approaches have been closely related to changes in New Zealand’s broader political environment. The suffragists made use of formal political pathways, using petitions and lobbying for bills to be introduced to Parliament. They did so because the political

¹⁹ I address the scepticism of some authors regarding the existence of the Third Wave movement in Chapter 3.

agency of women in the nineteenth century was limited and formal channels of achieving political change were most promising to them. The Second Wave of feminism emerged during a time when street protests were popular ways of highlighting issues of injustice. The state feminism characteristic of the Third Wave emerged when activist groups adopted increasingly formal structures and their opportunities for disruptive activism declined as they accepted government funding to develop women-centred programmes. Moreover, the establishment of the Ministry of Women's Affairs in the mid-1980s offered state feminism an opportunity to keep some women's issues on the political agenda at a time when the dominant political and economic interests shifted in a neoliberal direction. Thus, feminist activity has clearly always been shaped by the current political environment.

Moreover, despite these different approaches, there are recurring debates in feminist activity. First, New Zealand women have always struggled to incorporate issues of diversity within their feminist practices. For instance, Pākehā women dominated the mainstream women's movement in all three waves while Māori women created their own networks and organisations. Second, the women's movement has always tended to incorporate other struggles for social justice within its work. The WCTU, for example, cared about poverty and Shepard emphasised her overall 'humanitarian' approach to justice. The Second Wave movement initially emerged from the broader activist scene on the political left and thus, many Second Wave feminists associated themselves with anti-capitalist movements (e.g. from a socialist or Marxist perspective) and anti-racism. Finally, state feminism often struggled to address social justice issues but discussing child poverty, for instance, offered an opportunity to address poverty among sole mothers.

In 2013 New Zealand celebrated 120 years of women's suffrage. This chapter has highlighted how much has been achieved by and for women in this time. Yet, gender inequality remains a part of contemporary New Zealand society (see Chapter 1). The empirical study discussed in the following chapters thus shifts the focus away from historical events to investigate present developments in feminism to explore how feminists today work to overcome this problem.

Chapter 3

Theorising women's movements and Third Wave feminism

Introduction

Since it is my aim to identify whether feminist activity in New Zealand can be said to constitute a contemporary women's movement in New Zealand, it is essential to identify what might characterise women's movements and how such movements are shaped by contemporary political conditions. This is the task of the current chapter.

I first discuss the characteristics of a women's movement and explain Sawyer's (2010) definition, which I apply to my study. This is followed by a discussion of how social movement theories have evolved over decades causing much disagreement among scholars, including those concerned with women's movements in particular. I identify the political opportunity framework as the most suitable social movement theory to capture the importance of neoliberal influences on the contemporary women's movement in New Zealand. Having made these theoretical choices, I elaborate on how the literature characterises Third Wave feminism. This is important because Third Wave feminism arguably represents the ideology underlying contemporary women's movements in Western countries. While I argue that this assumption fails to take into account state feminism as an additional and central aspect of New Zealand's contemporary feminism, I show that the Third Wave literature provides important insights to understand individualised feminist activities in New Zealand.

What is a women's movement?

The outcome of my search for New Zealand's contemporary women's movement depends on how I conceptualise a women's movement. The literature offers a range of possible definitions. This variety is not surprising given that women's movements have existed over a long period of time and within different cultural contexts. Since it is my aim to examine *New Zealand's* contemporary women's movement, I limit the following discussion to definitions that have been

applied to women's movements in Western societies since the 1960s and explain the particular approach I selected for my project.

Theoretical considerations

Many scholars make a distinction between women's movements and feminist movements (Beckwith, 2000, 2001; Dann, 1985; Lovenduski, 2008). They argue that women's movements promote women's issues and are under women's leadership. Theoretically, these movements can have any kinds of women's issues as their goals, including right-wing and anti-feminist ones. Women-led, pro-life movements are examples of such anti-feminist movements. However, according to this approach, feminist movements are those subsets of women's movements that are informed by feminist beliefs and the goal of challenging patriarchy.

I do not subscribe to this differentiation between women's movements and feminist movements because I firmly believe that the aims and goals of women's movements are always feminist in the sense described in Chapter 1. My following conceptualisation of women's movements will clarify why anti-feminist movements, such as the pro-life movement, do not qualify as women's movements. Moreover, I argue that a definitional distinction between women's and feminist movements fails to acknowledge the well-documented reluctance of many women to identify with feminism while supporting the pursuit of gender equality (Baumgardner & Richards, 2003a; Baumgardner & Morris, 2010; Buschman & Lenart, 1996; Harris, 2010; Olson et al., 2008; Williams & Wittig, 1997). 'Feminism' is a loaded, sometimes threatening term that is misinterpreted by many people to carry connotations of extremism and hatred of men (Bulbeck, 2006; Edelstein, 2007). Consequently, an explicitly feminist name will be rejected by some women's movements that challenge patriarchy even though they still meet the criteria of being feminist on a theoretical level. Therefore, I follow authors such as Rosas and Wilson (2003) and apply the terms 'women's movement' and 'feminist movement' interchangeably.

Beckwith (2001) suggested that women's/feminist movements are dissimilar to 'women in political movements'. With the latter category she referred to women who actively engage in social movements that are not women's movements (e.g. peace and environmental movements). The distinction highlights that women can be politically active without a feminist motivation. In this context, Ferree and Mueller (2003) claimed that any political movement by women who organise *as women* can be named a 'women's movement', independently of the movement's broader goal. This clarification acknowledges that some mobilisations of women start with, for example, anti-racist or other social justice-orientated goals and subsequently incorporate feminist perspectives. A relatively recent example of such a movement might be Occupy (see Chapter 2

for details), where women participated *as* sole mothers, *as* losing parties of the gender pay gap and *as* other feminised subgroups of ‘the 99%’. However, the Occupy movement also faced serious problems regarding the inclusiveness and safety of women (Anonymous, 2012) and I am therefore hesitant to include such movements in the category of women’s movements. Nevertheless, as I show in Chapter 6, movements that provide some space for a feminist agenda contribute to keeping political discourse on women’s issues alive.

Conceptualising women’s movements

Lovenduski (2008, p.175) stated that women’s movements are constituted by both ‘a form of collective behaviour and the ideas that inspire that behaviour’. This is quite a broad description but I understand it as a starting point that suggests a women’s movement consists of people engaging in actions that aim for social change (as the previous discussion of collective behaviour explained) and some form of ideology (feminism) that guides this behaviour.

Sawer (2010), who has conducted considerable research into this field in the Australian context, offered a more detailed definition that I find useful for my project because it provides a clear structure to guide my ‘measurement’ of a women’s movement. She identified three characteristics of women’s movements: first, they are mobilisations of collective identity as women; second, they sustain the challenge of women-centred discourses even through periods of abeyance; and third, they make claims on behalf of women. When related to Lovenduski’s definition, this third part of Sawer’s definition suggests that making claims on behalf of women includes achieving social change through collective behaviour that is in the interest of women. Sawer’s way of framing this point does not imply that all claims are made on behalf of *all* women at the same time, which acknowledges different needs among women. Neither does it suggest that only women can make such claims, which opens women’s movements to participants of all genders. Nevertheless, pro-life movements, for instance, do not meet this criterion. They might be making claims on behalf of unborn life but not on behalf of women.

The second part of Sawer’s definition — sustaining women-centred discourse through periods of abeyance — is important for New Zealand’s contemporary women’s movement because it clarifies that a movement still exists as a movement even though it may be in abeyance. It establishes the idea that keeping women’s issues on the political agenda is part of the work of a women’s movement. Regardless of phases of abeyance, the discourse sustained by pro-life movements is not women-centred as they focus on the value of a foetus’ life. While women’s issues are difficult to define, I follow Sapiro (1981) who suggested three categories of women’s issues: those in which women have more interest than they have in other issues; issues

in which women have more interest than men do; and issues in which women have a special interest because of their particular viewpoint. Of course, not all women share *all* their interests. Thus, it is important to understand these varying interests in relation to the first part of Sawer's definition of women's movements — the mobilisation of collective identity as women — because this relationship clarifies how a diverse group of women can share a common identity.

Collective identities are a crucial component of political mobilisation (Katzenstein, 1987; Melucci, 1989; Whittier, 1995, 1997). Whittier (1995) explained, for example, that a feminist identity is a collective identity. Through adopting such an identity a group creates a distinction between insiders and outsiders and takes on a certain political consciousness. While their meanings can change over time, collective identities can only exist when individuals agree and act on them. Thus, conceptualising a collective identity is a political process in itself, because it determines who belongs to a group and who does not (Bacchi, 1999; Ferree & Mueller, 2003; Whittier, 1995).

Drawing on this conceptualisation, I understand the collective identity of women as a political category. It reflects those political interests that women share as women. This does not imply that all political interests of all women overlap. Nor does it deny the many instances when political interests of women *as women* are considered less important than, or contradict, political interests of women *as individuals* who hold other collective identities, for example those based on race, ethnicity, age or class. But it does assume that some political claims can be made on behalf of women because they are structurally disadvantaged in many social areas. Again, pro-life movements are not aligned with such political interests of women. In fact, they subordinate the political interests of women to those of the unborn.

Returning to my starting point of conceptualising women's movements based on Lovenduski's approach, I need to add some final qualifications to the understanding of collective behaviour. So far, I have addressed the actors of a movement as individuals. But within women's movements, individuals also organise themselves into groups, formal organisations and within government institutions. Ideally, they form alliances between these levels and build interpersonal networks (Dobrowolsky, 1998; Ferree & Mueller, 2003; Katzenstein, 1990; Sawer, 2010). New Zealand scholars have confirmed that a feminist presence on all three levels is vital for the survival of feminism (see Curtin, 2008; Hyman, 1994). Therefore, I understand women's movements to situate their collective behaviour within the micro- (individual), meso- (groups and organisations) and macro-levels (government and state) of society.

Contextualising social movements

So far, this chapter has explained my understanding of what constitutes a women's movement. However, I argue that New Zealand's women's movement significantly changed character because of neoliberal influences impacting on the political agency of feminists. Therefore, my conceptualisation needs to explain how political environments contribute to the rise, development and decline of social movements. For this purpose, the following discussion provides an overview of the broader field of social movement theories which helps to explain why I chose the 'political opportunity' framework for theorising New Zealand's women's movement. I will first introduce a range of social movement theories and subsequently argue why I made this choice by relating the theories to the specifics of *women's* movements. However, the number of theories in this field is large and I cannot discuss all of them. Consequently, I only present those that allow me to briefly sketch the academic development of social movement theory and to suggest why the political opportunity approach is most applicable to my purposes²⁰.

Collective behaviour

Le Bon (1897) was among the first scholars to discuss mass behaviour, considering protesters as emotion driven and irrational crowds (Benski & Langman, 2013). Based on Blumer (1939), who developed the conceptualisation of mass behaviour further, Smelser (1962), Blumer (1971) and the school of structural-functionalists theorised collective behaviour a few decades later. These theories understood collective behaviour as nonconformist activities to challenge and transform the social order arising from people's dissatisfaction with social norms (Della Porta & Diani, 1999). Such early collective behaviour theories were primarily developed to explain fascism and presented riots, mobs, protests and social movements as irrational and undesirable collective responses to alienation and social dysfunction (Meyer, 2004). Initially, theorists focussed on individuals engaging in such collective action, but later theories acknowledged the importance of organisations and institutions for social movements (Blumer, 1969; Marx & Wood, 1975; Weller & Quarantelli, 1973).

Following the rise of social justice movements in Western societies in the 1960s, the idea that protests reflected rare and unreasonable behaviour was challenged (Jenkins, 1983). Thus,

²⁰ Among the theories I do not have space to discuss are 'framing theory' (Benford & Snow, 2000), 'transnational protest' (Della Porta & Tarrow, 2005), 'newest social movements' (Day, 2004), 'lifestyle movements' (Haenfler, Johnson, & Jones, 2012), or theories on the relevance of emotions (Benski & Langman, 2013) and social networks (Krinsky & Crossley, 2013) for social movements.

during the 1970s, social movement scholars developed their theories further and eventually split into two main camps: those publishing on ‘contentious politics’ and those focusing on new social movement theories (Benski & Langman, 2013).

Contentious politics

Scholars theorising social movements as ‘contentious politics’ first developed the ‘resource mobilisation model’. This approach considers why social movements emerge only at certain times, despite the continuous existence of social conflict. According to this approach, movements are not driven by unreasonable and emotional motivations, as earlier theories suggested, but represent rational political intentions. They are extensions of institutionalised activity which, however, require financial and human resources mobilised and managed by interest groups and civic organisations. The resource mobilisation model asks how and under what circumstances are enough of these resources mobilised to address social conflict through a social movement. (Dahlerup, 2013; Edelman, 2001; Jenkins, 1983; Kuumba, 2001; McCarthy & Zald, 1977; McDonald, 2002; Melucci & Avritzer, 2000).

Increasingly, ‘political process’ scholars adopted these ideas regarding contentious politics and considered the political and social environment in which movements developed their strategies for social change (McAdam, 1982; Tarrow 1994). Consequently, their theories focused on interactions between mainstream political actors, who determine political conditions in society (e.g. political parties, government institutions, media), and less conventional activism (Della Porta & Diani, 1999; Kuumba, 2001; Meyer, 2004). They argued that activists choose their goals and strategies within a given political context that is significantly structured through these relationships (Meyer, 2004).

McAdam (1982, p.20), a political process scholar, defined social movements as ‘rational attempts by excluded groups to mobilize sufficient political leverage to advance collective interests through noninstitutionalized means’. This definition stands in contrast to earlier resource mobilisation approaches since it emphasises political activities outside of institutions. Similarly, Tilly (1984, p.306) defined social movements as a ‘sustained series of interactions between power holders and persons successfully claiming to speak on behalf of a constituency lacking formal representation’. Pointing towards these interactions, Tilly highlighted the reciprocity between activists or organisations and mainstream political actors.

Eisinger (1973) developed this theory further and was the first to use a ‘political opportunity’ framework²¹, which examines the political climate created by political institutions in a similar way to political process approaches (Meyer, 2004). However, this theory argues that the willingness with which political institutions and governments respond to the demands of a social movement and political dissent helps or hinders the movement’s development. Thus, the political opportunity framework evaluates how much impact collective action can or will have in a given political environment (Eisinger, 1973; Staggenborg, 1998; Tarrow 1994, 2011). Overall, these structures determine the context created by political institutions in which activists make their choices.

Political opportunity theory and its predecessor, the political process model, have received some criticism (Meyer & Minkoff, 2004). Several scholars have argued that these theories explain how political environments create or inhibit opportunities for social movements but leave the question ‘opportunity for what?’ unanswered (Cornwall, King, Legerski, Dahlin, & Schiffman, 2007). Others have argued that the ‘political opportunities’ concept has been stretched to become synonymous with ‘environment’ or given so many different meanings, that the concept has become empty (Goodwin & Jasper, 1999). Throughout this chapter I demonstrate that this theoretical approach is nevertheless useful to understand New Zealand’s women’s movement.

New social movement theory

As stated above, the development of social movement theory from resource mobilisation to political opportunity structures represents only one of two theoretical camps. Within the second, scholars engaged with ‘new social movement theory’ (C. Brooks & Manza, 1994; Buechler, 1995; Calhoun, 1993; J. L. Cohen & Arato, 1994; Dalton & Kuechler, 1990; Klaandermans, 1990; Melucci, 1989; Touraine, 1981). This approach divides social movements into ‘old’ and ‘new’ types. ‘Old’ social movements are understood to have emerged prior to the 1960s and were influenced by Marxist class-politics. Since they were mainly concerned with materialist claims such as worker’s rights and trade union issues, working and low socio-economic classes were organising and fuelling these movements (Calhoun, 1993; Mayo, 2005; Staggenborg, 2011).

Following the revolutionary year of 1968, social movements in Western societies increasingly engaged with issues such as ecology, peace, homosexuality rights, animal rights, pro-choice and women’s liberation (Calhoun, 1993; Edelman, 2001; Inglehart & Abramson,

²¹ It seems that some authors do not distinguish strictly between the political process model and the political opportunity framework (see Goodwin & Jasper, 1999).

1999; Staggenborg, 2011). These 'new' movements mainly involved the well-educated middle-class who were affluent enough to focus on such post-material concerns (Inglehart, 1977; Offe, 1985). As class theories failed to explain these movements, new social movement theory emerged and discussed identity, ideology, quality of life and social integration as motivating factors for these movements (C. Brooks & Manza, 1994; Buechler, 1995; Edelman, 2001; Mayo, 2005; Staggenborg, 2011).

Given this emphasis on identity-based mobilisation among new social movements, 'identity politics' became an important and contested concept within new social movement theory (Bernstein, 2005). Kymlicka (1995) argued that, although group identities are socially constructed, they provide the basis for shared political demands. Thus, new social movements use collective identities to mobilise, for example, for anti-racist or environmental agendas. Touraine (1998) emphasised that radical movements (e.g. certain lesbian movements) tend to reject identity politics because of its discriminatory character. Similarly, many authors (Bernstein, 2005; Cole, 2008; Crenshaw, 1991; Fraser, 1996) believe (narrow) identity politics ignore the intersection of multiple identities. New social movement theory seems to neglect explaining these essentialist and constructionist understandings of identity politics.

Edelman (2001) further considered how the United States never had a strong class-conflict based 'old' labour movement and that the division of old and new movements was more appropriate for Europe. Other authors (e.g. Crossley, 2002; Holst, 2002) argued that allegedly 'new' movements are part of the 'old' but ongoing working class movement which now places more effort into being inclusive and progressive. Thus, the theory's underlying differentiation between old and new social movements was questioned entirely (Calhoun, 1993; Tarrow 1991). Additionally, D'Anieri, Ernst and Krier (1990) claimed that new social movement theory failed to sufficiently analyse the impact of political structural changes and events that influence the emergence of movements. Pichardo (1997) further objected that this theory focused on the political left and failed to consider contemporary conservative movements.

Movement cycles

While the theories discussed so far aimed to explain why and how social movements emerge, other scholars have discussed the development of existing movements. In this context, Blumer (1951) identified four stages to describe the lifecycle of social movements: social ferment (unorganised activities influenced by the propaganda of 'agitators'), popular excitement (causes and aims become more defined), formalisation (organisations coordinate strategies to achieve their goals); and institutionalisation (the movement becomes a part of the society and develops a

professional structure) (Della Porta & Diani, 1999). This theory has been altered and developed further, but the emphasis of each of the stages has remained similar (Christiansen, 2009; Hiller, 1975; Staggenborg, 1998).

Importantly for my endeavour, scholars supporting this theory have identified several reasons why a movement might decline in what they define as its final stage. Accordingly, a movement will cease to exist either because of success, because of organisational failure, due to co-optation, repression or the establishment of its causes within mainstream society (Christiansen, 2009). Thus, it seems that the institutionalisation of a movement — which is a characteristic of New Zealand feminism since the mid-1980s (see Chapter 2) — is understood to signal the *end* of a movement (Hiller, 1975). However, the literature acknowledges that not all social movements go through the four stages, and movements emerging in response to what new social movement theory identified as ‘cultural’ issues (e.g. women’s or lesbian/gay rights) are less likely to fit into this scheme than ‘political’ (class-based) movements (Buechler, 1995; Christiansen, 2009).

The applicability of the political opportunity theory

As indicated earlier, I argue that the political opportunity structure approach is most helpful for explaining the women’s movement in New Zealand and in the following I clarify why. Some social movement theories do not explain women’s movements well (Beckwith, 2000; Ferree & Mueller, 2003). The focus on non-institutionalised means of protest in early political process theory, for instance, does not explain the significance of women’s organisations and the institutional channels of contemporary women’s movements (Goodwin & Jasper, 1999). Accordingly, it is not applicable for my purpose.

Both Second and Third Wave feminism have been theorised as new social movements which put ‘women’s issues’ on their agenda and, therefore, *can* be interpreted as identity-based and post-materialist (Krips, 2012; Lotz, 2003). Such a classification is supported by research suggesting that individuals who hold post-materialist values are significantly more likely to embrace feminist values than materialist orientated people (Hayes, McAllister, & Studlar, 2000; Steel, Warner, Stieber, & Lovrich, 1992). However, while this research suggests that feminist *individuals* seem to combine post-material and feminist value sets, feminist *movements* usually target both material (e.g. equal payment) and post-material (e.g. abortion rights) goals. Therefore, many feminist scholars disagree with the categorisation of women’s movements as new social movements (Ferree & Mueller, 2003).

According to the stage-theory of social movements, the rise of state feminism — a highly institutionalised form of feminist activity — signals the beginning of the end of women’s

movements (Andrew, 2010). However, the history of New Zealand's women's movement (see Chapter 2) has shown that state feminism is not an entirely new approach to feminism: suffragists also worked mainly in alignment with institutionalised and state-related politics. Their form of state feminism was not the final stage of the First Wave movement but rather its main strategy. It was the most promising political avenue open to women in the political climate of that time. Therefore, I am hesitant to apply stage-theory to New Zealand's women's movement.

The political opportunity structure model, however, situates the rise and decline of a social movement within the political climate created by institutional politics. This explains, for example, why the suffragists chose institutionalised strategies to influence parliament and why the Second Wave movement declined after failing to win ground on the hoped-for abortion law reform. Most importantly for contemporary feminism, this theory takes into account the effects of neoliberalism on the development of New Zealand's women's movement after 1984.

The two main critiques of the political opportunity structure approach mentioned earlier do not outweigh its benefits for my purposes. The first concern, framed as the question posed by Cornwall et al. (2007) — opportunities for what? — can be dispelled for my study by answering: I am interested in the political opportunities of a women's movement in neoliberal New Zealand for surviving and for creating new approaches of feminist activism, despite adverse conditions. The second critique addresses scholars using 'political opportunities' synonymously with 'environment' (Goodwin & Jasper, 1999). Accordingly, I want to clarify that the political opportunities I describe refer to the avenues and possibilities for feminists to pursue their political agenda. These opportunities differ for individual women, women's organisations and state feminist institutions because of their different work priorities as well as their different positions in relation to political institutions and government. These differences will be clarified in Chapters 6 to 8. However, for all three of these levels, neoliberal ideology adopted by institutional entities such as government and the mainstream media have shaped these opportunities considerably.

Exploring Third Wave feminism

Earlier in this chapter, I named feminism as the ideology that guides the collective behaviour of a women's movement (see Lovenduski, 2008). Since I am particularly interested in New Zealand's *contemporary* women's movement this section more closely explores Third Wave feminism, the arguably 'latest wave' of feminism. This endeavour is a complex task because feminist authors (and activists) disagree about the character and content of Third Wave feminism.

Within the following discussion, I mainly draw on the literature referring to versions of Third Wave feminism developed within English-speaking Western countries, which is most appropriate for the New Zealand context. Cultural differences between New Zealand and, for example, the United States need to be kept in mind, but given the importance of the internet for Third Wave feminists as an information source that facilitates the global exchange of ideas I argue that international academic developments have significantly influenced New Zealand's Third Wave feminism.

As noted in Chapter 2, state feminism is central to New Zealand's Third Wave movement. The Third Wave literature does not usually refer to this form of feminism but mainly focusses on activities on the micro- (individual) and, to a lesser extent, the meso- (organisational) level of women's movements. I argue throughout this thesis that, in the New Zealand context, Third Wave feminism needs to include the macro- (state) level as well. However, in this section I provide an overview of the existing literature which does not take state feminism into account.

What is the Third Wave?

In her essay *Becoming the Third Wave*, Rebecca Walker (1992, p.41) was the first to claim 'I am not a postfeminism feminist. I am the Third Wave'. This started a long-lasting discussion among feminists about whether there is a Third Wave of feminism and if so, how it is different from the Second Wave. Much of this discussion has occurred in the United States (Dicker & Piepmeier, 2003; Hernández & Raḥmān, 2002; Heywood & Drake, 1997; Labaton & Martin, 2004; Walker, 1995), but a considerable literature exists in the European (Budgeon, 2011a, 2011b; Lenz & Paetau, 2009; Scharff, 2012) and Australian (Bulbeck, 2001; Harris, 2001, 2010) contexts. As indicated in Chapter 2, the Third Wave literature for New Zealand is limited (Coleman, 2008, 2009; Hyman, 2009).

A universally accepted definition of Third Wave feminism is difficult to find. Dean (2009) voiced concern that existing conceptualisations are either too subjective and based on the viewpoint of the respective author, or are too simplistic, framing Third Wave feminism as one coherent approach to feminism. While both the First and the Second Wave are commonly assumed to have constituted distinctive periods of feminism in many Western countries, the Third Wave is highly contested. Some authors argued that this contestation is due to the fact that Third Wave feminism first emerged in popular consciousness and only afterwards did scholars try 'to control it theoretically'²² (Gillis & Munford, 2004, p.169). Harnois (2008) argued that it is

²² For instance, Walker's essay *Becoming the Third Wave* was first published in the feminist magazine *Ms.* before it received academic attention.

an identity rather than a theoretical perspective and Shugart (as cited in Purvis, 2004) understands Third Wave feminism as a rhetorical phenomenon of Generation X, but not as a part of feminism. In New Zealand, Coleman (2009) asked whether Third Wave feminism is a movement, a discourse, an identity or a shift towards a broader understanding of oppression.

One difficulty accompanying any attempt to define Third Wave feminism is the question of whether to use a specific generation or cohort of feminists as a starting point or whether to focus on theoretical and ideological underpinnings. The literature offers both possibilities. For example, Edelman (2001) and Heywood and Drake (2007) have defined Third Wave feminists as born after the baby boom generation of the 1960s and as politically active since the 1990s. However, a strikingly large share of the Third Wave literature explicitly addresses or refers to 'young women', often defined as late teenagers or women in their early twenties (Bail, 1996; Baumgardner & Richards, 2000; Budgeon, 2001; Cullen, 2001; Garrison, 2000; Harris, 2001; Kinser, 2004). I find this interesting because Third Wavers who were 'young' in the early 1990s are now in their thirties and forties. It may be because of this contradiction that some voices within the literature mention a possible 'mid-wave' generation (Coleman, 2009; Kinser, 2004) or even suggest the rise of a Fourth Wave movement (Wrye, 2009).

Consequently, a second approach to defining the Third Wave, promoted by Dean (2009) and Garrison (2000), claims that a simple differentiation of feminist waves based on cohorts undermines the radical potential of the Third Wave and falsely indicates that it addresses one homogenous age group. Their suggested definitional approach is more complicated because of the already indicated disagreements about the content of Third Wave theory. For the purpose of this study, I employ both approaches because I suggest that only a combination of them is able to capture the complexities of Third Wave feminism outlined in the literature: Third Wavers of today *tend* to be relatively young and they *tend* to embrace a feminism that is informed by a number of characteristics, themes and aims that I explain later in this chapter.

A postfeminist feminism?

Before my discussion delves into explaining the agenda of Third Wave feminism, one more theoretical clarification is required. Third Wave feminism is often associated with being 'postfeminist'. However, this connotation is problematic because postfeminism is defined in various and contradictory ways. Postfeminism is most commonly understood as an ideology that not only views feminism as outdated, but is explicitly disinterested in and alienated from feminism. Thus, it represents an anti-feminist backlash (Buschman & Lenart, 1996; Faludi, 1991; Gray & Boddy, 2010). Gillis and Munford (2004) and Siegel (1997) claimed that this most

common reading of postfeminism is a result of mainstream media declaring the need for feminism and the women's movement to have ended. Kinser (2004), however, explained that postfeminism can also be viewed as a discourse that regards gender equality as important but as an aim that has been achieved. McRobbie (2007, p.720), meanwhile, suggested that the assumption of achieved gender equality paradoxically secures gender inequality by advertising its false existence: 'Young women are able to come forward on condition that feminism fades away'.

Brooks (1997) and Lotz (2003) stated that the concept of postfeminism has generally been misperceived and rather reflects a poststructuralist viewpoint that criticises Second Wave feminism for not addressing differences among women adequately. As a result of this critique, this reading of postfeminism argues for feminism to engage with other social justice issues and to incorporate post-colonial, intersectional and postmodern theory. Thus, postfeminism is not anti-feminist but rather demands the fusion of feminism with other ideologies (e.g. anti-racism). In this sense, it is a successor of feminism and therefore *post*-feminist (A. Brooks, 1997). This explanation is, however, less used than the conceptualisation of postfeminism as an anti-feminist backlash.

For my study, I adopt the understanding that postfeminism perceives feminism as outdated. This does not mean that other theories presented are implausible. My rationale for choosing this pessimistic approach is based on practical considerations: I assume that women active in New Zealand's women's movement are most likely to share this perspective because it is most common and arguably also more intuitive than Brooks (1997) and Lotz's (2003) theoretically more complex perspectives. Since the chosen approach is considered as anti-feminist, I do not associate Third Wave feminism with postfeminism.

The Third Wave's struggle for... what exactly?

Despite much contestation, there have been some attempts to identify characteristics of Third Wave feminism (Budgeon, 2011b). Drawing on Mills (2002), Baxter (2003, p.5) offered a list of six features: (1) acknowledging the diversity and multiplicity of women's identities, (2) discussing the performativity²³ of gender (3) focussing on context-specific gender issues rather than general concepts such as patriarchy or sexism, (4) understanding identities to be co-constructed through social interactions, (5) recognising the relativity of power and (6) emphasising female resistance to stereotyped subject positions.

²³ This concept understands gender as a performance rather than something people *are*. See Butler (1990).

Not all of these characteristics are emphasised by every Third Wave author, but the first — a focus on differences as a desire to overcome an essentialist view of ‘women’ being a homogenous group of people — is often central (Dean, 2009; Harris, 2010). Critics of Third Wave feminism argue that multiple forms of oppression have been explored by feminists before and that black feminism, postcolonial theory, postmodern theory, intersectionality theory and critical race theory provided insights into anti-essentialist thought before the 1990s. However, Third Wave feminism particularly builds upon such theories and advocates for coalitions that embrace and acknowledge differences among women rather than look for essentialist sameness and equivalence (Budgeon, 2011b; Bulbeck, 2006; Dean, 2009; Mann & Huffman, 2005). The importance Third Wave feminism assigns to the recognition of differences among women is visible in its aim to identify the impact of relative privilege among women that systematically benefits some feminist voices and silences other (Harris, 2001). Consequently, it is inherent to Third Wave feminism to actively reflect upon power dynamics within feminism and, therefore, to critique itself (Kinser, 2004).

Third Wave feminism often incorporates political concerns of other social justice movements that intersect with feminism (e.g. anti-racism, anti-classism, etc.), broadening and fragmenting the feminist agenda. Moreover, Third and Second Wave feminism share many concerns such as sexual and domestic violence and reproductive health issues (Garrison, 2000), making it harder to define Third Wave themes. Although some attempts have been made (e.g. Baumgardner & Richards, 2000; Heywood & Drake, 1997), a Third Wave agenda is not well recorded in the literature. Nevertheless, in the following discussion I attempt to identify key themes that reoccur within Third Wave literature and activism.

In the United States, for instance, Third Wave feminism appears to revolve around issues of popular culture (Dean, 2009). More specifically — and this is reflected outside the United States as well (e.g. Harris, 2008) — Gillis and Munford (2004) argued that one of the strongest contributions to Third Wave feminism emerged from ‘girl culture’, consisting of a range of young women’s sub-cultures including Riot Grrrls, ‘lipglossed Girlies’ and proponents of ‘girl power’. None of these groups are *necessarily* political, but Gillis and Munford (2004) appreciated how they attempted to strip derogatory and disrespectful connotations off the term ‘girl’. Similarly, Garrison (2000), who specifically addressed Riot Grrrls, emphasised that this sub-culture supports a ‘girl-positive’ ideology that encourages women and girls to take initiative and control.

It is noticeable that Third Wave themes are often related to the female body. This encompasses engagement with issues of reproductive health, abortion and menstruation (e.g.

Baumgardner & Richards, 2000; Bobel, 2006), concerns regarding sexual or domestic abuse and ‘slutshaming’²⁴ (e.g. Berger, 2006; Savage, 2011), as well as critical analyses of fatism and healthy body images (e.g. Fikkan & Rothblum, 2012). The promotion of ‘sex-positivity’ (see Chapter 5) and discussions of female sexuality are also central aspects of this focus on bodies (e.g. Bulbeck, 2001; Harnois, 2008).

With regards to using the female body as a means of activism, Third Wave feminists have received some international media attention. For example, the heavily contested Ukrainian activist group ‘FEMEN’²⁵ — which established associated groups in several other countries — engages in topless protests against, for example, sex-tourism and sexual exploitation during large sports events, as well as against the politics of Vladimir Putin. While their political demands do not exclusively address feminist concerns, the embodiment of their protests always manifests that these women protest *as women*. However, their use of ‘naked protest’ is not new to the feminist repertoire and has been incorporated in various forms of women’s protest internationally (Tyler, 2013).

Much of the Third Wave literature addressed the role of the media in contemporary feminism. Since mainstream media is often understood to be unsupportive of the feminist project (Breitbart & Nogueira, 2004; Pozner, 2003), Third Wave feminists have created and made use of their own alternative media channels including zines²⁶, internet blogs and music (Berger, 2006; Labaton & Martin, 2004). However, Third Wave engagement with the media also encompasses discussions about specific aspects of the media, such as pornography (Ciclitira, 2004; Snyder-Hall, 2010; Strossen, 1993; Waters, 2007) and television programmes (Leavy, 2000; Pender, 2007).

Overall, it is noticeable that the Third Wave literature tends to provide personal accounts of the authors’ specific experiences and interests (Baumgardner & Richards, 2000, 2003b; Berger, 2006; Labaton & Martin, 2004). This is a manifestation of another characteristic of Third Wave feminism identified in the literature, which I discuss in the following section: the focus on the individual.

²⁴ ‘Slutshaming’ refers to practices that put shame on (mainly) women who wear revealing clothes and/or engage in sexual activities that are perceived as too extreme or unusual.

²⁵ I recognise that FEMEN is a highly controversial group within feminist circles, not least due to the dubious role of Victor Svyatski in the group and the group’s arguable lack of cultural sensitivity. Thus, I suggest caution when interpreting FEMEN’s aims as representative of Third Wave feminism. However, because of this controversy, they continue to draw media attention to contemporary feminism. See Zychowicz (2011) for more details.

²⁶ ‘Zine’ is an abbreviation of ‘magazine’ and describes self-made, low-budget publications that are usually distributed by the makers themselves. See Davidson (2005) and Harris (2003) for more details.

Increasing individualism

Gray and Boddy (2010), who draw on Cruikshank (1999), have noted that Third Wave feminists are influenced by neoliberal notions such as self-responsibility, active citizenship and freedom of choice. According to Budgeon (2001), this influence results in a tendency among predominantly young women to celebrate individual freedom rather than adopting a collective feminist identity. Thus, the emphasis on individualism in Third Wave feminism can be read as a reaction of feminism to the changing political climate (see Booth-Tobin & Hahrie, 2010; Bulbeck, 2006).

Third Wave feminism embraces individualism in several ways. Given the acknowledgement of women's diversity, Third Wave feminism rejects the idea of one homogenous and shared feminist identity. Inspired by intersectionality theory (Mann & Huffman, 2005), it promotes an understanding of identities as having several interconnected layers (e.g. ethnic identity, sexual identity, etc.), all of which influence feminist perspectives but differ in their combination for individual feminists. Thus, Third Wave feminism promotes personal approaches to feminism (Garrison, 2000; Sowards & Renegar, 2006) and rejects generalised definitions of feminism: 'Your feminism is what you want it to be' (Karp as cited in Mann & Huffman, 2005, p.74).

Individualism not only affects conceptualisations of feminism and feminist identities but also feminist practices. Bail (1996) coined the term 'DIY (Do It Yourself)-feminism' to describe such individual practices, which include the production of literature, music, online communication, self-produced zines and videos (Andrew & Maddison, 2010; Bulbeck, 2001; Garrison, 2000; Sowards & Renegar, 2006). Bail (1996) understood DIY-feminism to be de-politicised acts, motivated by personal challenges and passions rather than expressions of a collective feminist identity (see also Bulbeck, 2006). Maddison (2002), however, emphasised that they signify acts of resistance for many, especially young, feminists.

Closely related to DIY-feminism is the practice of 'everyday resistance' (Katzenstein, 1990) and 'everyday activism' (Sowards & Renegar, 2006). Budgeon (2001) described how many young women understand their daily lives as shaped by gendered structures which they challenge in individual and small actions (Harris, 2010). Such incorporation of a feminist perspective into daily routines is understood as a way to create a better present, not only a better future (Johnson as cited in Sowards & Renegar, 2006). Like DIY-feminism, everyday activism is located in the private rather than the public sphere and therefore seems less suited to the broader mobilisation of a women's movement (Sowards & Renegar, 2006). However, its intention is to challenge the taken-for-granted gendered aspects of the everyday life. Thus, it aims to achieve the personal empowerment of individuals, which is an important characteristic of feminist

activism (Sowards & Renegar, 2006). Hence, Budgeon (2011b, p.16) argued that Third Wave feminism ‘shifts the attention to the subjective and individualized experiences of women as they develop their own relationship to feminism’.

DIY-feminism and everyday activism are not the only recently coined feminist approaches to develop under the umbrella of Third Wave feminism. Other examples are ‘cyberfeminism’, which involves feminist online activism of various forms (see Chapter 5); ‘lipstick feminism’, which challenges derogatory notions of femininity; and ‘power feminism’, which rejects the perception that women are powerless victims of male oppression and instead focuses on developing women’s individual strengths (Coleman, 2009; Harris, 2001; Mann & Huffman, 2005).

However, there are numerous critics of these individualised approaches to feminism. In particular, the rejection of a collective understanding of feminism and of a shared feminist identity is one of the reasons why Third Wave feminism is often perceived as problematic (see Dahlerup, 2013). For instance, some authors (Dicker & Piepmeier, 2003; Mann & Huffman, 2005; Pinterics, 2001) believe that the DIY approach lacks the level of organisation that is necessary for achieving social change, and suggest that feminism without transformative potential is politically regressive. Kinser (2004) argued that the focus on everyday practices — which she called ‘false feminism’ — leads young women to feel revolutionary without having to engage with and commit to any actually transformative practices. The Third Wave claim that feminism does not need to be organised because it can be found everywhere in daily life has also been criticised as a form of ‘big tent’ feminism. While trying to be inclusive, it fails to differentiate between feminists and women and therefore is too reductive and simplistic (Bulbeck, 2006).

The alleged lack of a political underpinning to Third Wave feminism is another major criticism. Guest (1998) argued that the focus on the individual hides systematic oppression that needs to be tackled by a broader movement. This is an argument aligned with Hanisch’s (1970) famous essay, whose title *The Personal is Political* became a popular slogan for the Second Wave movement. The essay discusses the relationship between the public and the private spheres in women’s lives (Dann, 1985; Einhorn & Sever, 2003; Holmes, 2000) and the Third Wave has adopted this catchphrase to advocate their understanding of everyday feminism. However, several authors have pointed out that reading political value into individual everyday practices is a misinterpretation of Hanisch’s intention (Cullen, 2001; Gillis & Munford, 2004; Mann & Huffman, 2005). For instance, ‘Lipstick feminism’, which emphasises femininity through make-up and fashion and interprets them as positive and empowering traits of women, has

consequently been discarded by its critics as shallow, vain and a nod to patriarchy (Baumgardner & Richards, 2000; Coney, 1993b). According to Ghasedi and Cornell (as cited in Kinser, 2004, p.144), buying ‘the black instead of the pink nail polish’ is not a feminist act.

However, Sowards and Renegar (2006, p.67) argued that the self-focus of contemporary feminism should not be understood as narcissistic but rather as a ‘recognition of the complexities of contemporary activism’. Lichterman (1996) similarly emphasised that such forms of feminism are not inherently selfish but form the initial basis of commitment to a community of individuals who engage in the same activity. For example, ‘Stich’n Bitch’²⁷ groups, zine collectives and Riot Grrrl bands do have the potential to form communities (see Minahan and Cox as cited in Harris, 2010).

Mothers, daughters, sisters, conflicts

Many of the criticisms of Third Wave individualism discussed in the previous section have been voiced by authors associated with the Second Wave generation. This exemplifies that the intergenerational relationship among feminists contains certain disagreements and misunderstandings between younger and older women (see Maddison, 2003).

Some of these intergenerational disagreements relate to the fact that the Third Wave movement has emerged while Second Wave feminism still exists. Since the wave metaphor *can* be interpreted in a way that suggests two waves cannot exist at the same time (see Chapter 1), some Second Wavers became concerned that Third Wave feminists might claim to have replaced the Second Wave entirely (Gillis & Munford, 2004). In such a context, Morgan (as cited in Bulbeck, 2006, p.15) — a writer and feminist since the 1960s — has addressed the younger generation by stating: ‘get your own torch. I’m still using mine’.

However, Third Wave feminism’s ‘own torch’ has received criticism for its difference from Second Wave approaches to feminism. As explained earlier, young feminists producing zines and music appear to some Second Wavers to ‘just want to have fun’ (Harris, 2001), to be naïve (Cullen, 2001) or to be doing nothing at all (Rosas & Wilson, 2003). Third Wave feminism has been interpreted as hollow and meaningless (Kinser, 2004). Allegedly, it abandoned the insights of previous feminist generations and gave up on important issues such as equal pay and political participation, which had informed decades of feminism (Bulbeck, 2006; Coleman, 2009; Maddison, 2002; Rosas & Wilson, 2003). Consequently, there is some anxiety among the Second Wave generation that few young women are willing to defend the achievements of the women’s liberation movement (Rosas & Wilson, 2003).

²⁷ See Chapter 6 for a discussion of craftivism.

These critiques by older feminists have influenced the self-conceptions of the younger generation (Maddison, 2002). To prove the older generation wrong, Third Wavers have emphasised that they exist in large numbers (Gillis & Munford, 2004; VanNewkirk, 2006). However, they have also highlighted their differences with the Second Wave and claim a feminist identity that is distinctively their own (Bail, 1996; Kinser, 2004; Maddison, 2002, 2013b). The title of Henry's (2004) book *Not My Mother's Sister*, which engages with the feminist generational conflict, illustrated this notion well.

The literature points to several reasons why Third Wavers want to distinguish themselves from the previous generation: They criticise Second Wave feminism for being old-fashioned and too monolithic; for not addressing intersecting forms of oppression adequately; and, sometimes, for being racist. Moreover, the Second Wave is often blamed for being jealous of the younger generation's freedoms (Bulbeck, 2006; Maddison, 2013b; Purvis, 2004; Staggenborg & Taylor, 2005).

Some scholars have argued that most of these accusations on both sides are fuelled and inflated by the mainstream media which uses caricature-like perspectives of both waves — 'straw-feminisms' — to artificially create rivalry between them (Davidson, 2005; Maddison, 2002; Purvis, 2004). Consequently, it has been suggested that feminist discourse needs to abandon generational categories altogether, in order to draw more attention to the differences based on content rather than age (D'Arcens as cited in Maddison, 2002; Purvis, 2004). However, generational disputes between feminists are not new. Grey and Sawyer (2008), for example, noted that Second Wavers also disassociated themselves from the comparatively polite methods of their mother's generation of protesters. It is not unusual that changing social and political contexts cause new generations to form different approaches to feminism (Cullen, 2001; Grey & Sawyer, 2008). Indeed, Maddison (2013b) suggested that this is a sign of a healthy women's movement, not a cause for concern.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have explained why I chose Sawyer's (2010) conceptualisation of women's movements and the political opportunity structure approach as the theoretical framework for learning whether contemporary feminist activities in New Zealand constitute a 'women's movement'. These choices were influenced by the literature stating that women's movements are challenged by neoliberal environments. Both concepts equip me to explain feminist activity as being shaped by external factors. In addition to these choices, this chapter explored Third Wave

feminism, the ideology that arguably underpins contemporary women's movements, in particular at the micro-level of individual feminist activities.

The literature characterised Third Wave feminism as being challenged by contradictions (Bailey, 1997; Gray & Boddy, 2010). As an ideology that encourages women to engage in individualised forms of feminist activities, it has to position itself between two opposing schools of thought. On the one hand, (some) Second Wave feminists accuse Third Wave feminism of not being feminist enough, and, on the other hand, postfeminism claims feminism is redundant altogether (Kinser, 2004; Rosas & Wilson, 2003). State feminism is in a similar situation. Grassroots feminism accuses it of being co-opted by 'the system', but at the same time it needs to keep women's issues on the agenda of a government that views women's issues to be at odds with its neoliberal agenda. Women's organisations are located in between these two scenarios, being shaped by feminist understandings of individual members but also in close relationship with the state through partnerships and contracts.

These contradictions highlight that neoliberalism has significantly impacted on the political opportunities of feminism. The following chapter explains the methodology and methods of this study, which is then followed by the presentation of empirical data to explain, exemplify and analyse these difficulties of contemporary feminism, not only as an ideology but as practices at the individual, organisational and state levels.

Chapter 4

Methods and Methodology

Introduction

In this chapter I explain how I collected the empirical data on which I base the arguments presented in this thesis. This involves a twofold discussion. I start with elaborating on feminist methodology, in particular standpoint theory, which I have chosen as my epistemological approach. In discussing why this is suitable for my project, I also highlight that I do not agree with all of its aspects. A feminist methodology usually involves a critical feminist perspective, which shapes the overall aims of feminist research. In this context, I explain where I see value in my study for a wider feminist community. I further reflect on how my personal characteristics as a researcher possibly impact upon my project.

The second major part of this chapter explains my research methods, namely qualitative interviews with feminist women and content analyses of women's organisations' websites and government documents. In each case, I discuss the processes of sampling and data analysis. Since the qualitative interviews are my main data source, this discussion is the most detailed. Ethical issues that were relevant for the empirical work of this study are discussed in the third section of this chapter.

Feminist epistemology

Harding (2004c, p.29) argued that 'the women's movement needed knowledge that was for women' and that such knowledge was generated through the adoption of a feminist methodology. More specifically, she referred to standpoint theory as the preferred epistemological framework. It is this theory that I have adopted for my project.

Although feminist methodology is often associated with qualitative research methods (see R. Cohen, Hughes, & Lampard, 2009), it is not actually related to the choice of a specific set of methods. Rather, feminist methodology is 'a commitment to using a whole constellation of methods reflectively and critically, with the end aim being the production of data that serve feminist aims of social justice' (Ackerly & True, 2010b, p.6). Consequently, a feminist methodology affects all stages of the research process by underpinning theory, research design,

ethics, choice of methods and their application, as well as data analysis and how and where results are presented.

While there are various approaches to feminist methodology, I chose standpoint theory to guide my research. This theory emerged in the 1970s and 1980s as a critical feminist theory that considered social power dynamics to be a crucial element in the production of knowledge (see Harding, 2004d). This epistemology and the concept of ‘situated knowledge’ (Haraway, 1988) were introduced to the literature by feminist scholars who argued that traditional theories of knowledge systematically excluded women from being agents of knowledge or ‘knowers’. Standpoint theorists criticised the production of knowledge within such traditional epistemologies as taking on an entirely male perspective, with the knowledge being produced giving answers to only male questions that are not necessarily relevant to female realities (Longino, 1987). Moreover, such theories do not make it obvious that they come from a male perspective but claim to perform what Haraway (1988, p.581) called the ‘God trick’: objectively seeing everything from nowhere, representing disembodied scientists with no particular perspective or interest. Standpoint theory, however, argues that this ‘trick’ is not possible because the production of knowledge is *always* socially situated: ‘It is a delusion — and a historically identifiable one — to think that human thought could completely erase the fingerprints that reveal its production process’ (Harding, 2004b, p.128).

Importantly, a standpoint is different to an individual perspective or a viewpoint. The social situatedness of knowledge does not refer to personal experiences and perspectives of those who produce it, but to the situatedness of social groups (e.g. women). Their social, cultural and historical position defines the standpoint from which groups experience and view social relations. These group-specific standpoints allow different levels of critical insight into how society is structured and thus define the distinctive kinds of knowledge specific social groups are able to produce in this way (Harding, 2004a). Thus, ‘[s]tandpoint theories map how a social and political disadvantage can be turned into an epistemological, scientific, and political advantage’ (Harding, 2004a, p.8). A feminist methodology that incorporates standpoint theory consequently argues that knowledge produced from the standpoint of women is preferable over knowledge produced from any other standpoint (Harding, 2004c).

This is a bold claim that does not come without controversies (e.g. see the discussion between Hekman, Hartsock, Hill Collins and Smith in Harding, 2004d). While I do not agree with all of its implications, as I explain in the following, I see more value for my project in standpoint theory than in other approaches to feminist methodology. For example, a postmodern feminist approach, which focuses on differences among women (see Alcoff, 1997), might seem

appropriate to capture the diverse and individual voices of my participants²⁸. However, I decided to use standpoint theory because it relates the production of knowledge to *political struggle* and the *experiences of women* as a social group, which seems particularly helpful to my research interest in a women's movement being a manifestation of women's political struggles (e.g. Harding, 1987, 1991; Hartsock, 2004; D. E. Smith, 1992).

The significance of gender

Controversially, standpoint theorists argue that knowledge produced from the standpoint of women is more privileged than other knowledge. Harding (2004b, 2004c) makes a point of distinguishing standpoint theory from 'perspectivalism' and relativism. If there is no way of evaluating differently situated knowledge claims against each other (e.g. claims of the oppressing against claims of the oppressed class), then knowledge is relative and all claims are equally valid. However, standpoint theory argues that the women's standpoint is not just one among others, it is considered to be more valuable than others.

This argument is drawn from a Marxist epistemology stating that knowledge production is controlled by the ruling class and therefore reflects the interests and values of that class (Jaggar, 2004). Because the ruling class is interested in concealing its means of domination, its interpretation of reality will make sure that 'the suffering of the subordinate class will be ignored, redescribed as enjoyment or justified as freely chosen, deserved, or inevitable' (Jaggar, 2004, p.56). Privilege ensures that members of the ruling class are not likely to perceive their daily lives as contradicting such interpretations and will therefore contribute (consciously or not) to reproducing this perspective. The oppressed class, however, views reality from the bottom up from where it can see the negative impact of stratification. Moreover, the standpoint of the oppressed represents the interest of the population as a whole and not just that of a small and privileged section because it has, unlike the ruling class, an interest in changing the oppressive system. Therefore, this standpoint is not only more critical but also more advantageous than the standpoint of the ruling class (Harding, 1995).

From a feminist perspective, the standpoint of women equals that of the oppressed. Because women have an interest in exploring questions that concern their lives, challenge patriarchal orders and scrutinise assumptions of gender roles, their social situatedness advantages them in their ability to understand how the social order of patriarchy works (Harding, 1997). However, being a female researcher does not guarantee the production of more valuable

²⁸ As I will explain later, it is central to my research that the group of participants covers a broad range of ages, ethnicities and sexual identities.

knowledge. Neither does being not-female invariably inhibit a privileged standpoint (see Harding, 2004b). Standpoint theorists (e.g. Harding, 2004a) have repeatedly emphasised that a standpoint is an achievement rather than a given fact. Hartsock (2004) and Harding (2004a), for example, explained that since the ruling class controls not only the production of goods but that of ideals as well, adopting the standpoint of the oppressed requires political struggle. It is a ‘moment of critical insight’ (Harding, 2004a, p.8) that lets scholars see through the dominant ideologies that distinguish between what is regarded as normal or, in the feminist case, accepted as masculine normativity. Thus, Hartsock (2004, p.245) understood this privilege to be ‘ethical and political rather than purely “epistemological”’.

I agree that the standpoint of women is more valuable for feminist research which focusses on women’s positions within society than a standpoint of other genders. However, I am hesitant to agree that the standpoint of women is more valuable for *all* cases of knowledge production. I have this reservation for two main reasons. First, I share the concern of Hammersley (1992) when he questioned whether female emancipation is the sole goal of all research and argued that, in many cases, other variables might be at least as important as gender. While I do not follow his further argumentation regarding an adequate consideration of differences — an argument that I address later in this chapter — I agree that women are by no means the only oppressed group capable of political struggle. Although I appreciate Harding’s (2004b, p.135) discussion of the inter-relatedness of feminist movements with other social justice movements, I am also not convinced about the generally superior position of the women’s standpoint. My second concern is that the literature on standpoint theory seems to contrast a standpoint of women against a dominant male standpoint. It addresses gender as a dual system, whereas my understanding of gender is more fluid. I cannot generally rank the standpoint of women over that of men, because such a proceeding would leave me with the question of how to rank ‘in-between’ gender identities. But since my project is not only inherently feminist but also deliberately investigates the perspective of women (e.g. by restricting the group of interview participants to women), these concerns do not affect my study.

How important is the individual?

Standpoint theorists have continuously defended their position against two seemingly opposite arguments. On the one hand, standpoint theory has been accused of essentialism. Given the insights of intersectionality theory, how is it possible to talk about *a* standpoint of women (e.g. Hammersley, 1992; Hekman, 1997)? On the other hand, if the production of knowledge is so dependent on social situatedness, what becomes of academia’s ‘Holy Grail of objectivity’ (S. G.

Howard, 2003, p.85)? Accordingly, standpoint theory seems to somehow focus insufficiently on the individual while at the same time focusing too much on the individual. My thesis is not the space to iterate this entire debate (a good summary has been provided by Harding, 2004d). But since my project is very much located in this field of conflict (do women with intersectional identities constitute a women's movement?), I will address these discussions to the degree I see as important to my study.

With regards to the role of objectivity in standpoint theory, Harding (2004b, p.127) asks: How can you 'have it both ways' and have valid knowledge that is socially situated? Ironically, there are different understandings and definitions of what 'objective' means in feminist methodology; a summary can be found in Eichler (1997). Differences in these definitions go hand in hand with differences in the meaning that is attributed to objectivity. Some authors have claimed that feminist scholarship cannot be objective at all, others have stated that objectivity is not desirable (Eichler, 1997).

In this context, Harding (1995) developed the concept of 'strong objectivity'. She dismissed the idea that objectivity requires the elimination of all social values and interests from the research process. Similar to the way standpoint theory views some standpoints as more valuable than others, Harding (2004b, p.137) claimed that not all social values and interests have the same negative effects on research results because 'democracy-advancing values have systematically generated less partial and distorted beliefs than others'.

Again, I do not fully subscribe to this approach, mainly because the term 'democracy-enhancing' leaves room for interpretation. I sympathise more with Haraway's (1988, p.581) definition: 'Feminist objectivity means quite simply situated knowledges'. She went on to explain that it is the limited location, and not the desire to split the subject from the object, that makes feminist scholarship objective. Since all knowledge is always socially situated, actively recognising and reflecting on this situatedness means taking responsibility and being accountable. It is not possible to practice unmarked objectivity, therefore admitting situatedness and partiality enhances the production of rational knowledge. Haraway (1988) agreed with Harding (1995) that the preferred standpoint has to be the one of the 'subjugated' (or oppressed) because their standpoint is most likely to be critical. I support this argument probably for most sociological studies, but I am hesitant to apply it generically to all research. However, I certainly see its relevance for my project.

The question of essentialism is a different one. It has been argued (e.g. Hekman, 1997) that there is no one standpoint of women because they constitute a diverse social group which includes many individual standpoints, depending, for example, on class, race, ethnicity and age.

In this context it is important to keep in mind that there is a difference between the individual and the group as units of analysis. Again, a standpoint refers to a group's location within social power relations and groups are not understood as crowds of individuals with unique standpoints (Hill Collins, 2004). This perspective does not suggest that all individuals within a group share the same experiences, but rather that they are exposed to certain social power dynamics as a group. Individual experiences are not denied by standpoint theory, but they are simply not its focus.

Within a research project such as mine, where differences among women and their individualised approaches to feminism (see Chapter 3) play an important role, this approach might appear confusing. Therefore, I want to emphasise that I use standpoint theory as an epistemological approach, not as an analytical one: I differentiate between my role as researcher and the content of my analysis. Regarding the former, standpoint theory became important when I chose a research topic focused on the women's movement with the aim of producing knowledge relevant to women, when I decided to interview only women in order to understand their standpoint (see later in this chapter), when I acknowledged my social situatedness as impacting on my research (see later in this chapter) to document 'strong objectivity', and when I deliberately designed this project to support the political voice of women in New Zealand. For my analysis, however, I recognise the importance of differences among women for their impact on the women's movement. I do not see these two levels of my project as conflicting since together they enable me to acknowledge both the relevance of women's social situatedness and the individual voices of my participants.

Critical feminist perspective

A critical feminist perspective is an inherent part of a feminist methodology, implying that feminist research not only aims to explain gender injustices but to change them (e.g. Ackerly & True, 2010b; DeVault, 1996; Ferree, 2009). The practical application of this aim can take many forms including the development of theory and the introduction of new topics to the discipline, raising awareness for certain issues, or producing data that will support political action or policy decisions (DeVault, 1996). Often such approaches draw on practices of action research (e.g. Noffke & Somekh, 2005). Consequently, critical feminist perspectives have been criticised because they contradict the traditional ambition of research to be politically neutral (see V. Taylor, 1998). However, many feminist academics counter this argument by referring to the male bias within academia that has historically been understood as neutral but, in fact, never was (e.g. Acker, Barry, & Esseveld, 1996).

It was important to me to design a research project that was useful for the advancement of feminism in New Zealand, if only on a small scale. To be able to provide an analysis that is of interest to the participating women, I asked them what they expected of feminist academic research. There was strong agreement that they wanted research to have practical implications and to be accessible for those outside academia. I see both demands as related to each other. The most practical way findings can be useful is to share them with activists and organisations. This is because the findings reflect on the strengths and weaknesses of feminist activity in New Zealand. To make results accessible, I will send my findings to all participants who showed interest (by stating so on the consent form; see Appendix). I have already informed my participants about an article summarising early findings of my research (Schuster, 2013) by email. Furthermore, I aim to publish findings in a non-academic medium that is accessible to a broader audience.

Impact by the researcher

In employing a feminist methodology, it is important to reflect critically on how my personal experiences and social positioning impacted my project. Authors such as Ackerly and True (2010b) and Hesse-Biber and Yaiser (2004) have recommended such a practice for feminist researchers and the literature on feminist methodology argues that hierarchies between the researcher and the researched, the subject and the object, the academic and the activist need to be removed as much as possible (Eichler, 1997; Hartsock, 1987; V. Taylor, 1998). Hammersley (1992) offered ethical, methodological and practical reasons for this rejection of hierarchies. First, an ethical argument claims that relationships between women have to be horizontal because feminist scholarship seeks to work against social inequalities. A methodological claim is that only non-hierarchical and therefore less intimidating relationships will create environments in which participants share genuine information. Finally, a practical argument recognises that research on social change will benefit from a closer relationship between academia and activism.

I perceived the relationship I had with my participants as relatively equal. Many of the women interviewed were tertiary-educated or used academic research in their work and a research setting did not seem to be intimidating to them. I experienced an overall friendly and open atmosphere during the interviews, which was probably a result of the shared interest between my research participants and myself in the current state of New Zealand's women's movement. Most of the women appeared to be enthusiastic to participate and to share their experiences, but a few seemed sceptical during the interview. However, I do not believe that such

scepticism made them feel uncomfortable or intimidated, but rather cautious, while they remained in control of deciding what kind of information they wanted to share with me.

Since the median age of my participants was 31, my own age at the time of the interviews (30) enabled me to establish an easy rapport with many participants. However, when answering questions around generational debates within the women's movement, most of the participants who were older than me tended to explain any concerns they had about younger women in a careful tone, probably assuming that I would side with the 'young' perspective. Possibly for the same reason, participants who were of a similar age to me talked more openly and to some extent less politely about any difficulties they had with the views of the older generation.

Being Austrian, English is my second language and my accent easily gives my 'foreignness' away. This impacted on the interviews significantly. Many of my participants answered interview questions by explaining the specifics of the New Zealand context, including historical events (relating to New Zealand's women's movement), cultural customs (e.g. the role of women on a marae²⁹) or institutional facts (e.g. acronyms of organisations or names of politicians). Even though not all of this information was unfamiliar to me, I gained much from their explanations because they often revealed their personal opinions and values when giving this 'additional' information. Their expectation that I would lack knowledge about New Zealand also enabled me to receive detailed answers to very basic questions. For example, many of my participants expressed negative views about the current National Government and they often made an effort to explain the political circumstances they particularly disliked — which I assume they would not have done if I had a 'kiwi' accent.

My Austrian, and thus, Western socialisation impacted on this study in countless ways. I acknowledge that my approaches to feminism, women's movements and other central concepts within my study, as well as my approach to *research* itself, all reflect a Western perspective. As I will explain later in this chapter, my Western perspective certainly influenced my ability to recruit participants. According to standpoint theory, it is not possible to shake off a culturally biased perspective. Therefore, the best I can do is to reflect on it.

Identifying as a heterosexual certainly puts me in a privileged position in a heteronormative society, but I cannot measure how this privilege impacted upon my project. Generally, my participants seemed to be comfortable talking about their sexual identities, despite the fact that I did not ask about this topic. However, if I identified differently I might have given sexual identity greater priority in my project.

²⁹ A marae is the centre of a Māori community, offering a space for meetings, celebrations and discussion.

Methods

While qualitative research methods are not inherently ‘more feminist’ than quantitative ones, a qualitative approach was most promising to generate appropriate answers to my research questions. It enabled me to investigate the opinions and views of my participants and helped me document the diversity of women’s experiences within feminism. While a content analysis of documents and websites has quantitative elements (e.g. counting the frequency of certain key words), I applied a dominantly qualitative perspective. Overall, a quantitative approach would not have allowed a sufficiently in-depth analysis of the complexity of women’s identities and activities.

I chose two methods to gather empirical data from three sources: my main data is based on qualitative interviews; while additional data has been collected by applying content analyses of websites and documents of governmental bodies. I explain each of these methods in the following.

Qualitative interviews

Problem-centred interviews

As my main method of collecting empirical data I adopted a slightly altered version of qualitative ‘problem-centred’ interviews, a concept developed by Witzel (1985, 2000) that has mainly been employed in German-speaking research (Kurz, Stockhammer, Fuchs, & Meinhard, 2007). This method aims to ‘gather objective evidence on human behavior as well as on subjective perceptions and ways of processing social reality’ (Witzel, 2000, p.2). Given standpoint theorists advise adopting a sceptical perspective towards ‘objectivity’, I neglected the first named aim of this method, but saw much value in the second. In problem-centred interviews, participants are invited to narrate their views but, in contrast to narrative interviews, researchers guide the interviews back to the ‘problem’ that is the focus of the research (Kurz et al., 2007) and include fact-related questions (Flick, 2007). This approach draws on grounded theory (e.g. Glaser & Strauss, 1967) in its understanding that data can be collected before the operationalisation of concepts has been finalised. However, it assumes that the researchers have previous knowledge that should be used in the data collection process. Such knowledge informs ideas for questions and dialogue with the interview participants. The researchers modify their previous theoretical assumptions during the course of the interviews based on the information they receive from their participants. Thus, deduction (the use of theoretical concepts deriving from previous knowledge) and induction (the input of empirical data) occur at the same time.

While other forms of semi-structured qualitative interviews require interviewers not to express opinions and values themselves, within problem-centred interviews there is room for the participants to return questions to the interviewer. This occurred in my interviews when, for example, participants asked me what I thought about SlutWalk³⁰ and whether *I* identified as feminist. However, the interviewer should never dominate the conversation (Mey & Mruck, 2010).

Three basic principles constitute the problem-centred interview (Witzel, 2000). First, a problem-centred orientation focuses on a social issue ('problem') that is relevant to the participants. In my case, this 'problem' was contemporary feminism and the women's movement in New Zealand. Second, object-orientation allows for methodical flexibility depending on the necessities of the research object. As I explain later, this principle made it possible for me to phrase questions differently across interviews depending on the respective participant. Third, process-orientation emphasises that information is developed through the process of the interview. For example, many of my participants articulated that they had never before thought about defining concepts such as feminism or the women's movement and they developed their ideas during the process of the interview.

Witzel (2000, p.3) intended problem-centred interviews to be a mixed-method approach in which the researchers prepare for interviews, for example, by holding focus groups. In my case, interview questions were informed partly by the literature and partly by email conversations I had with many of my participants prior to the interviews. These conversations provided information about the individual participants and included questions about their association with feminism and feminist activities.

Further, Witzel (2000) suggested four instrumental components of the interview process. First, he recommended a short questionnaire to collect data on social characteristics. My version included eight questions about the participant's demographics (see Appendix). Second, he argued that the main interview should be structured by a guideline in order to support the interviewer's memory and to ensure comparability across interviews. I chose a semi-structured guideline, which allowed for flexibility within a diverse group of participants. Witzel also recommended to audio-record the interviews, which I did using an mp3-recorder. Writing postscripts directly after each respective interview was Witzel's fourth recommendation, which I followed by taking brief notes on unusual circumstances of interviews, spontaneous ideas about interpretations and general thoughts regarding the interviews.

³⁰ 'SlutWalk' is the name of an international series of feminist protest marches that started in 2011. See Chapters 6 and 7 for details.

Witzel (2000) argued that the structure of a problem-centred interview should ideally take the following form:

1. Introduction: open and general questions.
2. General exploration: asking about the participant's opinions and views of the 'problem'.
3. Specific exploration: follow-up questions with reference to previous answers.
4. Ad-hoc questions: covering topics of the guideline that have not been mentioned so far.

However, these four 'phases' are only a description of an ideal sequence. In practice, there were no two interviews that followed exactly the same order of questions. Typically, the first question of the interview was either 'Do you call yourself a feminist?' or 'What does feminism mean to you?' but this was dependent on how much I already knew about the respective participant prior to the interview (e.g. when I knew that she did not identify as feminist then I would ask 'What is feminism?'). Further questions explored details about participants' understanding of feminism, feminist identities, the impact of feminism in their daily lives and the importance of ethnicity, sexuality and generational differences in their understandings of feminism. I also asked my participants about their herstories³¹ of becoming involved with/interested in feminist issues.

This first set of questions was followed by an exploration of the participant's involvement with feminist activities, activism or work on women's issues. Again, the specific questions depended on the respective person and the activities they were involved in. Overall, I explored what kind of work the women engaged with and why, as well as what aspects of it they found rewarding and frustrating. If they were part of a group or organisation with relevance to the research topic I asked questions about the work/activities of this organisation, its networks and funding situation. Other questions related to the participants' views on whether New Zealand currently had a women's movement. Furthermore, I was interested in the participants' opinions on the government's care of women's issues, as well as the role of academia for feminism.

The third interview phase of 'specific exploration' entirely depended on the previous answers of the participants and included clarifications and questions for understanding on issues that have been mentioned so far. Despite an overall intent to follow the order of questions suggested by Witzel, interviews were shaped by the individual participant's train of thought. Consequently, there were usually a few topics left at the end that had not been included in the 'natural' flow of the interview. By checking the interview guideline I made sure that I did not

³¹ In interview #23, my participant started a conversation about her preference of the term 'herstory' as opposed to 'history'. I kept using the term from then on.

miss a question. Usually³² I ended the interview by asking ‘Is there anything that you would like to add? Something that is important to you being a feminist/doing the work you do that I have not mentioned so far?’ This not only made sure I covered every topic important to my research, but it was also a practical attempt to establish a horizontal relationship with my participants. It offered them a chance to influence the content of the interview, if they had not already done so prior to this question.

The first two interviews were intended to be pre-test-interviews, although they worked well enough to be included in the analysis. After those two interviews, I changed the list of questions slightly, re-phrased some of them and added new ones. For a list of interview questions see Appendix.

Sampling

The literature suggests that the sample size for qualitative interviews should be based on saturation (e.g. G. Guest, Bunce, & Johnson, 2006). Such an approach is impractical when the number of interviews has to be determined before the start of the field work in order to obtain approval by the Human Participants Ethics Committee. Mason (2010) specifically addressed this issue. While he argued in favour of achieving saturation, he discussed its practical unfeasibility in the context of PhD projects. He analysed sample sizes of PhD projects and showed that approximately 30 interviews was common for projects comparable to mine. Since my research interest required a particularly diverse group of participants, I raised this number to 40. This allowed me to include women of a broad range of ages, ethnicities, and different organisational affiliations. I conducted 40 interviews between September and December 2011 and one in April 2012. One participant withdrew her participation after her interview; therefore my analysis encompassed 40 interviews which were on average one hour in length.

I was interested in interviewing people who self-identified as women³³, who were 18 years of age or older and associated themselves with at least one of the following three criteria:

1. They called themselves ‘feminist’.
2. They engaged in political activities focused on or related to women’s issues of any kind.
3. They worked for an organisation/group/institution that is involved in work concerned with women’s issues (e.g. an NGO, non-profit agency, activist group, governmental institution).

³² In two cases I ran out of time and did not ask this question (once because the participant had to leave and once because the interview took longer than expected and I had another interview scheduled).

³³ My understanding of gender is not limited to a binary system of men and women. Thus, I did not only exclude men but any group of people who do not identify as women. My sample criterion was explicitly ‘self-identified women’.

The age restriction was included for reasons of political maturity, meaning I did not need to obtain consent from parents or legal guardians. The decision to focus on participants who identified as women was based on several considerations which I want to discuss in more detail.

My main research question focuses on the contemporary *women's* movement in New Zealand. The movement got its name because it was started by women trying to liberate and empower women. The movement has changed over time, and men are not excluded from many feminist communities and perceptions of fluid gender identities have been increasingly adopted among feminists. Still, following standpoint theory, I am interested in the opinion and views of *women* about this movement because their political interests are arguably at the heart of a women's movement. Moreover, I was particularly interested in hearing women's perspectives and giving them voice through my analysis of their views and experiences. While the perspectives of men would without doubt have offered additional interesting insights, they were not the focus of this project. However, this does not mean that only women can be part of such a women's movement. Neither do I assume that only women can be feminists or do valuable work in the field of women's empowerment. The engagement of men in White Ribbon Day³⁴ is just one example illustrating this point. However, the involvement of men in women's movements has historically been a difficult issue. Therefore, including participants who identified as men in the sample would have required including this discussion in my analysis. Addressing this issue with the attention and detail that it deserves would go beyond the scope of this thesis.

The 40 interviews took place in Auckland (27) and Wellington (13). Because of the size of those two cities it can be assumed that most activists and political groups/organisations are based (or at least have a branch) in either of those places. Moreover, Wellington (New Zealand's capital city) was chosen because it hosts many government related institutions, whereas Auckland's ethnically diverse population was beneficial to my research intent. I was based in Auckland, therefore it was most practicable to conduct interviews there. I spent one week in Wellington to interview women living there. While it would have been desirable to conduct interviews in other places in New Zealand (including rural areas and the South Island), the time frame and financial possibilities of a PhD thesis did not allow for this. I am aware that the geographic limitation biased my results towards urban environments. However, some of the women interviewed had lived a reasonable amount of years outside cities and could share some experiences about feminism in rural areas.

³⁴ White Ribbon Day, 25 November, is the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women.

I arranged the interviews at locations that were convenient for my participants. Some (13) interviews took place at the participants' homes, another 13 on university premises, ten at cafés and four at the participants' work places.

Interviewing a diverse group

Given the women's different backgrounds (see the description of the sample later in this chapter), I modified certain components of the interview according to the respective interview participant. For instance, questions that made sense to an anarcho-feminist activist in her early twenties did not necessarily work for a legal executive in her sixties. Consequently, I adapted the phrasing of the questions when needed. Since there is a lot to be said for using the same wording for each participant to improve comparability across interviews I kept such alterations to a minimum. Nevertheless, they were important in many cases. My question about the participants' views on the involvement of men in feminism illustrates this issue: The word 'men' may be unambiguous in many social communities, but not necessarily in some feminist and queer circles. There, differences between 'cis-men'³⁵ and 'trans-men' are crucial: some of my participants differentiated their opinions about the involvement of those groups of men within feminism. Using the word 'men' would have been unclear to them or would potentially lead them to assume that I have a limited understanding of the concept of gender — which in turn might have decreased their trust in my research. At the same time, using the word 'cis-men' for all interviews would have been confusing for those of my participants who did not know about this concept.

Changing the content of the questions was necessary for other reasons. Some participants identified as feminists, others did not. As explained earlier, a lot of the questions simply did not make sense to ask people who did not identify as feminist. Similarly, the form of feminist activism or kind of work they engaged in determined the set of question about those activities. For example, I could not ask street activists about the ways they got funding from the government. Also, I was hesitant to ask employees of the Ministry of Women's Affairs about how satisfied they were with the government's treatment of women's issues, because such a question might put them in the potentially uncomfortable position of having to criticise their employer and/or work.

³⁵ Some participants used the term 'cis-man' to describe a person with a male identity in a biological male body as opposed to a person with male identity in a biological non-male body. Both groups are referred to as 'men' and thus, only discussing the role of 'men' in feminism is insufficient because cis-men usually hold a high level of social privilege, whereas trans-men, for example, do not.

Recruiting participants

My initial recruiting plan involved distributing a Call for Participants (CfP) via several different means, including the email newsletter of the Women's Studies Association New Zealand, my personal networks in political activist circles and relevant organisations/groups. I also planned to include snowball recruitment, which means asking participants to recommend other potential interviewees (Marshall, 1996). However, after I sent the CfP via email to a woman who used to work at a women's health organisation, as well as to a university colleague who was engaged in feminist research and who offered to forward it to her personal networks, those contacts kept forwarding my CfP without my inducement. In the following weeks I received over 70 emails from interested people all over New Zealand who wanted to participate. I learned that my CfP had been distributed via various email networks, Facebook, Twitter and blogs.

I created a Microsoft Excel database of everyone who contacted me, including information about how they fitted into my sampling criteria, their age range and ethnic groups, organisational affiliations and the city/town they lived in. I emailed them to ask for more information if necessary. After excluding some responses from people who either did not identify as women or were not living in Auckland or Wellington, I grouped the remaining 66 women in three categories: those who I was interested in interviewing, those who I might have been interested in interviewing but about whom I needed more information, and those who I wanted to interview if those first contacted withdrew their interest. I emailed all of them, asking either for an interview, additional information or patience.

Early in the recruitment process it became clear that a large percentage of interested women were either Pākehā or had European backgrounds³⁶. A satisfactory number of Asian³⁷ women had responded but not many Māori or Pacific women. The distributions of ages, levels of organisational affiliations and engagements with feminist activism were relatively even across all ethnic groups, therefore I prioritised ethnicity as a sampling criteria and tried to make interview appointments with as many non-Pākehā/non-European women as possible. By the end of 2011, I had conducted 39 interviews, including 7 Asian, 5 Māori and no Pacific women. Given that Pākehā/European people constitute the majority of New Zealand's population it seems appropriate to reflect their higher proportion in my sample to some extent. However, this was not

³⁶ By referring to Pākehā and European women separately, I distinguish between New Zealanders of European descent (Pākehā) and more recent immigrants of European background/descent who came from Australia, Europe and North America to New Zealand. I find this differentiation useful because some participants who belonged to the latter group did not identify as 'Pākehā'. However, the combination of both categories ('Pākehā/European') can be understood as the New Zealand code for 'white people'.

³⁷ I am aware that all ethnic categories, especially 'Asian', are broad and simplistic terms. I have used them here for reasons of readability. For more details refer to Table 4.1.

a probability sample and I was not satisfied with its distribution. Therefore, after the Christmas break, I made a second attempt to recruit and focussed exclusively on Māori and Pacific woman. This attempt included contacting individual women directly, asking university staff members with networks in Pacific communities for help, and emailing specific organisations (e.g. women's health organisations or women's refuges with a focus on Pacific or Māori women). By the end of April 2012, I had one additional interview with a Pacific woman. Unfortunately, the restriction of time made me decide to end recruitment, although I was aware of the remaining ethnicity bias within my sample.

I cannot be entirely sure why women from some ethnic groups were more interested than others, but I can offer some reflection on this issue: I am a white European woman myself, therefore my own cultural background made it much easier for me to get in contact with Pākehā and European women. However, my narrow understanding of New Zealand's cultural dynamics at the time of writing the CfP (at a very early stage of my research planning) was probably the main reason for my limited success in recruiting an ethnically diverse group of participants. The need to apply for 'ethics approval' within the first months of the project made this nonetheless necessary. Moreover, central concepts of my project (e.g. the women's movement, feminism) have different connotations and conceptualisations in different cultures. My way of framing the CfP was probably too focused on a Western understanding of such concepts. Retrospectively, being more aware of such differences I would rephrase my CfP (e.g. by focussing more on women's empowerment and their role in shaping communities rather than on feminism). Due to cultural reasons, researching the women's movement (for example in comparison to community or family related issues) might also be less urgent for Māori and Pacific women than it seems to be for Pākehā and European participants. Moreover, I am aware that staff members of women's refuges (whom I contacted in my second attempt at recruitment) are generally overworked and have limited time resources. Thus, I empathise if participating in a PhD project was not high on their list of priorities or if they simply were not interested in participating in a study by a European researcher (which they could easily tell by my name included in the CfP).

Due to the fact that the recruitment process was almost entirely based on various forms of online communication (email and different versions of social media), I must assume that my sample also does not include people who do not use such means of communication. However, given that email has become a very common form communication, such bias is not likely to be significant.

Final sample composition

My final sample was a non-probability snowball (network) sample, so the choice of participants was not randomised to achieve proportional representation of the broader New Zealand population, but rather used feminist networks to recommend suitable participants. Since I ensured I interviewed participants in all age and ethnic groups, however, the sample showed some characteristics of quota sampling (e.g. Adams, Khan, Raeside, & White, 2007). Table 4.1 presents the distribution of a first set of characteristics among the interviewed women. The median age of the 40 women was 31 at the time of the interview. The numbers in the column of ethnic groups add up to more than 40 because some of the women identified with two or more ethnic groups.

Table 4.1: Sample characteristics

Age	n	Ethnic group	n	Sexual identity^a	n
20-29	17	Pākehā ^b	28	Hetero	25
30-39	11	Asian ^c	8	Queer	7
40-49	3	Māori	5	Lesbian	5
50-59	6	European ^d	4	Bi-sexual	1
60-70	3	Samoa	1	Unknown	2

^a I did not ask about the women's sexual identity, but most of the participants referred to it during the interview.

^b New Zealander of European descent.

^c Includes Chinese, Filipino, Indonesian, Malay, Singaporean, Sri Lankan and Vietnamese.

^d Includes recent immigrants of European descent from Australia, Europe and North America.

To reflect their often complex life circumstances, the interview participants could name multiple occupations, as shown in Table 4.2. It was mainly students who made use of this option, naming forms of employment additional to their study.

Table 4.2: Participants' occupation (multiple answers possible)

Paid work	n	Other	n
Community worker ^a	15	Student	13
Private sector employees	6	Benefit recipient	2
Public sector employees	5	Full-time mother	2
Freelancer ^b	3	Retired	1

^a E.g. community educators, unionists

^b E.g. artists, sex worker

The women engaged in a number of ways with women's issues. Table 4.3 shows their involvement with feminist/women's groups, organisations and institutions. Multiple answers

were possible since, for example, one woman can be employed in a certain institution while being a member of another (or multiple) activist group(s).

Table 4.3: Participants' involvement with women's institutions, organisations and groups (multiple answers possible)

Form of engagement	n
Activist/grassroots collective (e.g. anarcha-feminist collective, activist/support group)	19
Service provider (e.g. Women's Refuge, Women's Centre)	9
Advocacy group (e.g. National Council of Women, Māori Women's Welfare League)	7
Non-political women's group (e.g. Church group, choir)	7
University club/politics (e.g. feminist club, women's rights office)	6
Government institution, political party (e.g. Ministry of Women's Affairs)	5

Table 4.4 illustrates the financial situation of the interviewed women. It displays a cross-tabulation of the participants' personal yearly income and their usual ability to financially make ends meet. Given that many participants (18) shared a household with children and/or a partner, the level of personal income alone does not explain how well a person was doing financially. While my questionnaire offered six income categories (from 'NZ\$20,000 or less' to 'NZ\$100,000 or more'), for reasons of simplification I have summarised them into three (low, middle and high) income groups.

Table 4.4: Participants' income group per ability to make ends meet

		Income group (n)			
		low	middle	high	total
Make ends meet	with some difficulties	13	5	0	18
	fairly easily	6	6	1	13
	easily	1	5	2	8
	unknown	1	-	-	1
	total	21	16	3	40

Educational level was not a sampling criteria and the group of participants was relatively homogenous in this regard. All of them were either university graduates (or held a comparable degree) or were enrolled in tertiary education at the time of the interview. This is not surprising since there is evidence to suggest that people engaging with feminism in Western countries tend to be highly educated (e.g. McCabe, 2005). Curtin and Devere (1993) certainly identified this connection between feminist identification and high levels of education for New Zealand women. However, the absence of lower educated women needs to be considered when interpreting interview data.

Analysing interviews

To transcribe the interviews, I used the free version of the software Express Scribe. My participant consent form asked whether the women wished to receive the transcript of their interview. If so, they had one month to edit it (e.g. delete statements they were not satisfied with) and return it to me. More than half (26) of the participants requested their transcript and nine of them returned an edited version. Most of their edits were minor; some added additional thoughts to the content of their interview answers.

Subsequently, I coded the transcripts by using both a traditional ‘paper-and-highlighter’ approach and the software NVivo 9. While I found the traditional style helpful to identify initial themes and generally internalise the content of the transcripts, NVivo was useful to organise the data and group themes across interviews.

Overall, my analysis of the interview data followed the standards of thematic analysis by Howitt (2010). This process is divided into six steps:

1. *Data familiarisation*: This step starts during the transcription of the interviews and is intensified in the first round of coding when recurring broad themes are noted.
2. *Initial coding generation*: In this first coding phase I used printed versions of the transcripts to manually identify themes and collect initial ideas for interpretation.
3. *Searching for themes based on the initial coding*: I ascribed broad themes to every part of each transcript and assigned labels (codes). I also noted further comments and ideas for the preceding analysis.
4. *Review of the themes*: Using NVivo, I identified sub-themes and different aspects within the broad themes coded earlier.
5. *Theme definition and labelling*: I assigned final labels to themes and sub-themes and structured them in a coherent and clear way. This also included identifying common statements and contrasting them with special or outlying statements within one theme.
6. *Report writing*: Findings based on the analysis of my interview data are reported in Chapters 5 to 8 of this thesis and in an academic journal article (Schuster, 2013). I have also presented selected findings at four national and international conferences in the field of Sociology and Political Science. Further publication of material is anticipated.

Content analysis of organisations’ websites

My second approach to collecting empirical data was an analysis of the content of women’s organisations’ websites. This was an important data source for my discussion of the meso-level of feminist activity in New Zealand. Although I asked interview participants about the

organisations they were involved with, I never addressed the women as official representatives of these organisations. Thus, their answers reflected their personal views only. The analysis of websites, however, enabled me to interpret how organisations position themselves within New Zealand's feminist communities.

There is reason to argue that such websites are designed to capture the 'identity' of organisations (Oliver, 2007). They are put online to show what an organisation stands for, what aims it pursues and what services it provides. Stein (2009) identified that social movement organisations, in particular, use their websites to provide information, coordinate activities, engage in fundraising and build networks. These aspects significantly overlap with information I required to answer my research questions.

Although websites vary regarding the quality and quantity of information they provide, overall, they have some advantages as data sources compared to leaflets or other printed information material. For instance, websites are not only easily accessible, they are also reasonably comparable between organisations (e.g. many websites provide similar categories such as 'about us' or 'what we stand for' sections).

Sample

To select websites for analysis, I used a list of New Zealand's women's groups and organisations provided by the website of the Ministry of Women's Affairs (MWA) as an initial database. This extensive list offered a wide range of groups, organisations and institutions that provide advocacy and various services for women. Diversity was not only a key element for selecting my interview participants but also for choosing organisations. Therefore, the approach of maximum variation sampling (Given, 2008) seemed to be most appropriate. This is a purposive sampling approach based on the search for cases that cover 'the spectrum of positions and perspectives in relation to the phenomenon one is studying, and would include [...] both extreme and typical cases plus any other positions that can be identified' (Given, 2008, p. 697). To cover all such positions I created a list of categories which relate to key variables of my research questions (Table 4.5). Additionally, I included 'area' as a way of addressing a rural organisation, which I only had limited access to through interview participants. The subsequent sampling process ensured I selected at least one organisation for each of these categories.

Table 4.5: Categories for maximum variation sampling (MVS)

Ethnicity	Māori	Pacific	'Migrant'	
Sexual identity	Queer/Lesbian			
Area	Rural			
'Wave'	'Second Wave'	'Third Wave'		
Type	Advocacy group	Service Provider	Grassroots group	Union

The categories in Table 4.5 are obviously missing majority groups, such as Pākehā or heterosexual. However, they are represented in the sample due to a second selection criterion: the thematic focus of the organisations. As stated earlier, I intended to analyse websites of organisations that focus on women’s issues (see Chapter 3 for a definition) and which were frequently discussed by my interview participants as relevant for feminism in New Zealand. I made sure that — in addition to the criteria shown in Table 4.5 — I included at least one organisation per issue listed in Table 4.6.

Table 4.6: Relevant issues

Issue	Issue
Abortion law	Perpetrators of violence
Academia	Poverty
Child Poverty	Prostitution
Domestic violence	Recreation
Employment	Support for women in their communities
Health	

Assigning organisations from the list of the Ministry of Women’s Affairs to the categories of Table 4.5 and Table 4.6 was based on information that the websites of the organisations offered, as well as on previous knowledge I had about the organisations. One problem that arose in this assigning process was the fact that some organisations did not have a website and, therefore, could not be included in the sample. However, no excluded organisation was a unique representative of a specific sampling category.

The Ministry of Women’s Affairs’ list had some limitations: the website providing this list had been last updated approximately five months before my sampling and there was a possibility that new organisations had been founded in the meantime. Also, I was aware that the selection of the MWA was based on criteria that reflected what kind of organisations the MWA, a government institution, viewed as relevant to women’s lives. Therefore, I needed to make sure that I included organisations which systematically had not been included by the MWA. Categories such as ‘third wave’ or ‘union’ were particularly underrepresented. I conducted an

online search for women’s organisations in New Zealand that specifically focused on the sampling categories that I needed to fill after using the MWA list.

Table 4.7 shows the final sample and the relevance of the selected organisations for the sampling criteria. I accessed website content between 22 September and 1 October 2012. A list of the websites can be found in the appendix.

Table 4.7: Final sample for the website analysis

Name of the organisation	MVS category	Relevant issue
Abortion Law Reform Association	Advocacy group	Abortion law
Central Region Eating Disorder Services	Service provider	Health
Child Poverty Action Group	Advocacy group	Child poverty
Kapiti Living Without Violence	Rural, service provider	Perpetrators of violence
Māori Women’s Welfare League (Opotiki)	Māori, rural, service provider	
National Advisory Council on Women in Employment	Advocacy group	Employment
National Council of Women	'First/Second Wave', advocacy group	All women’s issues
New Zealand Nurses Organisation	Union	Support for nurses
New Zealand Prostitute Collective	'Third Wave', grassroots	Prostitution
NZ Division of Women’s International Motorcycling Association		Recreation
Pacific Allied (Women’s) Council Inspires Faith in Ideals Concerning All	Pacific, advocacy group	Support for Pacific women
Rainbow Youth	Queer/Lesbian, service provider	Support for non-heterosexual youth
Rural Women in New Zealand	Rural, advocacy group, service provider	Support for women living in rural areas
Salvation Army	Service provider	Poverty
Shakti	'Migrant', service provider	Domestic violence
Shine	Advocacy group, service provider	Domestic violence
Webgrrls	'Third Wave', grassroots	Support for women in IT
Women’s Health Action Trust	Advocacy group, service provider	Health
Women’s Refuge	'Second Wave', service provider	Domestic violence
Women’s Studies Association		Academia

Analysis

A content analysis is ‘the intellectual process of categorizing qualitative textual data into clusters of similar entities, or conceptual categories, to identify consistent patterns and relationships between variables or themes’ (Given, 2008, p.120). The compatibility of feminist research with this analytical method has been shown by scholars such as Reinharz (1992) and Leavy (2007).

I developed 10 questions to structure my analysis and to identify patterns and themes relevant to my research questions. I searched the content of the websites with the aim of finding answers to these questions:

1. What general field is the organisation working in and how does that field relate to women's issues?
2. Who is addressed as the clientele of the organisation?
3. Who are the people running the organisation?
4. How is gender addressed? (Is the organisation for women only?)
5. How is ethnic diversity addressed? (How is biculturalism addressed? Are culture-specific programmes/services available?)
6. How are sexual identities addressed? (Are they mentioned at all? If so, how? Are specific programmes/services available?)
7. How is age addressed? (Are there specific programmes, groups, activities for specific age groups?)
8. How is the organisation funded?
9. Is the organisation part of any network?
10. Is feminism mentioned on the website? (If so, in what context?)

I collected information needed to answer these questions by copying relevant text sections from the websites into a Microsoft Excel database. This database allowed me to identify communalities and differences between organisations for each of the ten questions. Results of this analysis are presented in Chapter 7.

Content analysis of government documents

As a third data source, I analysed a number of documents produced by New Zealand government departments. By analysing these documents I aimed to collect information about the work of state feminism. According to Lovenduski (2008), documents recording the process of policy-making reflect whether and how feminist voices participate in decision making. Therefore, they are a more suitable information source for my project than documents presenting final policy because the latter does not often incorporate demands by women's movements directly.

Sample

I selected a total of seven documents for my analysis, all available from the Ministries' websites, which I accessed on 1 November 2013. These included annual reports by six government departments, including the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE), the

Ministry of Health (MoH), the Ministry of Social Development (MSD), the Ministry of Women's Affairs (MWA), the Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs (MPIA) and Te Puni Kōkiri (the Ministry of Māori Affairs; TPK). All reports related to the year ending 30 June 2013 and were the most recent reports available at the time of the analysis. Beneficially for my study, they covered the time period following the interviews, which enabled me to compare whether current political issues relevant for the interview participants were also discussed within these documents.

The rationale for selecting the reports of these specific six Ministries was to cover those institutions mainly responsible for addressing issues important for women's lives on a policy level: community support, violence prevention, health, paid work and poverty. Of course, *all* government Ministries address issues relevant for women to some extent; however, it was not necessary to include all their reports in this analysis to enable me to identify major trends in policy making for women. The underlying intention of annual reports as publications is to inform government and the public about the year's work of the respective Ministry. The reports show the progress of the respective Ministry's work in comparison to their targets and outcomes for that specific year and allow insight into where they place women's interests within their priorities. The Ministry of Women's Affairs' work, of course, focusses solely on issues relevant to women, but its report provides information on the priorities among such issues and its approach to instructing policy makers in other institutions and departments on the implementation of a gender analysis in their programmes. My main interest in analysing the five reports of the other departments was to examine how well the Ministry of Women's Affairs' advice was adopted and reflected in the respective departments' work.

While other types of documents, for instance the annual Statement of Intent by each department, offer similar information, they do not cover documentation about the Ministry's internal agenda, such as commitments to Equal Employment Opportunity³⁸, as annual reports do. Overall, annual reports are reasonably comparable across Ministries, not only because they cover the same time period, but also because they follow a similar structure.

The seventh document included in the content analysis was the Ministry of Women's Affairs Briefing to the Incoming Minister (2011). This document is the most recent of such briefing documents and was written to inform Jo Goodhew, as the newly appointed Minister of Women's Affairs, about the department's work after the 2011 general election. This document was included because, as Chapter 8 explains in detail, I consider the Ministry of Women's Affairs to be New Zealand's most important institution of state feminism and its work therefore required a more in-depth analysis than the other departments. Similar to the annual report by the Ministry

³⁸ EEO is a policy to ensure a fair hiring process in the public sector for all genders and ethnic groups.

of Women's Affairs, this document explains the work foci of the ministry but from a different angle: while the annual reports inform government (and the public) about the work and achievements of the Ministry of Women's Affairs, the briefing document mainly addresses the new Minister of Women's Affairs and suggests the direction the Ministry should take during the following legislation period. Thus, it offered greater detail regarding the Ministry's work priorities than the annual report because it covered issues that are not on the general agenda of the overall government. Moreover, because Ministries are primarily accountable to their Ministers regarding their work priorities (see Chapter 2), it is of interest to this study to include this report of the Ministry of Women's Affairs to its Minister.

Analysis

The analysis process for the content of the seven documents was similar to the content analysis of websites described earlier. I developed the following questions to guide the data collection.

1. Are women addressed directly and if so, in which context?³⁹
2. Are women addressed as a diverse group and if so, how?
3. What kinds of issues do the documents address that are relevant to women?
4. How important are those issues within their programme?
5. How apparent is gender mainstreaming within the content of the documents?

As with the content analysis of organisation's websites, I collected all relevant information to answer these questions in a Microsoft Excel database. This enabled me to structure and compare approaches to women's issues across departments. A discussion of the findings can be found in Chapter 8.

Ethical considerations

Since my study included interviews with adult participants, approval from the University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee was required and was received for a period of three years, expiring on 8 August 2014. In the following, I discuss a number of issues relevant to the ethics of my study design.

³⁹ Since the Ministry of Women's Affairs only addresses women as their target group, I excluded this question for the analysis of its report.

Confidentiality and anonymity

There are several reasons why it was important to protect the anonymity of my interview participants. Most importantly, many of them shared personal information with me, sometimes regarding their sexual orientation or experiences of violence and abuse. Also, some of the women talked about conflicts at their workplaces or disagreements they had with the objectives of organisations they belonged to. Making such information public could put them in uncomfortable positions. Moreover, many women talked about and sometimes criticised other feminist groups or women's organisations for various reasons. I have no interest in reinforcing ongoing conflicts within feminist circles by disclosing critics.

Therefore, I was cautious to protect the anonymity of my participants. All names of individuals appearing in this thesis or in other publications of my analyses are pseudonyms. I avoided revealing information about a participant if it could make them identifiable in any way, particularly in Chapters 7 and 8, which use many quotes from women talking about their employers. Some participants explicitly asked me not to quote certain statements from their transcripts.

However, the 'feminist scene' in New Zealand is small and makes it difficult to guarantee absolute anonymity. There is reason to assume that some of my participants know each other and that readers of this thesis who belong to the feminist community will be able to identify some of the participants. I explained the possibility of being identified on the participants' consent form and pointed it out before every interview. Most participants did not seem to be worried about this possibility.

Since Gillan and Pickerill (2012) have argued that ethical considerations for research on political activism should keep in mind that some participants might share information about illegal activities, I want to emphasise that this was not the case with my participants. Only one woman mentioned that her employment status was not legal. However, I do not regard this to be problematic as long as I protect her anonymity.

Further considerations

Obtaining informed consent is crucial for recruiting interview participants. Therefore, all participants received a participant information sheet (PIS) to offer information about their participation prior to the interview. Directly before the interview I explained the issues covered in this sheet to make sure they were understood. After this explanation, all participants signed a consent form, in which they agreed to take part in the project and to have their interview audio-recorded (see Appendix for PIS and consent form).

Also, the form informed the women about their right to withdraw their participation and to receive and edit their transcripts prior to the analysis. Withdrawal was possible at any time before or during the interview, as well as until one month after the interview. Only one participant made use of this right; she withdrew her participation about a week after the interview for personal reasons.

Personal involvement

An advantage I gained from ‘being foreign’ and relatively new to New Zealand⁴⁰ was my limited involvement in the local ‘feminist scene’, which is small enough that people tend to know each other, especially when they work in similar areas (which many of my participants did). As with any social circles, personal conflicts occur and people take sides. Because I was an outsider to this circle, my participants did not associate me with any inter-group conflicts. I did become part of the extended team organising the ‘Bust Rape Culture’ march⁴¹ in Auckland on 16 November 2013. This, however, happened long after the interviews were completed.

Conclusion

This chapter has provided a detailed and transparent discussion of how and why I adopted standpoint theory as a feminist methodology and used qualitative interviews and content analyses to collect my empirical data. In my explanation of standpoint theory I emphasised that I do not agree with all theoretical details of this feminist methodology but nevertheless I see much value in applying this approach to my project. It helped to shape the design of my research so that my findings are informed by and of interest to women in New Zealand. It is also part of my feminist methodology to apply a critical perspective on objectivity and on the personal impact I have as a researcher on the study. In reflecting on my personal characteristics, I have disclosed issues that affected the empirical work at several stages of the research process. As acknowledged by my feminist methodology, this impact cannot be avoided completely but only acknowledged and minimised.

The chapter also argued that my choice of data collection methods enabled me to base my study on different types of empirical data (interview data and content analysis data) from several sources. This is important because my research questions address different levels of a women’s movement, which need to be explored based on different types of information. Ethical

⁴⁰ At the time of submission I had lived in New Zealand for approximately four and a half years.

⁴¹ For an explanation of this specific protest march see Chapter 6.

considerations were also discussed in this chapter. In particular, interviewing requires sensitivity when participants share personal information. Therefore, I explained how I approached, for instance, issues of confidentiality and anonymity in my analysis of the empirical data that is presented in the following four chapters

Chapter 5

Exploring feminism

Introduction

Chapter 1 discussed feminism at a theoretical level and noted that feminism is the ideology that drives women's movements. Consequently, in order to understand what drives *New Zealand's* contemporary women's movement, it is necessary to explore New Zealand women's understandings of feminism. That is the aim of this chapter.

Within this context, differences among women, in particular between women of different ethnic backgrounds, are of significant importance. This is nothing new. For instance, Awatere (1984) highlighted discrepancies between Māori and Pākehā understandings of feminism 30 years ago, while Curtin and Devere (1993) discussed the plurality of feminisms among New Zealand women, and Lerner (1995) identified tensions in feminist theory and politics between ethnic groups. But as I have shown in Chapter 3, Third Wave feminism claims to put particular emphasis on recognising differences. Therefore, this chapter focusses on how women with different identities and backgrounds approach feminism in New Zealand today.

The chapter first discusses how the women initially became interested in feminism. These 'herstories' help to explain their underlying motivations and give insight as to why feminism is important to them personally. I then present these participants' views on feminist identities and relate these to explanations of what feminism means to the women. In doing so, I emphasise the importance of differences among women for their feminist identities and explore how the interview participants balance their feminist beliefs between inclusiveness and individualism. The chapter continues with a discussion of the relationship between feminists of different generations. Since women who associate with Third Wave feminism as well as women who associate with Second Wave feminism constitute New Zealand's contemporary feminist landscape, I am interested in exploring whether women across two generations share the same feminist ideology. To illustrate this issue, I present and discuss some examples of generational debate. The chapter ends with my reflections on how the aspects discussed help to understand the women's feminist beliefs.

Herstories

Hooks (2000, p.7) claimed that ‘feminists are made, not born’. This section highlights that the journeys that led to my interview participants identifying as feminists (or made them decide against this label) differed according to their life circumstances. There are, however, a number of motifs that reappeared through their narratives. In the following, I present these formative experiences of my participants, which offer insight as to the kinds of issues that sparked their feminist interest and, for those who self-identified as a feminist, identification. While the participants ranged in age from 20 to 70, meaning the women grew up, attended university, had first jobs and, sadly, experienced abuse at different times and under varying social and political circumstances, their stories did not vary significantly according to their age. However, it is possible that some reasons for their engagement with feminism may have been too personal to disclose in the interviews or too subconscious for the women to reflect upon.

Growing up

Many of the women developed an awareness of gender inequality early in life. Comments like ‘I think I’ve always been a little bit feminist’ (Louise, 23, Pākehā)⁴² were common and participants realised and experienced gender inequalities long before they knew the term ‘feminism’. Sometimes this was because of their young age at the time, sometimes it was because they spent their childhood outside New Zealand and ‘didn’t know that I was a feminist because there wasn’t that word in my country’ (Nana, 28, Southeast Asian).

Gendered family dynamics in their childhood often resulted in an early understanding of gender-based injustice in society. The women reflected on brothers being allowed to do a greater number of or different things than themselves and talked about watching their mothers going through rough times, such as finding work as a sole mother after a divorce or living with a violent husband. One participant explained the analysis she applied as a child to her tragic experiences. While her father was abusive towards her mother, she realised ‘You know, Mum never hit Dad. [...] *That* just didn’t happen. It was gender violence’. Although many of the participants were too young to understand the structural implications of such experiences, they recalled how early in their lives they decided to fight the injustices they witnessed while growing up.

⁴² All names of participants are pseudonyms. Because the risk of identification is comparatively low in this and in the following chapter, I provide age and ethnic group for additional information about the quoted women. As I explain later in this chapter, these two characteristics tend to be important in relation to the women’s feminist identities. While sexual identity is similarly important, this characteristic seemed too personal to be included for all quotes and did not emerge as a significant factor in later analysis.

Other women emphasised how growing up in a female-dominated environment (e.g. they had no brothers, lived with a sole mother, had many aunts and/or went to all-girl schools) influenced their understanding of gender roles. Having many strong female role models taught some participants that women could do anything — independent of whether these strong women identified as feminists or not. For others, the lack of boys and men in their environments meant that they grew up being unaware of gender injustices because there were no males present for comparison. Andrea (33, Pākehā), for instance, said:

In an all-girls high school as the oldest of four children with only one brother, [I had] just so little experience with men in the world and misogyny. And no, it wasn't that you didn't have any experience with misogyny — you did, but it was really hard to identify what it was.

Overall, seeing gender roles played out within the family and watching how female relatives dealt with gender-based challenges was — even if subconsciously — the first formative influence many of the participants had in their journey of becoming a feminist.

University

Virginia (26, Pākehā) joked 'I feel like my story is a little bit cliché in terms of, like, white middle-class girl who came across feminism at university. Cos that is my story [laughs]'. Given most of my participants held a university degree, many of the women across all ethnic groups shared this story and talked about university as an influential factor for shaping their perspectives on gender issues.

University was the place where many participants (14) encountered academic feminist theory for the first time. They described how the gaining of this kind of knowledge was empowering because such theory enabled them to explain their personal experiences in the context of systematic social power imbalances. Djamila (21, South Asian), for example, explained:

At the beginning of university I took a couple of Gender Studies papers and I found it really, really interesting. [...] I did an Anthropology paper [...] and I found it kind of liberating. Yeah, just all of a sudden gender wasn't really something that I took for granted anymore. It just got me thinking really differently about myself and my own kind of... my goals in life, my ambitions. It got me thinking differently about expectations as well. I started to question some of the things that were expected from me as a woman.

The women also described university as important for exposing them to groups of people they did not have a chance to meet before. 'University was the first time that I encountered people who identified as gay, lesbian, queer, etc.', said Betty (31, Pākehā). Others found people with

whom to discuss feminism and who introduced them to new ideas and perspectives. But university also offered the possibility to engage with student politics and some of the women made use of that to become, for example, Women's Rights Officer on their campus.

Male-dominated environments

While university was mostly described as a place that supported and re-affirmed feminist perspectives, the participants encountered other environments that triggered their development of a gender analysis of society through challenges. For instance, several participants had worked in male-dominated occupations and job environments or had male colleagues promoted or favoured over them, which increased their awareness of gender inequalities in the labour market. Gloria (36, Pākehā) described one such situation:

I remember a time when I asked him [her boss]: 'Could you teach me to do something?' It was a really, really low-level task but it was something that I wasn't able to do [...]. And he actually said to me 'No, that's a man's job'. And I mean, I was still pretty young at that stage. But then you talk to other women and they all have, you know, five similar stories.

Some participants had also been part of activist groups on the political left that were dominated by strong males who did not take female viewpoints seriously. For Chen (22, East Asian), this was a frustrating problem 'That group had a lot of men that were really dominant and would often silence and shut down women in meetings'. The list goes on: One participant was part of the hippy scene when she was a young adult and described this culture as 'very sexist' (Lily, 51, Pākehā). Another woman had been engaged to a soldier and found the patriarchal structures of the army impacting on her life. Other participants were involved in different music scenes and found their art was judged by 'the male version of what talent is' (Nana, 28, Southeast Asian). A woman working in science experienced consistent disrespect for women in her field, while other participants experienced women's subordination in various aspects of religious life. All of these women found their frustrations in such environments contributed to the development of their feminist beliefs.

Experiences of violence

Alarmingly, 11 of the 40 participants briefly mentioned or shared stories of being a survivor of sexual and/or domestic violence and most of these women said that feminism provided them with strength after such experiences. In some cases, mainly among the older women, feminism offered reassurance that ending an abusive relationship or marriage and living as a single woman

was not shameful. For some participants who were subjected to sexual violence at a young age, feminism was a helpful tool for interpreting these experiences. One participant⁴³ said:

So I already experienced how women's bodies were actually a battlefield of oppression. And I needed somehow to be able to explain that. [...] Because all this stuff is happening in my life, I need to be able to explain that. And [I had] almost a desire of it not to happen in anybody else's life.

As with this participant, experiencing violence was an important reason for a number of women to start engaging with concepts of women's empowerment. Feminism was one approach of 'taking up arms' to fight back, as one participant framed it.

Influential people and events

Many participants (12) mentioned one or more people in their lives who significantly influenced their views on gender issues. Sometimes this was their mother, but other women talked about friends, work colleagues, fellow activists, like-minded women in small and conservative towns, people in organisations they were involved with, and partners. Generally, such influential people were older women and a few participants referred to them as 'mentors'. In other cases, mostly with friends, partners and fellow activists, mentors were women of similar age as the participants. In one instance it was the participant's boyfriend who identified as feminist and shared his ideas with her.

Certain events also contributed to shaping the participants' views about feminism. Such events took on many forms. One woman became a mother at a comparatively young age and started to engage with parenting and family planning issues, which ultimately introduced her to feminist theory. Some women reported that the experience of attending a women-only conference or a similar event (e.g. an *afem-hui*⁴⁴) was significant for them. 'I just remember being blown away by the energy of that many women in one place' said Sylvia (52, Pākehā) about a conference her mother took her to when she was a teenager. Another woman mentioned that reading an essay about misogyny in *Harry Potter* books was an eye-opening moment for her. Similarly, one woman felt inspired after watching the movie *Clueless*. Others got introduced to Riot Grrrl music — a form of feminist punk music — and were impressed by the messages found in its lyrics.

⁴³ For reasons of confidentiality regarding this sensitive information I do not disclose her pseudonym, age and ethnicity.

⁴⁴ 'Afem' is an abbreviation of 'anarcha-feminist', and *hui* is a Māori term describing a 'gathering' or 'meeting'. *Afem hui* have been organised in New Zealand in a number of years, most recently to my knowledge in 2011.

Evolving identities

A few of the women interviewed could name one specific point in time or a single event that marked their personal identification with feminism. For instance, Andrea (33, Pākehā) talked about ‘the night that I decided I was a feminist’, while Rosa (28, Māori) ‘had a conversion experience’ taking a specific course at university. Most women, however, gradually adopted a feminist perspective until they eventually identified with the label ‘feminist’. In many cases, this last step happened during their time at university.

Once the women identified as feminists, their feminist ideologies continued to be subject to change. Women over 50 were more likely to acknowledge that their feminism had changed or evolved over time. In particular, some participants said that they had ‘mellowed’ and were now less staunch about many aspects of feminism than they used to be. Others explained that their understanding has deepened over the years as they added race and class analysis to their feminism. The inclusion of men in feminism was another theme around which women changed their opinion over time. Some of the older participants said they did not see a function for men within feminism in earlier years, but have since shifted their perspective.

Although only in their twenties, a few of the younger women had been active in the feminist scene for many years and also spoke about their changing feminist ideas. Typically they referred to moving away from staunch ‘black and white thinking’ towards a more open-minded approach to the complexities of gender inequalities. One woman also explained how she used to embrace labels such as ‘bitch’ or ‘slut’ but, due to increasing awareness of different cultural views about these terms, she now distances herself from them.

Noticeably queer women tended to explain that feminism was not their first political concern when they developed an interest in social and political issues. Instead, they first engaged with lesbian or queer issues before they combined them with feminist perspectives. This was also true for Asian and Māori participants, whose interest in anti-racism often preceded their feminist identification. However, one Māori woman conversely explained that she had come across Western feminist theory first and initially found it relevant to her life. But because she has engaged more with her whānau, hapū and iwi⁴⁵ during recent years, she ‘drifted away from it [Western feminism]’ and now had a deeper interest in Māori contributions to feminism and mana wāhine⁴⁶.

⁴⁵ Māori terms to describe extended family, clan and tribe.

⁴⁶ In an academic context, mana wāhine can be referred to as ‘a theoretical and methodological approach that explicitly examines the intersection of being Māori and female’ (Simmonds, 2011, p.11).

The meanings of feminism

Having explored how and why (most of) the participants came to identify as feminist, this section turns to their understandings of feminist identities and feminism as an ideology. One of them said, ‘feminism is just too diverse. [...] You can’t take anything for granted with it, really’ (Charlotte, 63, European). In saying that, she referred to feminism as having different meanings to different people — an acknowledgement that was, as I will show, common among my participants. Therefore, I place particular emphasis on exploring how differences among women’s feminist identities are reflected in the meanings they assign to feminism.

This is what a feminist looks like!

As noted in Chapter 4, my group of 40 participants was relatively diverse in many respects. However, most of them (34) identified as feminists. Four said they would ‘maybe’, ‘sometimes’ or ‘not often’ use the word ‘feminist’ to describe themselves and only two rejected this label entirely.

Greenwood (2008, p.45) stated that ‘political consciousness does not arise from a single social identity in isolation from all others, but rather from the individual’s multiple, simultaneous, and intersecting memberships in high- and low-power groups’. In situating feminist identities among forms of political consciousness, it is important to relate the participants’ feminist identities to other aspects of their identities. Figure 5.1 is a ‘word cloud’ that visualises all the labels, ideologies and life-styles the participants named when I asked them how they described their identity. The size of the word indicates the number of women who have named this particular category — the larger the word, the higher this number. It has to be emphasised that the terms shown in Figure 5.1 present subjective attributions made by the women themselves and do not reflect descriptive demographics or characteristics of the sample. For instance, not all participants who had children named the term ‘mother’ in this context. There were also women who, for example, were child-free, Catholic or academics, but did not use these words to describe their identity. Two participants answered this question by stating that they did not like using labels for themselves at all and did not name any description.

Figure 5.1 shows that there are certain ways of self-identifying that are relatively popular among the participants (e.g. mother, queer, anarcho-feminist, liberal). However, the majority of terms were only named once (all of the words in smallest font), which shows the diversity in how women identified as feminists.

With such statements, Nana and Virginia as well as other participants articulated how their feminist and political values were shaped by their individual identities and experiences. Overall, the participants placed most emphasis on ethnic and cultural issues in this context, but sexual identities — as for Virginia — and age were also important for many women.

As mentioned earlier, two women did not identify as feminist and four others were hesitant to do so. Emily (33, Pākehā), who worked for an anti-violence organisation, interestingly said ‘I am a feminist but I don’t really, necessarily identify as feminist’. She meant that other people would often label her as a feminist because of her job and because of her strong beliefs regarding ‘being a woman’. However, she would not use that label for herself. Negative stereotypes associated with the term ‘feminist’ were one reason for rejecting that label. She also said ‘Being a feminist is something outside of yourself. For me and my experience of who I am and how I do gender is... it’s me, it’s who I am and I don’t necessarily need to have that identity being feminist’.

The women in my study who did not identify as feminist (as well as some of the other women) prioritised an active promotion of gender equality and women’s empowerment over the use of a label. Often, this viewpoint was related to the idea that there are different kinds of feminists and just because two people call themselves feminists does not mean they share the same values. This raises the question: what is feminism?

What is feminism?

Anne (30, Pākehā), said ‘feminism is probably a different thing to many people’ and many other participants agreed. Given this wide-spread assumption that feminism has different meanings, I was interested in exploring what kinds of meanings my participants assigned to it.

In most interviews⁴⁷ I asked the participants ‘What does feminism mean to you?’ The women gave different types of answers, framing feminism, for example, as an ideological perspective, a certain course of action or a way of analysing the world around them. Three women described feminism as a political stance or position. One woman used the word ‘ideology’, one ‘philosophy’ and another woman ‘kaupapa’⁴⁸. The term ‘movement’ was only mentioned twice. Most often (17 times) feminism was described as a form of ‘acknowledgement’ or ‘recognition’ of gender inequalities — terms that imply an understanding of injustice. A few more women (seven) used expressions such as ‘a way of looking at/thinking of/reading’ social circumstances or a ‘lens’ through which the environment is perceived. I understand the latter

⁴⁷ In some cases this question did not make sense due to progress of the specific interview. See Chapter 4.

⁴⁸ Māori word for discussion, plan, scheme, proposal, agenda, subject, programme, theme.

expressions as having a level of active analysis whereas a focus on acknowledgement and recognition implied a passive understanding. Nine participants explicitly framed feminism as an activity. For instance, Emily (33, Pākehā), who did not identify as feminist, said ‘feminism [...] it’s an action word for me. To be a feminist you have to be taking action on something’. Others phrased it as a ‘fight’, a ‘struggle’, as ‘working towards’ or ‘creating a sense of mana’ (authority, power, influence). Another 10 women used gentler expressions for action: they talked about ‘attempts’ and ‘advancements’, or about ‘promoting’ ideas.

However, in several cases the women used more than one of these terminologies to describe what feminism meant to them. Therefore, for these women feminism can be an acknowledgment of gender inequality as well as an analytical lens, or it can be an ideology and a call for action at the same time.

Equality for... women?

Most participants (23) related the concept of feminism to equality, often in a straightforward way such as ‘it means just gender equality’ (Li, 20, East Asian). Others talked about having the ‘same chances in life’ or the ‘same dignity’. Some women elaborated on this idea by specifying that feminism meant achieving ‘equal rights’ and ‘equal possibilities/opportunities’ and having ‘political and economic equality’. This was sometimes illustrated with examples of equal representation in parliament, pay equity and equal access to education and information.

Besides the demand for equality, another central theme across the participants’ definitions of feminism was a demand for higher appreciation of women’s contributions to society. That included a general ‘positivity about being a woman’ (Rosa, 28, Māori) as well as putting more value on traditional ‘women’s work’ (both paid and unpaid).

Some of the participants, mainly those in the upper age range, put women as a social group at the centre of their feminism. One woman equated feminism with ‘women’s liberation’ and ten others understood feminism to be the struggle to improve women’s lives, rights, value or status in society. Most commonly this was exemplified by the promotion of reproductive health rights for women or, again, equal treatment of women in employment, but also with the improvement of rights of sex-workers (who are mainly female). One woman said ‘my feminism is having strong women leaders’ (Aiono, 45, Samoan/East Asian/European) and referred to all aspects of social life where leaders are needed. While four of the participants who put the emphasis on women made it explicitly clear that their feminism was neither ‘anti-men’ nor meant valuing women over men, one woman identified as a separatist, stating ‘I guess it [feminism]

means giving women priority. And so for me [pauses] women are a priority' (Charlotte, 63, European).

A large number of mainly young participants did not relate feminism to women specifically but rather to all genders. Phoolan (23, Southeast Asian), who worked for a domestic violence organisation said 'it's actually about gender issues for me. So that can be male, female or other'. Like Phoolan, women who shared this perspective tended to indicate that they did not understand gender as a binary category (men/women) but as multifaceted or fluid.

However, independently of conceptualising genders as either binary or fluid, for all these women feminism meant recognising the power imbalance between genders and that women were disadvantaged in comparison to men. From this fluid perspective, other genders were also acknowledged as disadvantaged, although women remained an important category for all participants.

Negotiating differences

Most participants shared an understanding that 'women' were not a homogenous group of people and many found it necessary to acknowledge differences according to race, ethnicity, class, sexual identity, age, ability, etc. within their feminism. Li (20, East Asian), for instance, emphasised that 'systems of oppression are all interrelated and they feed off and reinforce each other', Lily (51, Pākehā) had 'a deep suspicion of single-issue politics' and Judith (21, Pākehā) explained that 'when I'm fighting for my rights as a bisexual woman I'm not putting my feminism beside for that. It's all part of it'. Thus, many women did not separate an anti-racist or anti-homophobic perspective from their feminist views. Louise (23, Pākehā) clarified this common mind-set:

I don't think you can have feminism without looking at, you know, how ethnicity affects women in different ways. The same with class. I guess in my opinion all these things are central and you can't separate them. You can't separate your ethnicity from your gender. You can't separate your sexuality from your gender.

A surprisingly high number of the women (12) used the word 'intersectional' to describe this approach to feminism. While some had learned about this arguably academic concept at university, others came across the term in rather non-academic ways, for instance through New Zealand-based feminist blogs (e.g. The Hand Mirror, 2012) and feminist workshops (e.g. Aotearoa Anarcha Feminist Hui, 2010).

Women in their mid-thirties and younger talked the most about the relevance of differences between women. I suggest this is because intersectionality theory has developed since 1989 and has not been part of many older women's university education and early feminist

socialisation. Explanations of intersectionality were often shaped by the specific identity of women. For example, Rosa (28, Māori) stated ‘for me, feminism also involves a lot of the other kaupapa that I support’ and a woman who strongly identified as anarcha-feminist claimed that feminism is ‘addressing not just inequality by sex and gender [...] but also inequality to do with race and class, education. And connecting that back [...] to capitalism and to colonisation as well’ (Meri, 27, Pākehā/Māori).

The women not only used intersectionality as a theoretical concept, but used it to reflect on more practical aspects of feminism. For instance, Li (20, East Asian), who self-identified as ‘Kiwi-Chinese’ and was involved with a feminist student collective, noticed:

I’m always wondering why do I never see as many Asian women students into feminism? Why don’t more of them want to know more about it? It’s a really huge difference between how Asian students think compared to Kiwi students. There’s definitely a huge difference. It’s really hard to explain. But the cultural value is definitely a big factor.

My participants tended to draw two conclusions from their understandings of intersectional feminism. First, feminism needs to consider differences among women because feminist priorities within one particular feminist world-view may be different from another. Second, women of relative privilege needed to reflect on their status so they did not ignore or silence other groups of women. Two participants illustrated these two points:

Just because we’re feminists doesn’t mean we should ignore sexuality-type issues. And just because we’re feminists doesn’t mean we should ignore issues with people of colour. Because white feminists have a huge number of problems but they are not the same as for black feminists, for example, or Asian feminists or whatever. And we should actually be supporting each other. [...] I think that a lot of feminists really need to get their act together in terms of actually appreciating and understanding it [differences], instead of saying ‘We are all in it together — can you just shut up and stand behind me? And by the way, you are not allowed to speak’. (Judith, 21, Pākehā)

We have straight women who will campaign for the wage gap, which is terrible and really important — not denying it — and for reproductive freedom, which is a wonderful thing, but who don’t seem to want queer people to get married because it’s not as important. [...] Getting your own equality on the back of somebody else’s is actually not pushing us any further at all. In fact it gets us backwards. (Ellen, 24, Pākehā)

As a consequence of these expectations that they should acknowledge such differences, participants with relative privilege, such as young Pākehā women, tended to carefully avoid generalising statements when they felt their background influenced their feminist point of view. For example, Susan (23, Pākehā), a member of feminist and queer groups, reflected very critically on the impact of her ‘whiteness’:

Being one of the organisers and decision makers and feeling my ability to make the right feminist decisions was just... I felt like it had to be examined in the light of white privilege and of making things culturally accessible. [...] Since I've been involved in some alternative communities I have felt like, yeah, my identity as a white person is problematic sometimes in terms of political stuff.

These two demands for intersectional feminism (consideration of differences and acknowledgment of privilege) led the women interviewed to develop different strategies in order to deal with diversity: one aimed for inclusiveness and one emphasised individualism. As I show in the following section, both strategies raise a number of problems in their practical applications.

Inclusiveness

Zack (2005) argued that feminism needs to be inclusive of all women in order to reach its goal of improving the lives of women. But: inclusive of whom? The participants repeatedly emphasised that their understanding of feminism was inclusive of all genders, ethnicities, ages and classes, sexual identities, religions and abilities — inclusive of everyone. Some highlighted this view by directly stating 'my world of feminism is about inclusivity' (Rosa, 28, Māori). Others mindfully added qualifications to their statements. For example, when Anne (30, Pākehā) explained her definition of feminism, she said '[...] it's quite basic and it's about having equality for men and women. Yep, or for people of all genders'.

However, being inclusive of gender in practice had proved difficult and several participants were challenged by the question of whether men should be included in feminist work and activism. Some women rejected male participation or were sceptical about it, some saw men as helpful allies but did not want them to take on leading roles in feminist activities, and other participants thought men could be feminists in the same way as women. These different stances made it difficult to organise some groups and events based on the question of how to involve men (see Chapter 7).

The practicalities of gender inclusion also mattered for the creation of women-only safe spaces, which are relatively common in feminist communities. For example, the Auckland Women's Centre (AWC)⁴⁹, which promotes itself as a women-only safe space, faced the following dilemma: the AWC did not allow men to enter because some of the women using the space did not feel safe around men. While it was generally accepted that 'women' were people who self-identified as women, not everyone who avoided the company of men (often due to

⁴⁹ The AWC is a community organisation that offers support and health services, educational seminars, and advocacy on women's issues.

traumatic experiences) felt safe around everyone who identified as a woman. Consequently, constituting a women-only space came down to deciding between being inclusive of transwomen and allowing some of the other women to feel safe. Therefore, a decision in favour of inclusiveness (for transwomen) would potentially result in the exclusion of women who expressed safety concerns and would potentially stop using the space, or vice versa.

This discussion occurred at the AWC in 2011 because the Safe Space Policy of the centre did not welcome transwomen (even though some transwomen were in fact using the centre before this time). The board of the AWC finally decided in favour of including transwomen, stating that ‘the key consideration is about personal identity, and that the Centre should be available to all women identifying as women’ (Auckland Women's Centre, 2011, p.3). Although all women who reported this specific event in their interviews welcomed this decision, some commented on the confusion that the discussion had caused, framing transphobia as a ‘new’ topic on the feminist agenda that the Second Wave movement did not have to address.

While this example illustrates the difficulties of deciding who should be included, other women faced challenges in making their space attractive to those who should be included. Louise (23, Pākehā), a member of a university feminist collective explained:

We [the collective] do tend to be very white or Asian. One of the things we wanna work on next year is to make sure that we are a safe space for Māori and Pacific Islander women. We are not as diverse as we'd like to be. The core members are, but the wider ones [...] coming to the events — they do tend to be more white or Asian. So it's not as diverse as we would like.

While this concern was common among the participants, this applied mainly to Pākehā and Europeans. As Susan's earlier quote about her ‘problematic identity as a white person’ indicated, many of these women were anxious to create or be part of inclusive feminist circles that reflected their appreciation of different perspectives among women. Vanderpyl (2004) confirmed in her study that Pākehā feminists found it hard to claim solidarity based on their ethnic identity which was overshadowed with colonial guilt and privilege. Consequently, and as Louise's account showed, Pākehā-dominated feminist circles are interpreted as a failure with regards to inclusiveness. However, while Pākehā women had much ambition to create inclusive spaces, they often did not know how to achieve this. Alice (24, Pākehā) started to articulate a tentative idea to solve this issue but ended by raising more doubts:

I don't know... the only way that you can get past that [Pākehā dominance] is either taking feminism out to somewhere... taking it to a marae⁵⁰ or something like that. And having a discussion there, rather than having this group and expecting [Māori] people to come to you. But then also I don't think you can fit everybody in to a...

⁵⁰ A central space of Māori communities.

you can have feminism as an umbrella but so many people have different kinds of ideas of what it means to be.

Conversely, women of less privileged ethnic backgrounds showed less interest in inclusive spaces. The Young Asian Feminist Aotearoa (YAFA) collective, for instance, was founded as an explicitly exclusive group that enabled its members to engage in a feminist discourse reflective of their experiences as Asian women. The Māori Women's Welfare League is another example of an ethnic-specific women's network. In Chapter 7, I discuss issues of inclusiveness and exclusiveness within women's groups and organisations in more detail.

Individualisation

While a collective feminist identity is often understood to be an important factor for the successful formation of a women's movement (Dahlerup, 2013), the acknowledgement of differences among the participating women seemed to inhibit such unity. It also fuelled a tendency to divide feminism into an infinite number of strands accommodating individual needs and experiences. As Chapter 3 explained in detail, Third Wave feminism is characterised by such individualism which is partly a result of neoliberal ideology influencing feminists in New Zealand since the mid-1980s.

Many of my participants embraced individualist approaches typical of Third Wave feminism. Rebecca (34, Pākehā) stated that 'there is not necessarily a right or wrong way to be a feminist' and for five women self-identification was the *only* quality that defined feminists. Anne (30, Pākehā), for instance, explained 'if you self-identify as feminist then you are feminist. I don't know that there are really any other factors'. Seven more participants indicated that self-identification was at least important. With such a perspective, the women erased any need to define a common feminist ground.

However, in other women's statements it became clear that while they *said* 'being feminist' was about self-identification only, their wider arguments suggested otherwise. Although they would not openly argue that someone who identified as feminist was not (or vice versa), they still seemed to disagree with other women's self-identification. Betty (31, Pākehā), for instance, initially explained 'I come from that school of thought that if you think you are a feminist then you are a feminist. I think that that's probably the most important thing'. But later in the interview she added 'Sarah Palin identi... talked about being a feminist. It's a bit of a stretch! And I sort of have an issue with that'. Betty was not the only one who contradicted herself on this issue.

I suggest that there are at least two reasons why these women expressed such contradictions. Difficulty identifying with the word ‘feminist’ has been the subject of many studies, which usually address the phenomenon of the statement ‘I’m not a feminist, but...’ (e.g. Olson et al., 2008; Williams & Wittig, 1997; Zucker, 2004). Negative stereotypes associated with feminists are a major reason for this (see Schnittker, Freese, & Powell, 2003). I assume that the wariness with which many of my participants handled this term when it came to applying it to others can partly be explained by the same reason: they did not want to assign a label to their friends if they might interpret it in a negative way.

However, I also argue that the women were hesitant to label others as feminists because to do so implied imposing personal definitions on others. Given the importance assigned to individual approaches to feminism and to the recognition of differences among women, such obtrusive behaviour might be interpreted as ignorant and presumptuous within feminist circles and thus needed to be avoided.

This second reason is reflected in the tendency of my participants to emphasise individualism not only when discussing the feminist label but feminism overall. High expectations within feminist circles that women recognise different perspectives complicates the process of finding a definition of feminism that is shared by all feminists. Such recognition at an individual level can easily be achieved. Promoting an understanding of feminism that has different meanings on an individual level ensures nobody gets excluded or silenced — or at least it eradicates the grounds for complaining about it because every feminist perspective, statement and action can be justified as a personal approach. Consequently, and as the ‘Sarah Palin’ example showed, despite having an opinion about who a feminist was, many women kept this opinion to themselves and instead emphasised the importance of self-identification.

The acceptance of such individualism, however, came at the price of representation. If everyone is entitled to an individual perspective, how can anyone represent others or even speak for them? This issue is highlighted by the example of SlutWalk 2011. This was a very controversial event (Maddison, 2013b; Savage, 2011) and not all members of an Auckland based feminist group decided to participate in the march. However, one of them, Nana (28, Southeast Asian) spoke at the final rally — but she spoke solely for herself:

I asked everyone [from the group] ‘What do you think, should we say something, I mean we are here?’ It was like six of us who actually came [...]. And they were like ‘Yeah but you can’t speak on behalf of the group, you know, that’s not fair’ and I said ‘I know, I know. I’ll just speak for what I think then’.

If relatively small, homogenous groups of feminists are not prepared to agree on a specific issue such as SlutWalk, bigger, less homogenous groups may be even less likely to establish collective

positions. Such an unwillingness to represent others raises important questions about the political character of individualised feminism. I address this issue in more detail in Chapter 6.

Feminism: ‘It’s a minefield!’

These two strategies to overcome challenges of women’s diversity for feminism — focussing on inclusiveness and increasing individualism — seem to contradict each other as separate concepts. Zack (2005, p.2) further argued that ‘intersectionality is not inclusive insofar as members of specific intersections of race and class can create *only* their own feminisms’ [emphasis in the original]. Although I agree with Zack that specific groups can only create their own feminism, I argue that inclusiveness is not determined by *creating* feminism *for* others. In contrast, one of the main reasons for creating individualised feminisms is to show awareness of differences and to acknowledge, respect and support other perspectives. If successful, such an approach can be described as ‘inclusive’.

Many women in my study tried to translate their feminist ideals into practice. As I show in the following chapters, such attempts were challenging and the results did not always fit with their theoretical ideals. It is, however, one of the characteristics of Third Wave feminism to embrace contradictions (Kinser, 2004) and to see them ‘as the logical result of equally compelling, albeit competing, arguments’ (Renegar & Sowards, 2009, p.10).

Talking about generations

This thesis focuses on the contemporary characteristics of feminist activity, which involves not only those of young women embracing Third Wave ideas. Many of the women who were active feminists during the 1970s and 1980s are still around, as are Second Wave approaches to feminism. The relationship between the two generations, however, is at times difficult and Gillis and Munford (2004) stated that the ‘generational divide’ between Second and Third Wave feminism is one of the defining characteristics of the movement. This section explores the intergenerational relationship, its difficulties and its importance according to my participants.

Who belongs to which wave?

As discussed in Chapter 3, some authors (e.g. Edelman, 2001; Heywood & Drake, 2007) have identified the Third Wave generation as consisting of those feminists born after the baby boom in the 1960s and who became active as feminists from the 1990s onwards. If I apply this definition to determine whether my interview participants belonged to the Third or (if born

before or during the 1960s) the Second Wave, my sample included 11 women from the Second Wave and 29 Third Wavers. However, not all of my participants would agree with such classifications. For instance, Margaret (48, Pākehā) stated:

Technically, I should be a Second Wave feminist, except that I didn't really start off from there. I started off from coming in 1999 after the divorce and getting involved with feminists on campus. And getting involved just because of projects that we were running with a bunch of radical feminists who were Third Wave girls.

Her identification with Third Wave feminism was based on the kind of activism that she had become involved in and was independent of her age. Other participants were not fond of the wave metaphor at all. For example, Meri (27, Pākehā/Māori) said 'I don't really like the terms Second and Third Wave actually, cos I feel like there's lots of crossovers and I don't want to be associated with post-feminism. [...] I can't identify as either, Second or Third Wave'. Similarly, Andrea (33, Pākehā) said 'I find the entire Third Wave feminism so problematic'. She explained this stance by arguing that the wave metaphor was introduced when people genuinely thought that there was not much feminist activity between the First and the Second Wave. Since this was a false assumption, Andrea found the use of the wave metaphor inappropriate and thus rejected the idea of being part of the Second or Third Wave herself.

Other participants used the wave metaphor, although there was little agreement on the current status of the Third Wave. For example, Alice (24, Pākehā) claimed 'we're right at the bottom at the moment. [...] the wave hasn't quite started, it's building up!', while Qiu (39, East Asian) enthusiastically confirmed its existence: 'Yeah totally, it's a new wave!'. Overall, only nine participants talked explicitly about New Zealand's feminism and/or women's movement in terms of waves. That does not mean the remaining 31 women did not see differences between phases of feminism, but rather they preferred the terminology of 'generations' to refer to them.

Since I discuss differences between generations of feminists in the following, I categorise women based on where they placed themselves within their own narratives. For example, Jenny (59, Pākehā) stated 'The younger women perceive themselves as being able to make their own choices and do what they like. And they certainly can do easier than my generation could'. Because Jenny referred to 'the younger women' as 'they' and contrasted them with 'my generation', I group her among the older generation of feminists. This categorisation worked for most participants, younger and older.

However, eight women did not position themselves clearly in one generation or specifically talked about not belonging to either generation. Six of them were in their thirties and two in their forties. They located themselves in a space between the Second and the Third Wave, finding that their feminist ideas differed from both the younger and the older feminists they

knew. Betty (31, Pākehā), for example, said ‘I’m [...] getting into a bridging place where I’m [...] middle-aged at 30’. In the following, I refer to this group of eight women as the ‘mid-generation’.

Difficult relationships

Before exploring how the women in my study experienced and viewed the relationship between feminist generations, it is important to mention the extent of intergenerational contact among them. Within their feminist work and activities most participants interacted with feminists of the other generation at least sometimes. Some women employed by or volunteering for women’s organisations, especially those working for refuges or other domestic/sexual violence organisations, reported that this interaction was linked to these organisations and was regular. Other women occasionally met and worked with older and younger feminists, respectively, during specific events, one-off projects or in random situations. Nine women, however, seemed to have little or no experience in this regard. One of them was Chen (22, East Asian), who replied to my question about the relationship between feminists of different generations by saying ‘To be honest, I haven’t really had that much interaction with older feminists. So yeah, I don’t know how to answer that’. Others only used examples relating to their own mothers or daughters, which is indicative of little intergenerational feminist interaction outside of their family. All eight women of the mid-generation talked about encounters with both older *and* younger women.

Overall, the participants tended to talk respectfully but distantly about the generation that they did not identify with. Many agreed with Rebecca (34, Pākehā), who said that ‘there is a lot we can learn from each other’ and thought that disagreements did not inhibit cooperation and respect for each other’s work. A few young and mid-generation women highly valued having been mentored by older women, and some older women appreciated young feminists having shared new perspectives on certain issues with them. Seven women, across all age groups, regretted that there were too few opportunities for generations of feminists to get together and have discussions or provide and receive mentoring in New Zealand.

While there was much agreement that contemporary feminism in New Zealand is still concerned with similar issues to those of the 1970s and 1980s (e.g. the gender pay gap, abortion rights, domestic and sexual violence issues, gender inequalities regarding childcare and domestic work), the majority of the women interviewed saw differences in how generations of feminists approached these aims. I discuss these differences in the following section, but I want to emphasise that not all women shared this perspective. Andrea (33, Pākehā), for example, claimed

that ‘generational conflicts in New Zealand’s feminist movements are massively overplayed’ and a few others interpreted differences rather as a life cycle effect than as a cohort effect. There was also much agreement among the women that differences between generations are normal, as Eva (54, European) explained:

I mean, in some ways wouldn’t you expect contemporary feminists would be different from Second Wave feminists anyway because we have moved on, our understandings have changed, the world has changed. We don’t have this sort of stark choice between liberal feminism and radical feminism anymore. Feminism itself has changed. So yeah, there are differences.

In summary, when asked about the relationship between the feminist generations overall, most women had predominantly positive opinions. However, many women recalled a number of issues and situations throughout their interviews that reflected their discontent with the other generation. As I show in the following discussion, such tensions were often accompanied by misunderstandings.

Ungrateful youth?

A number of older participants were concerned that young women today do not appreciate the achievements made by the women’s movement in the past. This concern revolved around two arguments: first, they did not see many young women claiming the word ‘feminist’ for themselves and second, they argued that young women took the hard-won successes of the Second Wave women’s movement for granted. This is hardly a new debate within feminism (Rosas & Wilson, 2003), but I contrast these claims with some of the arguments made by young feminists in order to present a more balanced account of this allegation.

As mentioned earlier, young women’s resistance to identifying as feminist has been researched extensively (e.g. Budgeon, 2001; Harris, 2010; Olson et al., 2008; Zucker, 2004). Most of the young participants of my study happily and often proudly wore this label. However, they did reflect on the apparent decline of feminist identification among their peers. Djamila (21, South Asian), who identified as feminist, said ‘I mean, in the ‘70s feminism was popular. Everyone identified as a feminist. But now it’s really uncool to be a feminist’. She explained the unpopularity of feminism in terms of societal changes and social pressures rather than with young women’s indifference — an argument that relates to Eva’s earlier perspective on feminism adapting to social changes.

Also, some young women defended themselves from the accusation of taking feminist achievements for granted. For example, Judith (21, Pākehā) stated:

A lot of the Second Wave feminists that I know or that I have dealt with — and this is very much personal experience — they fought for our rights to choose. So please let us choose! There are a lot of the older generation feminists who think ‘We fought for your right to go out and have a career so you shouldn’t stay at home with your kids’. And I’m kind of, like, no, that’s what choice is all about. Otherwise we would be just as oppressed as we were before in the other direction.

Thus, Judith argued, while it might seem that, in this instance, young women choosing to become ‘stay-at-home-mums’ waste the opportunities that Second Wave feminists worked hard for, they are — from their point of view — building on them.

Another example was explained by Virginia (26, Pākehā). In her role as a community educator, she facilitated a discussion on the use of the word ‘queer’. During that discussion some older women argued that ‘all the young queers are just totally depoliticised because they are not using the word “lesbian” anymore’. They interpreted this rejection of the ‘lesbian’ label as dishonouring past successes of lesbian feminists. However, when the younger participants explained the term ‘queer’ they often explicitly emphasised the political aspect of it: just as the early lesbian movement fought against heteronormativity, they felt that taking on a queer identity deliberately opposes binary categorisations of sexual identities (hetero- and homosexual). The queer concept assumes sexual identities to be fluid and multiple instead of fixed and binary. Thus, they saw it as an expansion of the lesbian struggle, not a backlash.

Older participants also struggled with the terminology of the younger generation in another example, as Sylvia (52, Pākehā) explained. Together with a friend she used to run a radio show called ‘The Women’s Show’ when she was in her thirties:

This group of young women started coming around the edges and wanting to get involved with the show and they eventually took it over. And the first thing they did was changing it from ‘The Women’s Show’ to ‘The Girlzone Show’. And we were like ‘Oh my God!’, completely horrified. [...] It’s like... ‘girl’ was so not acceptable and you *had* to be a woman. And then it just flipped around and ‘girls’ are ok again. [...] So you know, go on, you [younger women] do what you need to do.

These are just three of many examples that illustrate how young feminists were perceived as ungrateful for Second Wave achievements. Of course, discussing these examples in more detail highlights other tensions. For instance, Samuel (2013, p.397) argued that the division between lesbian and queer politics is a ‘crude shorthand for a number of tensions within LGBT/Q communities’. I do not intend to downplay existing differences in political views between generations. However, at the same time I suggest that some tensions resulting from such differences are consequences of miscommunication and a lack of dialogue rather than fundamental disagreements about feminism.

But it was not only misunderstandings that divided younger and older feminists. Participants also talked about differences in methods of activism/political work and ways of framing feminist issues, which caused intergenerational difficulties. Since I cannot discuss all of them in detail, I use one example of each to explain the women's concerns: the rise of online activism as an example for changing methods, and 'sex-positivity' as an illustration of a new way of framing feminist issues. I chose these two examples because both are considered typical of Third Wave feminism (e.g. Alfonso & Trigilio, 1997; Harris, 2010).

Online activism

Many young and mid-generation participants used social media such as Facebook, Twitter or blogs for their feminist activities to raise awareness, share information and facilitate discussion. They also organised protest marches online and they coordinated activist collectives entirely through Facebook. Since social media is low-cost, flexible in its application and many people use it on a daily basis, this form of organising meets the needs of many young feminists.

However, social media only connects people who actively sign up to it. While a link to a Facebook page can be forwarded to anyone with an email address, most information on Facebook can only be accessed after logging in with a user name and password. Therefore, people who do not participate in online communities — in my study, mainly the older women — have a low chance of receiving the same information and knowing about activities that are organised online. Susan (23, Pākehā), for example, joined a discussion among abortion law reform activists, reporting:

You start talking about Twitter or something and people will be like 'Oh, I don't know', you know. The older women would definitely feel... I think you could notice that they felt excluded from that conversation. Whereas it was something that was quite exciting to those of us who have done online stuff. Which tended to be the younger.

Although some of my younger participants did not know the purpose of blogs and some older participants were happily using Twitter and Facebook, on the whole women in their early thirties and over were less likely to engage with online activism than the younger participants. As a consequence, the online-based activities of young women were 'hidden' from older women. But even when older feminists were aware about online activism many seemed to be a reluctant to count it as a valid form of political participation. For instance, Gabriela (25, Southeast Asian) talked about an encounter her feminist collective had with an older female researcher, who asked them about their ways of working:

[We told her that] we do a lot of stuff online and that's what we do. It was almost like she was invalidating that and being like 'Ok, I get that you have a Facebook page but what else do you do?' And we were like 'Well, the Facebook part is actually the biggest component of the work that we do'.

The young women's strong reliance on online activism not only hid their work from the older generation, it also decreased the young women's knowledge of how to connect with older feminists. Betty (31, Pākehā), for instance, said 'admittedly, I have almost no idea how to connect with them now, you know. Cos they are also not easy to find online, cos they are less likely to be online'.

Thus, the problem with online activism is that — no matter how useful it is for the young women's work — it facilitates an intergenerational divide between feminists based on methods and technology. Moreover, it reinforces perceptions of non-political and anti-feminist young women because it 'hides' many feminist activities online. The example of Auckland's Law Revue Girls' feminist YouTube video (see Chapter 2) showed that feminist online activism does not necessarily struggle to reach large numbers of people. Rather, it struggles to reach people of all ages. However, there is reason for hope that with increasing digital literacy across the generations the visibility of online activism will also increase.

Sex-positivity

Female sexuality has always been a focus of New Zealand's women's movement⁵¹. However, the Third Wave interest in 'sex-positivity' goes further than its predecessors'. Sex-positive feminism developed from the late 1980s to highlight women's sexual agency as a form of empowerment. This form of feminism disagrees that non-reproductive sex for women is objectionable and illegitimate (Dixon, 2008) and opposes the views that female sexuality is a practice that primarily subjects women to violence and oppression (Alfonso & Trigilio, 1997). I mainly address sex-positivity as an understanding shared by some of my participants and evident in their feminist practices. Thus, my discussion does not go into the theoretical arguments made in the feminist and queer academic literature.

Although not many participants explicitly identified as sex-positive, I regard the issue as a good example of contrasting feminist ideas between the different generations because it is a controversial topic and therefore, the women tended to have strong opinions on it. Five participants mentioned that they identified as 'sex-positive' or talked about sexuality in a way that matches Dixon's definition. All were between 21 and 26 years old. One participant

⁵¹ See Brookes (1993) for examples from the First Wave and Holmes (2000) for examples from the Second Wave movement.

explained ‘I am a very sex-positive person. That’s just how I’m like. I think having sex is ok, not having sex is ok. That’s what sex-positivity is all about. Do what makes you feel good. Be safe, be sane, be consensual and it’s all good’. Another woman said ‘I love the word “slut”, I identify as a slut. Cos I like to have sex and I think sex is really pleasurable and I think pleasure is good’.

Lipstick feminism (Scanlon, 2009), ‘being sexy’ and looking femme⁵² were aspects of what my participants regarded as sex-positive feminism. These forms of celebrating femininity felt empowering for the women and were also intended to attribute value to female beauty practices. However, for other women in my study these issues were not part of their understanding of feminism. For example, one woman who identified with the ‘mid-generation’ and who generally related well to younger feminists admitted ‘I see a lot of them [young feminists] fighting around femme-identity, which is kind of cool but because I don’t super-identify as a femme, sometimes I’m a little bit like “What?! Why are we talking about this?”’

Sex-positivity is also related to other feminist issues. Through events like SlutWalk, this brand of feminism has promoted the claim that women should be able to dress however they want without fear of social sanctions or sexual harassment. This claim was, once again, met with a lack of understanding among many feminists, especially older women. They articulated safety concerns, with one participant saying ‘It’s not like, just because you believe you shouldn’t [get harassed when wearing short skirts], it’s not going to happen’. Others also interpreted revealing clothing as a backlash against women’s emancipation. However, one young woman responded to such criticism as follows:

They talk about personal safety and things like that and I get that. [...] I can totally see their argument with that. Yeah, and that women shouldn’t be giving into men’s desire or whatever. And the whole argument with women being objectified. Just that I have absolutely no problem with being objectified. [...] [I’m] reclaiming being able to be sexy!

Moreover, another young woman stated:

This is where I actually find that Second Wave feminists were very heterosexist and still are. If I put on my tight little dress they are all like ‘Oh dressing up to get attention from men and playing into patriarchy’. And I’m like ‘I actually like women! [laughs] I don’t want the attention of a man, but I wouldn’t mind the attention of a nice girl!’

Sex-positivity relates to more than just clothing. For instance, there are huge controversies around prostitution (O’Connell Davidson, 2002) and pornography (Ciclitira, 2004) within feminist circles. One participant, who works as a sex-worker, explained:

⁵² People who identify as femme accentuate their femininity. This concept is often (but not always) related to the lesbian butch/femme dichotomy. For more information see Levitt, Gerrish and Hiestand (2003).

My view on sex-work is very similar to my views on sex and on porn. And in terms of compatibility with feminism I think that there are always people that will argue these things are inherently non-feminist or inherently anti-feminist because quite often there are issues with abusive power and with consent and I think... My view is just that these things aren't inherently sexist just because sexism can be reflected in them. You know, pornography and sex-work and BDSM⁵³ is just being like television: it's not inherently sexist but it reflects a lot of society a lot of the time.

As this participant indicates, such an opinion is not common among feminists. One feminist collective decided to clarify its sex-positive approach in its constitution because it found new members were often alienated by this point of view.

Not all older participants rejected the idea of sex-positivity (or parts of it). In particular, many older women supported the SlutWalk movement — even if most did not actively participate in the marches — since they understood it as a modern version of 'Reclaim/Take Back the Night'. Conversely, some young feminists vehemently distanced themselves from identifying as 'sluts'. Usually, however, divergent viewpoints regarding issues of sex-positivity were noticeable across feminists of different generations.

What I find interesting about such debates is that both positions support protecting women's bodies. The more traditional stance associated with Second Wave feminism wishes to achieve this by removing women's bodies from the centre of the discussion, arguing that women's value is based on more than their looks and sexuality. The sex-positive argument mainly adopted by young women in my study, however, puts female bodies back in the spotlight, claiming that women should not be ashamed of their sexuality and fondness of their bodies. On the contrary, they understand their bodies as means to women's empowerment because they challenge social standards of female sexuality.

These discussions around sex-positivity show how the different generations of feminists seem to have opposing values regarding certain issues although, in reality, they just aim to achieve similar goals through different approaches. However, from a superficial perspective these approaches not only appear to be different but converse. Accordingly, those who have not engaged with the topic often do not recognise sex-positive practices to be feminist.

Easing the divide

Purvis (2004) argued that generational debates among feminists are overplayed and mainly media generated. Consequently, she advocated against an academic terminology that distinguishes between feminist generations as chronologically separated because such terminology further entrenches this artificial conflict. I question the practicality of this

⁵³ 'Bondage and Discipline, Sadism and Masochism' is a sexual practice.

suggestion. Scholars of women's studies and feminist authors who reject certain terms will not stop activists and feminists outside of academia perceiving feminism along generational lines (see Bulbeck, 2006). I sympathise with Duncan's (2010) approach of minimising the harm done by generational conflict to the women's movement by emphasising what feminist generations have in common. International research has shown that a positive relationship between feminist generations secures the continuity of the movement (Whittier, 1995) and enables cooperation on contested issues such as sex-positivity (Edell, Brown, & Tolman, 2013).

Therefore, intergenerational differences need to be taken seriously. My participant Alice (24, Pākehā) certainly got infuriated by older feminists not knowing about the younger generation's work:

Because you [older feminists] can't see them [younger feminists], you keep on saying that they don't exist. And it's disheartening to say that because you are actually putting the movement back. Like, you know, young women would sit there and be like 'Ah yeah, I am all alone, why shouldn't I give up?'

The recent debate about abolishing the New Zealand's Women's Studies Association (WSA) highlights such a concern. In late 2013 the WSA called its members to a special general meeting to discuss the future of the organisation. The email invitation to this meeting, sent by Mary Mowbray on 12 November 2013, explained:

Active membership is falling, and Wellington members responsible for organizational tasks are struggling against age and burnout. At the 2013 Conference Prue Hyman invited younger women to 'hijack us, change our policies and take the organization in new directions'. Despite lively debate, that hasn't happened. It seems younger women are critical, but have their own interests and organizations. Fair enough.

While the general meeting on 5 December 2013 resulted in the continuation of the WSA under changed leadership, the struggle to get new, younger members on board continues. But the WSA adopted new and decentralised forms of organising, which seem to be more suited to the work styles of younger women. It will thus be interesting to see whether the WSA manages to become a space for intergenerational cooperation.

Conclusion: The role of feminism in the women's movement

The purpose of this chapter was to explore what feminism meant to my participants. The findings presented not only help us to understand the value and opportunities these women see in feminism, but also enable us to comprehend the challenges these women face when engaging in feminist activities, which will be discussed in the next chapters.

As I explained in Chapters 1 and 3, I understand feminism as the ideology that underpins women's movements. This means that people involved with the movement share a certain set of feminist ideas and beliefs which support and justify their activities and interests. Among my participants, gender equality was one of these central ideas. While some of the women put more emphasis on understanding feminism as a form of active involvement in the struggle for gender equality, others interpreted it as an analytical tool or lens for recognising inequalities.

In the presentation of 'herstories' I have shown that personal experiences in (early) life played an important role in shaping the perceptions of social gender inequalities among the women. The types of gender roles embodied by influential people of their childhood, experiences of violence, the influence of university and being exposed to both male and female-dominated environments shaped the women's ideas of gendered opportunities in life and political women's issues.

My participants' feminist identities were closely intertwined with other forms of identification, such as their ethnic and sexual identities. The importance assigned to such identities was often situational and depended on personal experiences of discrimination relating to particular identities. This personal approach to understanding feminist identities meant that most women shared the belief that women were a heterogeneous group and that experiences of gender inequality varied with different levels of relative privilege and marginalisation among women. Therefore incorporating an understanding of intersectionality, recognising and addressing differences according to ethnic groups, sexual identities, class, and so forth, were considered crucial for contemporary feminism by many (although mainly younger) participants. The women spoke of multiple strategies for implementing this awareness of women's differences into their feminist work. Hence, they developed individualised and inclusive practices to match their theoretical ideals. This, however, was not always successful given the different priorities among the women: while Pākehā women tended to aim for inclusive feminist spaces, women belonging to ethnic minority groups valued exclusiveness.

Regarding the relationship between feminists of different generations, I have shown that differences were complex, but were often related to the methods and ways of framing approaches to feminist issues rather than to feminism's underlying aims. Nevertheless, tensions and misunderstandings arising from such differences indicate a divide between younger and older feminists that inhibits cooperation.

In summary, my participants faced a number of challenges in developing their feminist identity and ideology. Both the importance of acknowledging differences among women and intergenerational tensions made it difficult to find a commonly shared conceptualisation of

feminism. Instead, many women retreated to perceiving feminism as a personal, and thus individual, approach to opposing gender inequalities. However, they shared a belief that feminism can have different meanings for different people. Gender equality seemed to be a shared goal, but the pathways to achieve it were accepted to be numerous. Such an approach makes it difficult for a women's movement to generate collective action. In the following three chapters, I investigate how the women coped with such contradictions in their feminist practice: first, as individuals, second as organisations and third through state feminism.

Chapter 6

Individualised feminism

Introduction

This is the first of three chapters to explore the levels at which women in New Zealand engage in feminist activities. I start by discussing feminist activities at the micro-level, representing individualised forms of feminist engagement. As explained in Chapter 3, the literature often characterises Third Wave feminism as dominated by such individual approaches and empirical evidence confirms this portrayal. For instance, in her study about young English women's relationships to feminism, Budgeon (2001, p.18) found that her participants 'had no sense of a collective political tradition but they exercised a politicized agency at the micro-level of everyday social relations'. As presented in this chapter, many participants of my study also adopted individualised and personalised approaches to feminism.

Following Howard (2007, p.1), I understand individualisation to be a social development in which 'the individual is widely and increasingly regarded as the fundamental agent of human action and the ultimate target of governance'. Furthermore, it is characterised by the 'disintegration of previously existing social forms — for example, the increasing fragility of such categories as class, [...] social status, gender roles' (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 2002, p.2). From this viewpoint, an emphasis on individual choices replaces the need for a collective identity (Budgeon, 2001; Rich, 2005). People take charge of their lives themselves, rather than expecting institutions or social structures to provide collective solutions. Belonging to social groups continues to play a role in individual experiences, but the meaning attached to such belonging has shifted 'to a deliberate action or affiliation' (C. Howard, 2007, p.8). For the women in my study this meant that their personal priorities and their ethnic, sexual or other forms of identification played an important role in shaping their feminist perspectives. Yet, they viewed them as individual identities rather than as the collective consciousness of a social group.

The individualism among contemporary feminists can be associated with neoliberalism and its promotion of individual responsibility (see Chapters 1 and 3). This emphasis on the individual, however, raises important questions for the examination of a women's movement. What are individualised feminist activities? How adequate are they for pursuing feminist aims? Can such activities be political?

I discuss these questions by analysing the participants' approaches to individualised feminism, including the implementation of feminism in their interpersonal relationships and private lives. I provide a selection of examples that illustrate individualism in feminist activity from varying angles. This discussion highlights that distinctions between micro-, meso- and macro-practices of feminism are often not clearly defined. Since the political value of micro-level feminism is often a point of contestation, this chapter further includes a discussion of my participants' views on whether individualised activities are, in fact, political.

Forms of individualised feminism

Sowards and Renegar (2006) stated that many contemporary feminists choose forms of activism that operate in the private sphere, such as creating grassroots models of leadership, using strategic humour, building feminist identities, sharing stories and challenging stereotypes. Harris (2010) and Budgeon (2001) similarly found that young feminists often expressed their ideas of gender equality through everyday life and personal means, sometimes without labelling these activities as 'feminist'. Furthermore, Bulbeck (2001) identified how young feminists focus on personal self-improvement by developing individual practices of feminism and working on personal challenges, as well as expressing feminism through cultural spaces such as 'zines' and all-women music bands. In my study, Alice (24, Pākehā), who was affiliated with various political and feminist groups herself, summarised these general trends towards individualism:

Feminism has become increasingly individualistic. So it's become less about the collective, so it's not even about people joining groups now. It's just people being feminists in their day-to-day lives, you know, which is totally legitimate. It's just very individualistic.

The women found a broad range of outlets for 'being feminist in their day-to-day lives' and these activities covered many aspects of their lives, including their education (e.g. choosing feminist topics in their university assignments), their art (e.g. playing in a Riot Grrrl band, writing novels about women) and leisure activities (e.g. reading feminist books, watching or avoiding certain television programmes). Some women's professional work was also a part of their individual involvement in feminism: one woman, for example, viewed her employment at a sex-toy shop as feminist work because she could help women explore their sexuality, while Kathleen (31, Pākehā) made an effort to engage with the public to 'be seen as a scientist. I don't want to be a poster girl but I think it's necessary to have women out there talking about science'. In the following, I discuss common examples of individualised feminism in more detail.

Feminist relationships

Putting their feminist values into practice in personal relationships was perceived as an important way of engaging with feminism at the micro-level. For Anne (30, Pākehā) ‘one of the most important ways of bringing around feminist change is just through your interpersonal relationships. You know, that’s where you meet and talk to the most people. Bringing up ideas and discuss them’. Other women highlighted the importance of having conversations with other women to support each other and of ‘making a difference in an individual life’ (Josephine, 41, Pākehā). In this section I explain how the participants approached their aims of ‘making change’ through their relationships with their friends, their partners, their children and their broader families, which were the four types of relationships the participants referred to most often. Some also mentioned other types of relationships (e.g. with work colleagues and church communities) but with less frequency and depth.

Friends

The majority of the participants had feminist friends or friends who did not call themselves feminist but ‘if there was some kind of feminist test they would pass it’ (Emily, 33, Pākehā). These feminist friendships were valued highly because they allowed the women to have conversations with like-minded people about feminist issues. Betty (31, Pākehā) explained why this was important to her:

The best thing is really just feeling like I’m not a weird crazy freak. Because if you are isolated it’s super-easy to feel like you are the only person who thinks this and nothing is ever going to change. By having a feminist community, if I’m having a bad day I can talk to them and so it’s probably the connection that’s the most powerful thing to me.

Betty used the word ‘powerful’ but some of the participants, including Anne (30, Pākehā), understood feminist friendships to be political:

I don’t think that you need to be part of a group in order to make some kind of change. I think that within this house [her home which she shared with feminist flatmates] we have amazing conversations and we are really supportive of each other and we talk about things along gender and sexuality and that’s not part of a group but I think that it’s really political as well.

Some participants talked about having a mixed circle of friends, including some feminists and some who are not interested in feminist topics. Others recognised that they — some purposefully, for others it ‘just happened’ — surrounded themselves with what they called their ‘feminist bubble’. They understood this ‘bubble’ as their circle of feminist friends who allowed them to avoid interaction with mainstream society. The reason for living in this ‘sort of eco-

chamber' (Gabriela, 25, Southeast Asian) was 'mostly because it got very infuriating when I didn't' (Judith, 21, Pākehā). Qiu (39, East Asian) explained:

I find it really difficult to be outside my bubble in the mainstream society, I find it really difficult. I find it difficult to watch TV without getting extremely angry and shouting at the TV. I find it hard to go to movies and not to get irked by something.

However, not all women were entirely convinced about the advantages of such a 'bubble'. Gabriela noted that in such an environment 'all of your thoughts and views get validated a lot' and her ideas did not get 'challenged a lot because I surround myself in that kind of liberal left-leaning bubble'.

Partners

Not all women talked about relationships with their partners, husbands and boy- or girlfriends during the interviews, but 15 out of 40 women shared a household with their partner and a few more indicated that they were in a relationship but lived in separate homes. Among those women who did talk about their relationships, being a feminist or holding feminist views impacted on these relationships to varying degrees. Not surprisingly, this often depended on the views of the respective partner towards feminist ideas. Few women said that their partner identified as feminist but others described them as 'supportive' or 'understanding' about feminist causes.

However, several women pointed out that the early stages of their relationships required some debates on basic principles, as Liz (58, European) explained:

I suppose in any kind of relationship with a partner, with a husband, one negotiates things and I suppose that when I first met my present husband I knew he was a little bit more conservative in some ways than I was. So you know, as I got to know him I wasn't afraid to say what I thought but I was conscious that he might have different ideas about things.

Isabella (28, European) reported a similar development and explained how her feminist values 'transformed' her relationship:

[Her partner's reflection on her feminist values] has actually transformed our relationship to what it is now, which is a very equal relationship, very respectful and [we have] high communication skills between us. So we are constantly looking at our relationship, making sure that we are being respectful of each other. So that's one example of how my politics and my views have actually transformed my daily life.

However, implementing feminist ideas in relationships did not always mean that traditional gender roles were abolished, as Liz's narrative demonstrates:

In terms of the roles we play in our relationship, I mean, some of them are quite traditional, you know, I fall into the role of the cook because I like it and I do it better

[laughs]. [...] And he tends to do more things outdoors like mowing the lawns and that. So we fall into traditional roles in that way but that doesn't mean we don't have equal respect for one another as human beings. So the basic understanding is we're equals.

While Liz seemed to be content with this division of household chores, she found it necessary to justify its traditional character by highlighting that she was the better cook and liked doing it. This might be because either her expectations, or her expectation about my feminist values, included the idea that feminists challenge traditional gender roles. Natasha (22, Pākehā) reflected on such a position:

A lot of women think that because you are a feminist they should feel bad when they do their partner's laundry or clean up after their partner or cook them something. That's not what it [equality] is. It's about making these choices and being respected for making these choices.

However, perpetuating traditional gender roles was not always a choice for the participants and some were not happy with their arrangements. Christine (31, Māori/Pākehā) illustrated her frustration around this issue:

He's really good, he helps me out a lot but it's the idea that he thinks he is helping me out rather than he should be sharing certain things with me. Like, I remember one time I had an exam [...] and he was cooking dinner. And he says to me when he's serving up 'It's ok, I don't mind cooking dinner every now and then' and I was like 'You know, I don't mind cooking dinner every now and then either! It's just having to do it all the time for everyone [that] becomes tiresome'.

As Christine's example shows, some participants struggled to implement their feminist values in their personal lives. The following section suggests that this was especially the case for those with children.

Children

Among the participants, 15 women were mothers; eight of them lived with at least one of their children and one woman shared a house with her partner and his children. Some of these mothers (6) viewed themselves as 'feminist mums', educating their children about a society that is shaped by gender inequalities. It also meant being challenged by contradictions between social expectations regarding their roles as both mothers and feminists. Consequently, some of the women interpreted child-rearing as a feminist activity, even activism. For instance, Margaret (48, Pākehā) said 'You can't do activism by not moving and parenting is probably one of the most moving things I've ever done'.

Overall, these participants reflected on the impact that feminism had on the way they raised and educated their children. Whina (35, Māori), for instance, said 'it affects the way that I

teach my children. [...] Because for me it's really important that they are fully aware and they are not walking around making ignorant comments'. Aiono (45, Samoan/East Asian/European) blamed her own mother for not encouraging her leadership qualities or being a female role model. She explained that she tried to avoid these mistakes with her own daughter, who was a strong and confident young woman:

I could have not embraced feminism in all of my cultures and all of the things I do and she [her daughter] would have been a not so significant up-and-coming leader. She would have been very different. She would probably have been a lot more damaged than I am, or I was.

Ellen (24, Pākehā) wanted to make sure her two-year-old daughter knew that gender roles are not inevitable: 'I spend a lot of time trying to show her that she can be whoever she wants and it's ok. She doesn't have to conform to be this little girl in a dress. And yeah, that's quite hard [laughs]'. Other mothers shared Ellen's assessment that countering gender norms with children was difficult. In particular, many struggled with gendered toys and clothes. Kate (26, Pākehā), mother of a six-year-old girl, lamented her daughter's taste for pink:

I try and be a feminist parent. [...] Oh my God, she is bombarded with so much crap! She is one of those kids... Well, she has basically rebelled against me: she is very pink and very purple and everything is sparkly and fluffy and makes me cringe.

Ironically, the struggle around gendered toys and clothes took a different direction when it was about a boy. Christine (31, Māori/Pākehā), mother of two children under the age of 10, said:

My son loves 'My Little Pony' and he loves [...] wondering around with a pink fairy dress [laughs]. [...] First, I kind of struggled with that because it goes against what you are led to expect from your child. But I think as a feminist I am aware of how those norms about dressing and that sort of thing are socially constructed. It [feminism] definitely has made me a lot more aware of that and sensitive, I think, to his needs and that sort of thing. And not to make a big deal out of it either.

Christine indicated that she consciously employed her feminist views in parenting to overcome her unease about her son who did not conform to gender norms. Thus, she used feminism as a guide for herself as a mother rather than as a guide for the values she wanted to teach her children (as Kate and Ellen did in the above examples regarding 'pink toys' and social norms about being a girl).

Finding a balance between being a mother and being a feminist caused further challenges for some of the women regarding the compatibility of different commitments. Practical challenges arose when childcare responsibilities interfered with feminist activities. Ellen (24, Pākehā), for example, joined a feminist collective but had not 'actually been to a meeting cos

they are at night and I have a kid'. Similarly, Rebecca (34, Pākehā) hesitated to become involved in a new feminist project during her pregnancy:

I said 'Look, maybe just wait until I have the baby because, you know, that might change everything for me. I may find that I'm not in the right space to do this'. But by the time he was three months old I was more than ready [laughs] to start doing something outside that home environment.

One way of dealing with such practical challenges was to become involved in online activism. Since blogs, Facebook groups and similar forums can be moderated at any time of the day and between parenting tasks, some of the mothers interviewed took on leadership roles in feminist collectives and groups that relied on internet-based organisation. Ideological challenges, however, were harder to resolve. Christine (31, Māori/Pākehā) explained that she struggled with the different roles she was meant to perform:

As a woman I don't just wanna be a mother. I don't like that part of my identity being singled out as the most important thing about me because I am so much more than that. So I definitely struggle in that respect. Especially trying to balance what I want from life with what my children need.

While social expectations about being a mother conflicted with Christine's own desire to be recognised as a more complex person than 'just a mother', Ellen (24, Pākehā) found two of her own value sets colliding: while she disliked conforming to social norms of living in a 'mother, father, child' household, she wanted to provide security for her daughter:

As a mother you have to fit into a certain number of things [laughs] and it's really tough, especially with family. Everybody wants you immediately to have a nuclear family. You know, with [her daughter's] dad and stuff like that. And as a feminist I don't believe that is the case but as a mother I really want that cos it's security in this society.

This discussion of feminist parenting has shown that feminist mothers are not immune to social expectations and norms that sometimes contradict their individual values. It has also demonstrated that several mothers interviewed consciously implemented feminist ideas when parenting their children, turning child-rearing into a feminist activity.

Extended families

All of the participants who viewed the dynamics between feminism and their extended family members (other than their children and partners) as important were women from ethnic minority groups. This is possibly because the feminist approach taken by most Māori participants highlighted the importance of whānau (extended family) for the empowerment of women, and

Asian participants tended to encounter conflicts within their families about feminist values in relation to cultural norms.

For some women it was important to take the time to discuss feminist issues with their families. Since Whina (35, Māori) worked for an organisation in the sexual violence sector, her family members often raised certain issues in her presence:

There's always stories they are hearing about someone who's either been sexually assaulted or raped and they [...] will say things like 'She shouldn't have worn what she wore!' and 'Why did she go to that place at that time of the night?' [...] They make really flippant comments like that. And I turn around and say something like 'Yeah but it's not her! [...] How come he didn't ask for permission first? Where is his responsibility in it?' And they usually end up being quite interesting conversations, very robust conversations. They happen all the time.

Thus, Whina made an effort to educate her family about issues of 'victim blaming'⁵⁴. Christine (31, Māori/Pākehā) was less certain about how she should approach sexist comments made by her father:

It's hard to know... when do you say something? Because if I every time... like, he is not, what's the word? Like nastily... He's just a guy of that age, do you know what I mean? [...] And so, how often are you meant to challenge that?

One major difference between these two participants was that Whina, due to her job at the sexual violence organisation, was used to having conversations that challenged people's attitudes. In contrast, Christine did not have this kind of experience. Hence, Whina was able to transfer her work skills into her private life. It is also possible that different power-dynamics affect the participants' relationships with their fathers and other whānau members.

For a number of participants with various Asian backgrounds it was also challenging to discuss feminist issues with their family members (often their fathers), but for different reasons. When referring to a dinner party organised by her father, a Chinese woman (Qiu, 39) explained 'And he would be embarrassed, laugh and say "Don't mind my daughter; she thinks she's a feminist!" [...] That same little line was how my father as a misogynistic Chinese male viewed women'. While she did not imply that Chinese culture was inherently misogynistic, she found it necessary to highlight her father's Chinese ethnicity in this context. She was not the only participant to do so. Other Asian women emphasised, in similar narratives, that their parents held more conservative views about gender roles than their own generation. Such an issue was sometimes combined with difficulties around language: 'my family is migrant and their

⁵⁴ Victim blaming describes a discourse that holds people responsible for harm done to them. For instance, in the context of sexual assault victim blaming involves assumptions about the victim having 'asked for it' by way of behaviour or dress.

understanding of English language is actually quite limited in itself. So it [feminism] is just too big of a conversation' (Phoolan, 23, Southeast Asian). Mainly young Asian women like Phoolan talked about difficulties communicating their feminist values to their parents. In these instances it was hard to distinguish generational differences from alleged incompatibilities between certain cultures and feminist values. This intersection of cultural and generational differences was manifested in the experience of Gabriela (25, Southeast Asian), who attended a traditional debut ceremony⁵⁵ with her father. She felt opposed to certain patriarchal aspects of this event, but she did not confront them at the time. She said:

I feel like that's a part of you, you have to close off at certain things. [...] It's just not the right time and place to be doing that. Which is a bit different from if I was at home and having dinner with my dad or something, [then] I wouldn't be afraid to vocalise these sorts of things. But I was with my dad and it was in a big group setting, lots of cultural expectations and a lot of expectations about me and my dad and about our place at the debut so... you know.

This anecdote shows how implementing feminist values into individual lives can be complicated by intersectional issues. This young woman appreciated the importance of the cultural event to her father although her feminist ideals were not reflected in the ceremony. Weighing her feminist identification against cultural norms resulted in her decision not to speak up at this event but to raise concerns with her father at home. Thus, she did not abandon her feminism but adapted to situational priorities of her identity in deciding where and when she articulated her opinions (see Chapter 5).

Self-improvement and self-interest

The most individualised reason for engaging with feminism is related to the idea of self-improvement (Bulbeck, 2001). Some of the participants used a feminist lens to critically reflect on their own situatedness within society and consequently adjust their view about themselves. Betty (31, Pākehā), for example, said 'I'm always examining myself and looking for flaws and trying to improve', while Li (20, East Asian) acknowledged 'I'm more open to ideas and more tolerant of people's lifestyles and less judgemental. I think it [feminism] made me more empathetic to people. [...] And I feel like I'm less of a pushover now because I have feminism on my side.' One participant emphasised that 'because of feminism I am able to look at my history of sexual abuse which has felt good. I mean, hard but really empowering'. Thus, these women used their feminism to personally 'improve' on many different levels. Characteristic of all such attempts was the focus on themselves as individual people.

⁵⁵ She refers to a coming-of-age celebration for young women at the age 18.

This was also true for those women who described a connection between their feminist views and their acceptance of their bodies. Meri (27, Pākehā/Māori), for example, explained how feminism impacted on ‘the way that I see myself, my own body, my friends, my friends’ bodies’. Overall, there seemed to be an expectation that feminists are able to ignore mainstream society’s beauty standards because of their feminist analysis of gendered norms and the social construction of such standards. However, this expectation did not necessarily reflect the women’s realities. Natasha (22, Pākehā), for example, explained how her feminist values theoretically embrace a body image that regarded all sizes as healthy and dismisses fatphobic ideas. However, she also stated that ‘in practice I’m very critical with myself’. Similarly, Rosa (28, Māori) faced contradictions between what she thought a ‘good feminist’ should look like and her wish to be attractive:

Sometimes [...] I feel like looking nice. I want to feel attractive. And so I’ll dress in a way that makes me feel attractive. But I don’t want to look too sexy, you know? It’s kind of always... I’m always judging myself, I guess [laughs]. You know, I want to be a good feminist but I also want to feel attractive — but not too attractive.

Rosa experienced a conflict that many feminists seem to negotiate individually (Baumgardner & Richards, 2003a). However, this personal conflict is closely linked to debates between younger and older generations about sex-positive and lipstick feminism (see Chapter 3 and 5). Thus, there are parallels between the questions around body image that the women negotiate with themselves (e.g. how ‘sexy’ can I dress and still be feminist?) and how groups of feminists (e.g. different generations) criticise each other. These questions can become relevant on a broader level, as shown by the example of SlutWalk that is discussed in the following section.

SlutWalk

SlutWalk is an international project that started in 2011 in Toronto and organised a series of protest marches in response to a police officer’s advice that female students should not dress like ‘sluts’ in order to avoid sexual harassment (Maddison, 2013b). Many of the participating protesters wore revealing clothes on these marches, chanting ‘Whatever we wear, wherever we go, yes means yes, no means no!’ The New Zealand version of this project, SlutWalk Aotearoa, included marches in several cities in 2011, 2012 and 2013. Thus, overall, SlutWalk is *not* an example of individual feminist engagement. I include it in this discussion because of the individual approach many of my participants took when responding to the conflicts sparked by SlutWalk within feminist communities.

SlutWalk is a sex-positive feminist movement with a strong focus on women’s bodies, clothing and reclaiming the word ‘slut’ (O’Keefe, 2011; Savage, 2011). However, interpretations

of the project's aim vary among organisers and participants. Internationally and within New Zealand, many feminists raised concerns about the promotion of 'sexy' clothing and the necessity of reclaiming the word 'slut'. These critics emphasised that there were differences in the severity of stereotypes and stigma women of different backgrounds have to face when they are called a 'slut'. Therefore, SlutWalk was criticised for mainly reflecting the perspective of privileged, heterosexual, white middle-class women who face less obstacles when identifying as sluts. In the case of SlutWalk Aotearoa, this debate became more complicated because the main organising team was relatively small (four women, according to one of my participants), but nevertheless included one Filipino and one queer woman.

The following two quotes, which represent the perspectives of a Māori woman and a Pākehā woman, illustrate how individual women responded differently to such debates, despite both being generally supportive of the cause behind SlutWalk. The Māori woman explained why she did not attend SlutWalk:

It is a privilege to be able to dress provocatively and actually not be abused by people. [...] People do get victimised when they do dress like that and that's often stratified by race and ethnicity and other variables. I felt a bit torn by that too because I have... I put in a sexual harassment claim for a lecturer at university and so I didn't want to be associated with anything that would glorify being a slut because I had been on the receiving end of that [...].

Conversely, the Pākehā woman said:

I definitely saw a lot of value [in SlutWalk] for myself. I guess I just felt with all the concerns about cultural accessibility and stuff... I put them aside for the day and do something because it was quite significantly personal to me, you know. But it's a hard one to juggle when you know it's really empowering, especially as a [sexual violence] survivor [...] but there is a problem with cultural exclusion.

Both women were aware of complaints regarding the cultural insensitivity of the SlutWalk movement and while the Pākehā woman participated in SlutWalk, the Māori woman did not. Interestingly, both women acknowledged in the first part of their quotes that they understood the *structural* dimension of such cultural difficulties, but both women rationalised their decision of whether or not to participate by relating those difficulties to their *individual* experiences of sexual abuse. Thus, they prioritised personal factors in a debate about cultural inequalities and white privilege. For the Pākehā woman, it was personally important to participate because SlutWalk empowered her in her journey as a survivor of sexual violence. Her privileged position enabled her to put her concerns about inclusiveness 'aside for the day'. The Māori woman, who was in a different position because of her ongoing sexual harassment claim, felt that any association made between herself and the word 'slut' would discredit her stand in this claim.

A question that arises from this debate is whether there is value in feminist struggles that are important to privileged women only. Virginia (26, Pākehā) related this issue to SlutWalk and said:

[The cultural debate around SlutWalk] really ostracises people and then leaves [marginalised] people with the question of should I support these privileged women with their march, cos yeah, it's a good cause? Or should I say that I'm fucking angry cos I've been left out of this and I'm not gonna march with you because you thought it was too complicated to include my perspective in this? So yeah, that's really difficult.

Virginia's approach to this dilemma was to frame it as an individual problem and not as one that SlutWalk needed to approach as a movement. Like the two women quoted before, she put the responsibility of deciding whether or not to take part on individual participants of the march, even though the problem reflects power imbalances between privileged and marginalised groups of women on a structural level. Therefore, this discussion of SlutWalk, one of the most prominent projects by Third Wave feminists to date, has shown that many feminists tend to approach challenges arising within international, large-scale activist projects from an individual perspective.

Misogyny Busters

Misogyny Busters, another example of recent feminist activism, illustrates the way internet-based social media tools facilitate the efficient mobilisation of individuals for feminist causes. Since this incident happened well after my interviews were completed, I did not have the chance to ask my participants about this case. However, this is a particularly relevant example of contemporary feminist activism in New Zealand and thus appropriate to discuss in my thesis. I draw on media reports and my personal experience as a member of the broader organising team for the 'Bust Rape Culture' protest march in Auckland on 16 November 2013.

In November 2013, the 'Roast Busters case' received considerable media attention across New Zealand. A journalist drew attention to a Facebook page run by young men who boasted about their sexual encounters with underage girls, including narratives about (group) rape. This evoked public outrage and discussion about the prevention of sexual assault. As part of this discourse, Willie Jackson and John Tamihere interviewed an 18 year old friend of one of the Roast Buster's victims on their Radio Live show, asking about the girl's alcohol consumption and suggesting that the Roast Busters were not rapists because some of the victims allegedly found them to be handsome initially (Dougan, 2013).

Reacting to this public ‘victim blaming’, a small number of people formed a Facebook group called Misogyny Busters and successfully pressured companies such as Countdown and Telecom to withdraw their advertisements from Jackson and Tamihere’s radio show. This occurred over the course of a few hours as people were encouraged to post demands on these companies’ Facebook pages, asking them to distance themselves from the radio show by withdrawing their advertisements. These events significantly contributed to the suspension of the show.

The Misogyny Busters’ call for participation through Facebook mobilised a large number of individual people. Those who posted on the companies’ pages were not part of any collective or physical group. Many probably did not identify as feminists. I argue that most of these people were mobilised because it was made easy for them to engage. They did not have to interact with anyone in person, join a group or attend an event. They were simply asked to post a pre-formulated statement on the companies’ pages (which only took a few minutes). This shows that individualised feminist actions that are executed entirely online can result in tangible outcomes outside the online sphere and that individual actions combined can be directed at a collective goal.

Craftivism

Craftivism adopts the use of individual skills (e.g. knitting, stitching and, occasionally, baking) to counter the effects of individualism among women by applying these skills to feminist activism and adding political value to them. In this way, the term ‘craftivism’ describes the combination of craft with political activism. Overall, this approach promotes a do-it-yourself (DIY) culture in opposition to capitalist consumerism and, therefore, sits in line with other left-leaning social justice communities. Craftivist groups have spread to many countries worldwide and often use ‘yarn bombing’ or ‘guerrilla knitting’ as forms of street art that combine knitted and crocheted elements with political messages. Often, such collectives run online platforms (e.g. blogs and Facebook groups) to promote their activism and network among members or other collectives (Pentney, 2008).

Since crafts like knitting are historically feminine skills, some strands of Third Wave feminism have adopted the ideas of craftivism and added a feminist slant. This became particularly popular after Stoller (2003) published her book *Stitch’n Bitch: The Knitters Handbook*. In this book, Stoller advertises crafts such as knitting and stitching as a way to build political women’s communities. In New Zealand, several craftivist collectives operate on rather informal levels. The Woolly Poles Project, for example, introduced yarn bombing to the

Auckland suburb of Devonport (Gordon, 2013), while the University of Auckland Campus Feminist Collective (CFC) hosted several events under the title 'Stich'n Bitch'. The Wellington Craftivism Collective (2013) explicitly adopted a feminist Third Wave perspective and runs a website as well as a zine. However, not everyone who engaged in craftivist activities is part of a collective or group.

Some interview participants occasionally attended craftivist events or engaged in craftivist activities as individuals. Anne (30, Pākehā) was one of the participants who associated craftivism with feminism and explained this relationship in a historic context:

Women used to come together and they used to knit or they would hand down all of these skills and it doesn't seem like that same kind of sharing of skills and working through things [is still being done] like we used to before, we are so much more individualised... so this 'Stitch 'n Bitch' is a reaction to that.

In this statement, Anne perceived craftivism as a development that counters individualism because it brings women together to craft. Moreover, many of the women saw value in 'taking something that is traditionally women's work and putting it in a public place', as Rebecca (34, Pākehā) stated. While some women highlighted anti-capitalist and environmentally-friendly values of reusing material instead of buying new commodities, some participants also saw business opportunities for women. Sylvia (52, Pākehā) pointed out 'Who is doing it? You know, 90 percent of the people involved are women. So they are the ones who want to be entrepreneurial and do cottage industries and do things that fit in with their life styles'.

However, the relationship between craft and feminism has an ambivalent history, leading to different interpretations of the feminist and political value of knitting, especially between women of different generations. Christine (31, Māori/Pākehā) for example, was disappointed that her mother never passed on this skill to her: 'She [her mother] doesn't value those things. I guess, because they are the typical women's domain. I do value them because I don't see value only in typically male things'. Qiu (39, East Asian) explained such different value sets, stating that feminists in the 1970s 'needed to make a real stand against everything that was traditionally feminine in roles, in their household, domestic chores'. Consequently, Qiu and other participants interpreted craftivism as a way of consciously reclaiming traditionally feminine skills and adding positive values to them. This in itself was understood as a feminist act. Knitted, stitched and crocheted objects have also often displayed political messages and, in the case of yarn bombing, been displayed in public spaces. Some projects even employed practical politics such as fundraising. All of these characteristics add to craftivism's characterisation as both political and feminist (Gordon, 2013; Harris, 2010).

Not all participants, however, agreed with this interpretation. One woman, Andrea (33, Pākehā), passionately argued:

You can't knit in a feminist way because to say that you can knit in a feminist way implies that you can knit in an un-feminist way. And I think that that's quite derogatory towards women who have been knitting for pleasure and for purpose, you know?

Her statement illustrates that the feminist value of craftivism is contested. But it also shows that craftivism is another example of Third Wave feminism's ability to evoke intergenerational debate about feminist methods rather than feminist values or aims (see Chapter 5).

Taking feminism to different fields

As Chapter 5's discussion of the importance of intersectional approaches to my participants' feminism showed, many women not only had an interest in feminism but also in other social justice issues and some perceived them to be inseparably intertwined. Consequently, many of my participants were also involved in other areas of activism, mostly in anarchist and socialist circles but also in advocacy for the transgender community, tino rangatiratanga (Māori sovereignty) and animal rights. While my discussion of Beckwith's (2001) conceptualisation of 'women in political movements' showed that such engagements are not part of a women's movement, they are relevant in the context of individualised feminism. By becoming involved with other social justice causes, these women brought their feminist values to these other areas without the support of a feminist collective but as individuals within these other communities. This was often a difficult task because activist circles on the political left were not necessarily open to feminist input.

Several women found socialist or anarchist activist groups to be dominated by male members. For example, Chen (22, East Asian) stated '[There was] a particular male member who would just be really dominating and controlling the group and he was also older'. Anne (30, Pākehā) said that 'there is conflict within some activist groups around issues of gender and patriarchy', and Meri (27, Pākehā/Māori) reported:

The activist scene in New Zealand [...] is still very sexist. But it's much more... it's quite hidden. Because a lot of activist men have read a lot of feminist theory and know 'Oh you know you can't outwardly say that but you can get a woman alone and get her drunk and have sex with her without asking her if that's ok. And that's, you know, that's different'. It's not at all. But that kind of thing goes on all the time.

Accordingly, it was a challenge for women to be involved in such groups and, in several instances, my participants eventually decided to leave or reduce their involvement. Ellen (24,

Pākehā), for example, reported her experiences with Occupy⁵⁶, which was still ongoing at the time of the interview:

I had a lot to do with Occupy but there's... I rooted out a guy a couple of weeks ago cause he was sexually harassing women there. And it got really bad. And a couple of the older white men there said that he wasn't doing anything wrong and we were hanging around with our c-words out. And as a result I've stepped back a bit.

She was not the only participant who retreated from sexist activist environments and focused on alternative circles. But there was also some feminist resistance. Isabella (28, European), who was involved in the organising team of Occupy (in a different city than Ellen), said that she received harsh criticism from participating men who 'find it very challenging that there is a woman holding a space for people to meet and having communication and they can't run the show'. But she also reported:

There was a group that was called 'Smash Patriarchy'. So lots of ideas of how to challenge patriarchy within the occupation came up. So they have been working on that; on how to actually change that power dynamic.

Fortunately, my participants also reported about activist communities that did not have problems with sexism and incorporated feminist perspectives well. Parts of the animal rights scene and Auckland Action Against Poverty⁵⁷, for example, were named by some participants as activist environments that successfully adopted an intersectional analysis — including feminism — in their approaches to social justice.

Outside grassroots activism, some participants similarly reported that unions and some religious groups were open to feminist perspectives. In most examples, my participants linked such positive narratives to the influence of strong individual women within these circles.

The personal and the political

When explaining the individual focus of their feminist practices, some participants used the catchphrase 'the personal is political' (Hanisch, 1970) to justify why they understood their personal conversations with friends about feminism, their negotiations of gender roles with their partners and husbands, and other personal life choices to be political. However, as one participant pointed out and as I indicated in Chapter 3, Hanisch's essay argued the opposite. It

⁵⁶ As explained in Chapter 2, the Occupy movement demanded economic equality by occupying public spaces.

⁵⁷ Its website explains that 'Auckland Action Against Poverty is a direct action and education group mobilising against the neoliberal agenda on jobs, welfare and poverty' (see AAAP, <http://aaap.org.nz/>; retrieved 15 January 2014).

discussed how personal women's issues need to be tackled by a movement rather than the individual because they originate in systematic inequalities that can only be fixed by changes in the political context. Hanisch (1970, p.77) declared 'There are no personal solutions at this time. There is only collective action for a collective solution'. Thus, how can individualised forms of feminist activity be political?

The literature defining what constitutes the 'political' is enormous and covers a broad range of viewpoints. Warren (1999, p.210) presented an approach that critiqued power relations and viewed the political as institutionally unbound (unlike many other definitions):

any concept of politics must cover the increasing number of actions, relationships, processes, and institutions that in ordinary language we call 'political': everything from cultural contest to terrorism, from distributional issues to those of self-identity, and from democratic deliberation to authoritarian imposition.

Following this broad definition, the examples discussed in this chapter can be interpreted as political. However, rather than measuring my participants' activities against such a definition, I am interested in exploring the political value the women themselves assigned to their feminist engagements and how strictly feminist activity can be separated from their personal lives.

Political and collective potential of individualised practices

Not all participants believed that individualised feminist activities were political and it was mainly the younger women who did. These women claimed that feminism was a tool for analysing their environments which helped them to understand and challenge gender inequalities in everyday experiences (see Chapter 5). For them, the line between the private and political spheres was blurred. They indicated that being a feminist and engaging in feminist activities was not confined to certain aspects of their lives. Rather, the women stated that they applied a feminist lens to everything they did. Susan (23, Pākehā) argued 'I feel like it almost got to the point where I've done feminism for so long that I can't turn it off'. Nana (28, Southeast Asian) described this mind-set as being a '24/7 feminist':

I'm continuously aware and analysing the circumstances around me. Whether it is my interactions with people on a one-to-one basis or if it's with group identities or group collective networking and stuff like that. So when I say [I am a] 24/7 feminist it also means that I'm quite analytical about the choices I make in my personal life, in the relationships that I have with people, friends as well as family and in the political work that I do. [...] Kind of like ticking, ticking, ticking, 24/7 [laughs].

For some participants, this mind-set was linked to their work. Isabella (28, European), who worked as an educator in the area of sexual violence prevention, explained that she needed to employ the feminist values she taught in her workshops in her personal life: 'If it's good enough

for the young people [educated by her organisation], we need to be doing that ourselves because otherwise we are just hypocrites. It's gotta be something that we actually believe in to be able to tell someone else'.

Other women's statements also suggested that their everyday practices were motivated by broader political aims. Meri (27, Pākehā/Māori), for example, stated 'if, in my political ideal, I want to limit as much social inequality as possible, I can practice that in my personal life, you know, simply by... if I'm grumpy not being rude to someone else'. Often participants explained that everyday practices of feminism, such as challenging someone on a sexist joke or changing someone's idea about 'victim blaming', counted as valuable achievements for feminism. Josephine (41, Pākehā) elaborated on the importance of this:

Small victories often mean the most, making a difference in an individual life. Although the big picture is important, it's sometimes more difficult to get people motivated in the big picture because it often takes a long time to get it organised or get stuff done. Whereas sometimes it's easier to focus on a smaller issue first and then slowly move forward.

Many of the women who shared similar views mentioned how rewarding it was to change people's opinions through individual conversations. Such small victories helped them to remain motivated as feminists. This helped to overcome the frustration associated with the slow and often futile activities of 'bigger picture' activism (e.g. advocating law changes and equal pay/pay equity). Therefore, these forms of individualised feminist activities not only aimed for (small) incremental social change, but also served as one way to sustain feminist motivation among the women, which is important for any broader women's movement.

For other women, however, the relationship between their individual activities and political aspirations was initially not intentional. Some feminist groups were established to share personal experiences and to provide a support network for the members themselves. Nana (28, Southeast Asian) talked about one of the collectives she belonged to, which addressed Asian women only. She explicitly stated that the initial purpose of this group was primarily to support the members themselves, who experienced intersectional marginalisation in their daily lives: 'we wanted a space where you can go "Oh my God, I know what you mean!" And so for us it's also self-fulfilling. It's not just something we can do for other people. It's like so we can all feel healthy as feminists [laughs]'. While this collective started as a support group, it has continued to be involved in various types of activism. Phoolan (23, Southeast Asian), who was a member of the same group, explained:

That's quite an informal group. It's supposed to be social support-based but it's kind of, I guess, becoming whatever it's becoming, which is more politically active than

the original intention, which was just to share our experiences with being non-male in a Eurocentric society.

It is possible that the initial personal and self-directed focus on supporting Asian feminists was necessary to create a safe environment for the members, which in turn enabled their further political involvement. I address the purposes of feminist organisational work in more detail in the following chapter. However, in the context of this discussion it is important to note that the women's individualised and personal motives impacted on the feminist work done within groups and collectives.

Moreover, engaging in individualised feminism did not necessarily mean that feminists were not connected with each other. Most participants in this study were involved in multiple feminist projects. Some participants who were particularly active online were also members of feminist grassroots collectives, while others who valued their 'feminist bubble' in their leisure time worked for women's organisations as their day-jobs. Additionally, some participants emphasised that New Zealand is a small country with an even smaller feminist community. Virginia (26, Pākehā) explained how this enabled an informal way of networking:

People know who people are. [...] There's multiple ways of how you can connect in but I guess if you don't find one of those ways then it's a bit of an abstract collective. So it might be quite hard to start getting involved with. Then once you are involved a little bit you know people that know people or whatever [...] If some of my friends or someone who I've done an action with before wants to do an action [...] then someone will call something and people will come together.

Nana (28, Southeast Asia) described the feminist scene in a similar way:

People know them, and if you know someone, you know someone. So it's quite a sub-culture in a sense but it's definitely there. And the way I know it is because if there is an injustice happening and I need to go somewhere to shout about it, I know who to go to, I know who to find.

New social media, in particular Facebook, have facilitated the advance of such informal networks between individual — if mainly young — feminists. The earlier example of *Misogyny Busters* highlighted its potential for rapid mobilisation.

Opposing views

Not all participants thought individualism was beneficial to feminism. The reasons for this were diverse. Some women refused to engage in personal conversations and arguments about feminism, especially with non-feminists, for personal motives. Virginia (26, Pākehā), for instance, explained in colourful language:

I try to not have conversations [about feminist issues] in my personal life anymore with people that I don't know very well who it seems really clear that I'm gonna have a very different perspective to them and I'm gonna have to explain myself. Or they're gonna say shit and I just can't be fucked telling them how fucked their idea was.

Thus, the same activities some women saw as rewarding and central to social change (see last section) were regarded as tiring and draining by others. Virginia was not alone with this stance, as a number of particularly younger women tried to avoid certain situations because, as Anne (30, Pākehā) clarified, they 'just couldn't be bothered having the argument or the debate with somebody. You know, sometimes you just can't be bothered to go into Feminism 101'. While Anne was one of the women who did see feminist value in conversations with other women, she — at least sometimes — limited them to *feminists*. This again raises the question as to whether 'preaching to the converted' is an appropriate tool for achieving social change.

Other women doubted that social change could occur through individual choices or activities. Nana (28, Southeast Asian), for example, worked for a domestic violence organisation and disagreed that day-to-day activities such as having conversations about feminist topics have the ability to raise awareness. She explained:

[It is frustrating] how people think that with more awareness things will get better. It doesn't work that way! Especially when you talk about family violence and you are talking about violence and discrimination against girls and young women. Just because people know that it's not ok does not necessarily mean that criminal statistic will reduce.

Andrea (33, Pākehā) had a similar dislike for ascribing political value to activities when she thought there was none:

Often people think that 'the personal is political' means I don't know... God knows... there is something political in wearing make-up or not wearing make-up or any of those things. [...] That's a trend that I really disagree with — the individualism as politics. I don't think it is politics.[...] The way you live your life is about dealing with it and finding the best circumstances and the strongest way forward for you. And politics is when you get together with other people and try to make something better.

Andrea was concerned because some feminists viewed individualised activities as political while she did not. Alice (24, Pākehā) had a similar complaint about feminist activities turning into social events: 'I worry about some of the feminist stuff that's coming up that it is so focused on having fun and having lots of cupcakes and whatever that it gets forgotten that it is a political kind of thing'.

Interestingly, both the harshest critics of and the strongest advocates for individualised feminism were found among the younger participants and those belonging to the 'mid-

generation'. Possibly, older women were either less aware of such feminist activities, or appreciated that young women were engaging in feminism at all. Overall, the women interviewed had different understandings about the political impact of individualised feminist activities, which is linked to the variety of individualised activities in which the women engaged. The examples of such activities presented in this chapter illustrated various approaches to individualised activities and explained a range of concerns and contradictions associated with this micro-level of the women's movement.

Conclusion: The role of individualised feminism in the women's movement

As this chapter has shown, individualised feminist activity can take many forms and, as a result, the role these activities play in the broader women's movement varies with these forms. Often, however, authors critical of Third Wave feminism reject individualised feminism as 'politically regressive' (Mann & Huffman, 2005, p.74) or postfeminist (Kinser, 2004) and question the potential of such approaches for inducing social change. Instead, large collective events, such as the protests of the Second Wave movement, are viewed as the classic example of feminist activity that *is* capable of creating a collective consciousness and being politically relevant. While such large events are still occasionally held (e.g. SlutWalk, Bust Rape Culture), many of my participants explained that they did not like attending them — even when they supported the cause — because they found them too stressful; they could not participate because of health, time or parenting issues or they did not know anyone else who engaged with such activism and did not feel comfortable participating on their own. Thus, this form of collective activism does not appear to be the most appropriate approach for all contemporary feminists.

However, I have argued that individualised forms of feminist activity play an important role in the broader women's movement. For instance, they maintain personal momentum for individual feminists. While large and collective feminist events are rare, and major, society-altering feminist victories even less common, in this chapter I have suggested that small successes in personal lives are realistically achievable and help feminists remain motivated to pursue broader political struggles. One participant further pointed out that embracing and incorporating feminist values in everyday life is necessary for becoming a credible feminist role model for others. Feminist DIY projects, such as the production of zines (e.g. *Mellow Yellow*, *MUSE*), internet blogs (e.g. *The Hand Mirror*, *Tulia Thompson*, *Stargazer*) or craftivist groups

(e.g. Stitch'n Bitch) also have the advantage of creating confined spaces in which women feel safe to have discussions and develop feminist ideas.

Despite such advantages, this chapter has also shown that individualised forms of feminist engagement create conflicts and challenges for feminists. For instance, not all participants agreed about the usefulness of individualised activities and some criticised them for making feminism 'too fun', distracting women from more serious feminist struggles against gender inequalities. Moreover, by using debates about the SlutWalk as an example, I further demonstrated individualised approaches to structural issues (e.g. relative privilege among women) to be problematic. A reversed interpretation of 'the personal is political' (Hanisch, 1970) seemed to be guiding such a tactics.

However, individualism among feminists is arguably a less isolated stance today than it would have been during the time of the Second Wave movement. I have explained that social media tools provide new ways of networking on an informal level that individuals can use without having to join a group. They also allow the rapid mobilisation of large numbers of women when necessary. Many, mainly young, participants who used such tools did not see the need for networking through physical groups with regular meetings and official constitutions because they perceived online networks as less binding and equally effective for sharing information and organising events. Nevertheless, many interview participants *were* members of women's organisations that operated on a more formal level. The next chapter explores this meso-level of feminist activity.

Chapter 7

Organisational feminism

Introduction

Moving from the micro-level discussed in the previous chapter to the meso-level of feminist activity, this chapter investigates the role of organisations in New Zealand's women's movement. Many women's organisations, such as the National Council of Women and the Māori Women's Welfare League, have a long history in New Zealand (Else, 1993; Olsson, 1992). They and others have contributed to feminist work and are key political agents (Martin, 1990; Staggenborg & Taylor, 2005).

However, many women's organisations in New Zealand have significant limitations on their work dictated by contracts and partnerships with government, restricting their political agency (Grey & Sedgwick, 2013b). Aimers (2011) offered a critical analysis of the impact of neoliberal policy on New Zealand's women's organisations and Vanderpyl (2004) provided a detailed discussion on the role and struggles of feminist organisations. I build on this research and contextualise the work of women's organisations within a discussion of the political opportunities available to them. This chapter further highlights the variety of organisations that constitute this meso-level of feminism. However, it is not my aim to offer an in-depth analysis of the organisations' specific activities. Rather, I focus on the diversity of issues and approaches adopted by the organisations as a means to understand what types of organisations are relevant to a women's movement and why some organisations' approaches contribute to the public perception that the women's movement is inactive.

For the purpose of exploring these issues, I draw upon two sources of empirical data. This study's interview data allowed much insight into the work of the organisations because most of my interview participants were involved with at least one group, organisation or institution. Some were employees of service providers, others volunteered with charitable organisations, and further women were members of activist groups. However, interview data can only reflect the subjective views of a small number of women. Therefore, I use additional data from a content analysis of 20 organisations' websites, which focussed on how these organisations present themselves.

I first conceptualise both ‘women’s’ and ‘feminist’ organisations and discuss how the organisations included in my analysis fit each of these criteria. I then explore how neoliberal and Third Way policy affected the structures and funding opportunities of NGOs generally, explaining how these developments have created competition and fragmentation in the non-profit sector. This is followed by a discussion of how the organisations analysed deal with differences among women, both their clientele and staff, and I briefly explore forms of cooperation between different organisations. To conclude, I elaborate on the importance of women’s organisations as a part of the women’s movement.

Conceptualising women’s organisations

When investigating women’s organisations, it is first necessary to clarify what constitutes ‘women’s organisations’. Table 7.1 lists the 20 organisations included in the website analysis and groups them into different types: service providers (10), advocacy groups (8), networks (4), unions (2), recreational clubs (1), and research associations (1), with some organisations falling into more than one of these categories. While the last three categories are self-explanatory, the first three categories require further explanation. I understand a ‘service provider’ to be an organisation that provides services and programmes to their clientele. The types of services and forms of delivery vary significantly across organisations. Such differences and their impacts are clarified in the following discussion. According to Boris and Mosher-Williams (1998, p.488), advocacy describes ‘efforts to influence public policy’ and includes civic involvement in non-profit organisations (e.g. public education, the mobilisation of civic and political participation). Differentiating between these two categories is important at a practical level because it impacts upon the organisation’s eligibility for charity status and most government partnerships, which can include a ‘gag clause’⁵⁸ (Grey & Sedgwick, 2013b). As Aimers (2011) highlighted, registration as a charity is only open to organisations that do not (primarily) lobby for political change or engage in political advocacy. This can have severe financial consequences for an organisation because certain benefits (e.g. tax relief) are available only to those with the status of a charity. The National Council of Women (NCWNZ), which had been a registered charity for years, likely felt this impact because it was deregistered by the Charities Commission in 2010 and was only reinstated as a charity after proving that its main focus was the promotion of the

⁵⁸ Gag clauses prohibit partnering organisations from engaging in political advocacy. However, even when such clauses do not exist, many organisations still fear an end to their government if they express critical opinions (Grey & Sedgwick, 2013a, 2013b).

status of women, with any political agenda only being ancillary (The Charities Registration Board, 2013).

A union, according to the website of the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (2013), is an organisation ‘which supports employees in the workplace by acting as an advocate for them and standing up for their rights’. While the New Zealand Prostitute Collective is not an official union, it also fits into this definition.

Table 7.1: Organisations used for the website analysis

Name of the organisation		Type^a
Abortion Law Reform Association	(ALRANZ)	Advocacy group
Central Region Eating Disorder Services	(CREDS)	Service provider
Child Poverty Action Group	(CPAG)	Advocacy group
Kapiti Living Without Violence	(KLWV)	Service provider
Māori Women’s Welfare League (Opotiki)	(OMWWL)	Service provider + network
National Advisory Council on the Employment of Women	(NACEW)	Advocacy group
National Council of Women	(NCWNZ)	Advocacy group + network
New Zealand Nurses Organisation	(NZNO)	Union
New Zealand Prostitute Collective	(NZPC)	Union
NZ Division of Women’s International Motorcycling Association	(NZWIMA)	Recreational club + network
Pacific Allied (Women’s) Council Inspires Faith in Ideals Concerning All	(PACIFICA)	Advocacy group
Rainbow Youth		Service provider
Rural Women in New Zealand	(RWNZ)	Advocacy group + service provider
Salvation Army		Service provider
Shakti		Service provider
Shine		Service provider +advocacy group
Wellington Webgrrls		Network
Women’s Health Action Trust	(WHA)	Advocacy group + service provider
Women’s Refuge		Service provider
Women’s Studies Association	(WSA)	Research association

^a The ‘types’ discussed here differ slightly from the similar classification in Chapter 4 because of the different foci of these chapters.

While these 20 organisations cover a broad range of work, I conceptualise all of them as women’s organisations because they meet the following two criteria: they work on women’s issues and a significant part of the organisations’ clientele⁵⁹ are women. While many of these

⁵⁹ By ‘clientele’ I refer to people using the services and facilities of an organisation, attending its events or being the main beneficiaries of its advocacy work. This group of people may or may not overlap with those working in and for the organisation.

organisations have a mainly female staff⁶⁰, I do not claim that work on women's issues needs to be done by women only. Accordingly, this is not part of my conceptualisation of women's organisations.

Table 7.2 relates these criteria to the characteristics of the 20 organisations I analysed. The column titled 'Main focus' shows their broad spectrum of work including several different forms of community support (e.g. for ethnic communities, rural communities), women's health and work issues, prevention of violence and reduction of poverty. I argue that all meet the criteria of being 'women's issues' as defined by Sapiro (1981), who suggested that women's issues are characterised by a special interest of women in them. 'Special', according to Sapiro, means that this interest is either stronger than for other issues, stronger than men's interest in them, or related to women's particular viewpoint (see also Chapter 3). I also suggest that they meet the second criteria of addressing a clientele with a significant share of women (see column 'Main clientele'). For some organisations these classifications may be less obvious than for others. Therefore, I elaborate on those organisations which I believe require clarification.

The two organisations working on poverty issues, Child Poverty Action Group (CPAG) and The Salvation Army, arguably address all genders equally. However, I suggest that their work is particularly relevant to women. While CPAG's aim is to better the lives of children in New Zealand, child poverty is inherently connected to the poverty of these children's parents or caregivers. Children living in poverty are often part of sole parent families (Ministry of Social Development, 2002), which mainly consist of *mothers* and their children (Brown, 1999). A keyword search on CPAG's website provided only 36 results for 'father' but 114 results for 'mother'. 'Parents' were referred to 380 times in the entire website and 181 of these results referred to 'sole parents'. This shows that the discussion on this website places much emphasis on the involvement of parents, particularly mothers. The Salvation Army's website showed little explicit emphasis on women but it described programmes to support children in need. Thus, the above discussion of the relation between mothers in poverty and children in poverty also applies to these programmes. Moreover, one of the organisation's main foci is on family related matters (e.g. parenting, budgeting) and, while women were not verbally addressed, the website predominantly used photos of women to illustrate these issues.

⁶⁰ By 'staff' I refer to paid employees as well as unpaid volunteers and any members who are involved with administration and coordination of the group/organisation.

Table 7.2: Focus, clientele and feminist characteristics according to the organisations' websites

	Main focus	Main clientele	Feminist organisation?
ALRANZ	Abortion rights	Women: it is a 'women's right to choose'	Individual members portrayed as feminists
CREDS	Eating disorders	Women: 'about 90% of people with eating disorders are females'	Not mentioned
CPAG	Child poverty	Children in poverty and their mothers	Not mentioned
KLWV	Violence prevention	Men as perpetrators; women as survivors	Not mentioned
OMWWL	Māori communities	Māori women	Not mentioned
NACEW	Advises the Ministry of Women's Affairs	Ministry of Women's Affairs	Published in feminist journals, presented at feminist conferences
NCWENZ	Advises the Ministry of Women's Affairs	Ministry of Women's Affairs	Promoted feminist projects
NZNO	Union work	Nurses (female-dominated profession)	Referenced feminist literature
NZPC	Support of sex workers	Sex workers (female-dominated profession)	Not mentioned
NZWIMA	Support for women in a male-dominated hobby	Female motorcyclists	Not mentioned
PACIFICA	Support network for Pacific communities	Pacific women	Not mentioned
Rainbow Youth	Queer/trans* ^a issues	Queer youth, incl. lesbian, trans- and queer women	Individual members portrayed as feminists
RWNZ	Support network in rural communities	Women living in rural areas	Promoted a feminist book
The Salvation Army	Poverty	Families in poverty; women responsible for household budgets	Individual members portrayed as feminists
Shakti	Violence prevention framed as assisting migrant/refugee families	Asian women with experiences of violence	Job applicants 'ideally, have a feminist perspective'
Shine	Violence prevention	Survivors of violence	Not mentioned
Wellington Webgrrls	Support network for women in a male-dominated community	Women engaging with the internet and computers	Not mentioned
WHA	Women's health	Women who seek information and support regarding health issues	Referenced feminist literature
Women's Refuge	Violence prevention	Women as survivors of violence	Feminism is one of its cornerstones
WSA	Women's Studies	Women: feminist researchers ^b	'The Women's Studies Association (WSA) is a feminist organisation'

^a Its website explained: 'Rainbow Youth uses the word 'trans*' as an umbrella term for gender-diverse people, including for example; whakawahine, tangata ira tane, FtM, MtF, transsexual, fa'afafine, transgender, whakawahine [sic], transmen, transwomen, akava'ine, leiti, genderqueer and gender-neutral people'.

^b At the time of the analysis, the WSA and its journal were only open to women and female authors.

Rainbow Youth is an organisation that advocates for queer youth of all genders and has no explicit focus on women or girls. However, as I showed in Chapter 2, New Zealand's women's movement and the lesbian/queer liberation movement have a strong historical and ideological connection (see Holmes, 2000). Thus, the relevance of this organisation's work for girls and women is rather implicit than explicit, but nevertheless exists.

Feminist organisations

Although not part of my criteria for conceptualising women's organisations, the question of whether an organisation is characterised as feminist is also relevant to my study. My analysis shows that the use of the feminist label depends on many factors, but not necessarily on the ideology supported by an organisation. The literature offers many definitions of feminist organisations. For example, Kravetz (2004, p.49) identified five principles to characterise them:

- (1) women helping women;
- (2) understanding gender inequality as a source of women's problems;
- (3) promoting both individual and social change for women;
- (4) empowering consumers through consciousness-raising, self-help, and sisterhood; and
- (5) empowering members through service work and egalitarian work structures.

I appreciate that this definition includes criteria regarding the work foci of organisations (1 to 4) and a characteristic of their intra-organisational structure (5). Noticeably, however, it does not address an important feminist debate: self-labelling. As I showed in Chapter 5, this was a crucial aspect in the identity of many contemporary feminists. One might argue that the same applies for organisations run by feminists. Therefore, Table 7.2 also provides references to the organisations' feminist orientation as described on their websites. A narrow majority (11) of the analysed websites indicated a feminist affiliation and nine did not mention feminism at all. However, reasons for and against the use of this term can vary and may include a strategic component. One interview participant (twenties⁶¹, European), for example, explained why the organisation she worked at did not explicitly adopt the feminist label:

It does and it doesn't [call itself a feminist organisation]. [...] we get criticised by feminist organisations that we work with men too much. And that's a strong critique. So for that reason we've gone away from calling ourselves a feminist organisation. Feminism is a strong call of identity. But from our history and also how we operate now and what kind of analysis we have in our workplace... [...] And also we are quite... We have quite a mix of ethnicities so [...] feminism might mean different things in different cultures — so [we are] also aware of that.

⁶¹ Many of my participants were employed by the organisations they talked about in their interviews. Since the information they offered was often critical towards their employers, this chapter provides less personal information (e.g. broad age) and omits the use of pseudonyms which could be compared to quotes provided in previous chapters.

Therefore, this organisation rejected the feminist label not because it did not perceive its work as feminist, but because feminism was a term that requires sensitive handling. In the following, I offer more detailed examples of similar strategies for feminist identification adopted by some organisations. However, other organisations may simply not view themselves as feminist. The website of New Zealand's Division of Women's International Motorcycling Association (NZWIMA), for example, did not indicate any explicit feminist agenda although the organisation's main focus of providing support for women in a male-dominated environment suggested an underlying analysis of gendered power dynamics among motorcyclists. The website also discussed the organisation's charity event 'Pink Ribbon Ride'⁶², which indicated an interest in women's issues beyond motorcycling. These examples illustrate that self-identification is not always a good criterion for assessing the feminist characteristics of an organisation, in particular when comparing them across organisations.

For organisations with a focus on minority ethnic groups, the feminist terminology that is often associated with Western values may have little relevance overall. For instance, while the Opotiki's Māori Women's Welfare League's (OMWWL) focus on Māori women's well-being may overlap with the goals of feminist theory (see McNicholas, 2004), the organisation's strong emphasis on involving whānau (extended family) and community does not tend to be reflected in Western understandings of feminism (see Simmonds, 2011).

For organisations such as the New Zealand Prostitute Collective (NZPC) and Shine, accessibility might be a deciding factor against feminist identification. Their clientele, sex workers and survivors of violence, are — for different reasons — mainly women in vulnerable positions who may be reluctant to seek support. Therefore, NZPC and Shine may share an interest in reducing unnecessary barriers of intimidation for their clientele and refrain from labelling themselves as feminist because 'feminism' can be a 'threatening term' (Bulbeck, 2006, p.40). The same may apply to Kapiti Living Without Violence. This organisation primarily focuses on a male clientele of violent offenders who need to overcome a major barrier of social stigma when contacting this organisation. Additional 'feminist' connotations might potentially prevent some men from doing so (see Crowe, 2011).

Out of 20 websites, 11 did refer to feminism, but with varying degrees of explicitness. One implicit way of indicating feminist affiliation was taken by the National Advisory Council on the Employment of Women (NACEW). Its website informed that NACEW published in feminist journals and presented its work at feminist conferences. A similar approach was taken

⁶² The Pink Ribbon is an international charity organisation that raises awareness and provides support for issues relating to breast cancer.

by the National Council of Women (NCWNZ) and Rural Women in New Zealand (RWNZ), which promoted both feminist projects and books.

ALRANZ, Rainbow Youth and The Salvation Army referred to feminism but in a more discreet way. Their websites did not describe the organisations as feminist but they presented biographies of staff members who identified individually as feminist. One of my interview participants (twenties, Pākehā) worked for Rainbow Youth and explained further:

The work that I do is feminist because I'm a feminist. Like, I can't just all of a sudden not do that. [...] There's three other people that work there. Two of them might not use or identify as feminists because they are guys and they might be doing that thing where, you know, they don't wanna take that word away from women or whatever.

Her statement and the organisation's way of presenting individual staff members reflected the importance assigned to personal engagement with feminism (see Chapter 6). Furthermore, the woman's reference to her male colleagues implied that staff at Rainbow Youth did not reject feminism as an ideology, but avoided the feminist label in consideration of its gendered connotations.

As noted earlier, for cultural reasons Pākehā- and European-dominated organisations were more likely to use the term 'feminism', but it was not restricted to them. Shakti, for example, did not give feminism a prominent space on its website, but the organisation did prioritise feminist values and advertised job openings within Shakti addressed people who 'ideally, have a feminist perspective' (Shakti, 2008). Moreover, one of my interview participants (twenties, Southeast Asian) worked for Shakti and described the organisation's ethos: 'Feminism is part of our [Shakti's] policy as in "We are all feminists in here". But I love how simple feminism is for them. For them feminism means "Women who care for other women"!'.

The website of the Women's Refuge left no doubt about its feminist position. It explained four cornerstones that underpinned the organisation's values, one of which was 'Feminism: Celebrating women's contribution to society' (Women's Refuge New Zealand, 2012). Similarly, the Women's Studies Association stated on its website: 'The Women's Studies Association (WSA) is a feminist organisation formed to promote radical social change through the medium of women's studies' (WSA, 2012).

What is notable about these differing strategies regarding the use of the term feminism is the fact that the absence of the term in many organisations did not mean feminist ideology was absent from their work. Given the literature suggests that one of the factors behind the decline in women's movements is the absence of feminist identification (see Chapter 1), this is an important detail to consider.

Changed opportunities for organisations

Many of the organisations discussed in this chapter have existed for a number of years with some pre-dating Third Wave feminism. However, all of them exist contemporarily and therefore, negotiated a space for themselves within today's political opportunities. Aimers (2011) discussed the impact of neoliberal, or more specifically Third Way policy on women's organisations in New Zealand (see also Chapter 2). She concluded that contractualism and increasing pressure to acquire funding caused many organisations to adopt the professionalised structures that made them eligible to apply for government funding.

The experience of one participant (thirties, East Asian), who worked at a women's organisation in the community sector mirrored Aimers findings:

Participant: So originally [the organisation] would have been volunteer run and collective run as well. But things changed about ten, fifteen years ago where we had [to employ] paid staff and get more and more paid staff. And we've gone from like a collective driven organisation to having a collective who governs the manager who then governs us, who manages us.

Julia: Ok, why do you think did this change happen?

Participant: I think it's necessary, to be honest. [...] I think in order for us to flourish and get bigger and do more we needed to have strong leadership and I think we also needed to have people who were in paid employment to be committed, to carry these things through.

The timeframe she referred to (starting in the late 1990s/early 2000s) aligns with the emergence of the Third Way (Grey & Sedgwick, 2013b; Simon-Kumar, 2011a) and the changes she described reflect the impact of policy made during that time.

Increasing formalisation and professionalisation was also an ongoing development for other organisations. One member of the Wellington Young Feminist Collective (twenties, Pākehā), a relatively new grassroots group, stated that the collective was 'planning to become an incorporated society next year. So that will involve having a constitutional document'. For this woman the main advantage of having such a constitutional document was providing a 'sense of direction for the group'. Other participants named a range of positive factors when talking about formalised aspects of their groups and organisations. The ability to work in a structured way, greater opportunities to be heard by policy makers and more avenues for funding were among those advantages. Two participants also suggested that it was easier for a formal organisation to be inclusive of other ethnic groups. One of them (twenties, Pākehā) explained this perspective with the example of inviting guest speakers to events:

Because there is this formal thing of inviting people to speak, you can look at your list of people you are inviting and be like ‘Oh God, we haven’t... All of our speakers are white women, we actually need to bring in some diversity!’ Whereas with informal groups there is no record of meetings or anything like that. And it’s so informal that you do get this lack in diversity. Inadvertently, obviously not deliberately, but yeah.

Not all participants agreed that increased formalisation was positive and, in particular, a number of women highlighted drawbacks of the extra bureaucracy it brought. For example, one woman complained about the long and formalised process of joining the Auckland branch of the National Council of Women as an individual member, and another participant involved in feminist student politics criticised the bureaucracy on campus: ‘There are a lot of times when you just want to go ahead and do something but you have to get it signed off by people and people don’t reply for ages’ (twenties, Pākehā). A similar perspective was shared by a woman who demanded that activism needed to be easily accessible rather than involving tedious administrative barriers. Thus, in the following I address some of these developments more closely and highlight the challenges they brought for the women’s movement.

Professionalism vs. lived experience

One major change that neoliberalism has imposed on many organisations is, as I explained in Chapter 2, the increased importance of having professional staff who bring expertise, rather than lived experience to an organisation’s work (Aimers, 2011). This development was apparent among the 20 organisations included in my website analysis. Only a few organisations seemed to be run by women who shared similar characteristics or experiences (referring to those relevant for the organisation’s work focus) with their clientele. Rainbow Youth (2009), for instance, stated on its website ‘We are run by youth, for youth, and have a board made up of people under the age of 28’. The New Zealand Prostitute Collective (2012) similarly explained that it ‘was formed in 1987 by sex workers as an organisation determined to seek equal rights for sex workers’. Organisations which explicitly engaged with specific ethnic groups tended to share ethnic identities across staff and clientele. Opotiki’s Māori Women’s Welfare League, for example is run by and for Māori women. Shakti’s website also emphasised that the organisation was ‘founded by Farida Sultana and 7 other Asian women’ as an organisation ‘by ethnic women for ethnic women’ (Shakti, 2008). While the terms ‘Asian’ and ‘ethnic’ are broad, they offer people who visit the website an indication of who runs the organisation and whose needs it represents.

However, while the Central Region Eating Disorder Services (2007) ‘was set up by a group of women who had themselves recovered from eating disorders’, the organisation’s website also reported on the increasing numbers of paid and professional staff during the 1990s:

‘The service then grew to employ over 19 staff, including a Dietician, a Psychiatrist and a team of therapists’. Similarly, the work of many of the organisations — mainly the advocacy groups — required a relatively high level of education to conduct research or provide professional counselling. In such cases (e.g. Child Poverty Action Group and organisations working to prevent violence), recruiting staff based on their expertise seemed to be logical. However, it has been argued that this focus on expertise has come at the cost of empowering women from communities who once brought their lived experiences and own ideas to the work of women’s organisations (Aimers, 2011).

Fighting for funding

Most of the websites studied indicated that the respective organisation was funded through more than one source. For half of the organisations (10) this included private donations, fundraising and, for eight organisations, membership fees. In most cases, however, these three types of funding were not sufficient to sustain the organisation. Seven organisations regularly applied for grants from charitable and philanthropic trusts and six organisations relied on government for funding. Four websites indicated that businesses sponsored the respective organisations and one organisation ran its own online merchandise store. Five websites provided little or no information about their funding sources.

These funding types were also most commonly named by my interview participants. Additionally, the women listed fundraising events such as the International Women’s Day breakfast hosted by the United Nations Women’s Committee and the lounge party of the Wellington Young Feminist Collective (WYFC). Small, new and often informal organisations (e.g. WYFC, Eats on Feets, Mothers for Choice) commonly had individual members pay for certain expenses from their private pocket.

According to my participants most organisations were under-funded, given their workload, and they faced an ongoing struggle to secure long-term funding. The women experienced this as frustrating for a range of reasons. Apart from concerns about being able to survive as an organisation, acquiring grants and funding became a central and laborious part of the workload. Some organisations had to put one of their few paid staff members in charge of acquiring funding, which reduced the amount of work they could do elsewhere. Many organisations working in the area of violence against women could not pay enough employees (if any) and relied heavily on volunteers. However, paying employees little and volunteers nothing often resulted in exploitative working conditions, as two participants explained:

You can pay them [employees] for 10 hours a week so they work 10 hours on top [of their other job]. And what ends up happening is they burn out. Cos they need to actually, you know, [to] fund their own lifestyle as well so they are working full time while volunteering out of control hours. (Twenties, Southeast Asian)

[Volunteers] go on the roster and you are expected to do, I think it's four [shifts] a month, [...] and that's the base that you are supposed to commit. What happened to me, because I'm a bit of a soft-touch, is because [the organisation] is underfunded and has way, way too much work for it, you can get sucked in and you can be doing everything. (Thirties, Pākehā)

As a result of such conditions, many organisations faced a high turnover of volunteers, creating more work because new volunteers needed to be recruited and trained.

Funding from governmental bodies was often tied to a contract to deliver certain services (see Chapter 2). This affected the work of these organisations in several ways, as my participants explained. One woman (twenties, Southeast Asian), who worked at an organisation with a focus on domestic violence, stated:

It [a contract] can be quite limiting. But then again, because you are limited like that you can also stop yourself from being too stretched and kind of being more defined in what you do. That's really important. Cos that's what I struggle with. There are so many issues that I would like to address but sometimes it's nice to have something else that's a barrier, that gives you boundaries.

This woman referred to the organisation being under-staffed and under-funded and she found the externally defined limitations of the contract helpful to keep her from working on too many issues with too few resources.

However, most participants criticised the restrictions of government contracts. Such contracts were often limited to six months or one year, which was too short for most projects. Participants who worked in the area of violence prevention emphasised that effective prevention programmes depend on establishing a trusting relationship with a particular community, which was not possible within the given amount of time. Several women explained that financial dependence on the government also limited the organisation's political agency: 'we can't be in street protests or be doing things because we need to have a relationship with the government'.

Contract-based funding was often tied to specific services for specific target groups, which also meant that it stopped when those services could not be delivered. In the case of a women's community centre, this resulted in a yearly battle for their health services that also reflected government's prioritisation on economic need and ethnicity over women's issues:

We did have cervical screening here at the centre regularly [...]. And then they lost their funding because apparently this area is too affluent now⁶³ [...] And they

⁶³ This centre is located in a relatively affluent suburb of Auckland.

recently got funding again to be here but we couldn't get enough members through because their target market was Pacific Island, Māori and Asian between 25-60 who hadn't been screened in 3 years. And those were the only [ones] who were allowed to get it. So it was hard to get minimum numbers for their funding. (Thirties, East Asian)

A number of participants agreed that cuts to government funding were particularly severe for organisations working in the violence against women sector. Even within this sector there seemed to be a hierarchy, as one of my participants (thirties, Māori) explained:

Look at the area of sexual violence and we are like family violence's poor cousin. Family violence gets all the funding and we get no funding. [...] And although they integrate a lot, there are still very separate effects that happen.

Another participant (twenties, European) had a similar view:

Probably the most frustrating thing on a government level is the fact of money actually given to this sector. So for two years sexual violence was just given one million dollars for the whole country. [...] Domestic violence seems to get on the agenda whereas sexual violence doesn't because it is even more uncomfortable to talk about. People don't like talking about it.

Not only did limited funding restrict the effectiveness of organisations, it also created competition between organisations:

We are all working for the same thing, to end sexual violence, but at the same time we have to compete for money from different places and that makes it more difficult. [...] We are competing with colleagues and agencies. I mean, the sexual violence sector is severely underfunded and so it just has promoted that competition. (Thirties, Pākehā)

Thus, organisations working in similar areas had little incentive to cooperate with each other because they were, to some extent, business rivals. Smith (2001) found a similar development when researching domestic violence organisations in the United States. She claimed that 'what was once a collaborative network that functioned for the good of clients became fragmented and competitive' (S. E. Smith, 2001, p.440).

Overall, many organisations — in particular those working on sexual violence issues — found themselves in a position where they had to adapt to the requirements of government bodies in order to be eligible for their funding contracts. These adaptations (e.g. increased bureaucratisation and professionalisation), however, created more costs for the organisations, making them even more dependent on government funding.

Between fragmentation and inclusiveness

Fragmentation and the lack of networking among women's organisations indicated in the previous section were not only caused by new forms of competition. For instance, one participant (twenties, European) who immigrated to New Zealand a few years ago stated:

I think in general in New Zealand everything is fragmented [laughs] and doesn't network very much! [...] I think that's a very Kiwi thing of here, 'I'm doing my thing and I can do it'. [There is a] very strong independence and a high social anxiety to actual go and talk to someone [laughs] and have a conversation and actually be able to network.

Although this participant was the only one to frame it as a national characteristic, many interview participants agreed that feminist activity in New Zealand was fragmented, scattered and not unified through organisations or activist collectives working with each other. However, this was not always perceived as a flaw:

I definitely think there is more fragmenting but I don't think that that makes it [the women's movement] weaker. It just means that we are recognising a wider array of things and the whole intersectionality thing. I think it's just realising more that there is more to it than just, you know, all women want the same thing [...]. Yeah, I don't think that it makes them weaker. I think it's a good thing, it just shows the diversity that is out there. (Twenties, Pākehā)

Recognising and reacting to different needs among women was, in line with individual forms of feminist activity (see Chapter 6), a major concern for the work of women's organisations. However, approaches to this issue took several forms, which are discussed in the following section.

Servicing and advocating for specific groups

As shown earlier in Table 7.2, the main clientele of most organisations in my analysis was limited to specific groups, such as Māori women, nurses and Asian women with experiences of violence. Thus, the services of these organisations did not aim to include *all* women. However, these limitations were mostly still broad enough to allow diversity within their clientele group (e.g. there are older, younger, hetero- and homosexual nurses). Therefore, the websites of many organisations additionally promoted special programmes for specific groups within their clientele. For instance, three organisations offered services explicitly directed at clients with non-heterosexual identities: the New Zealand Nurses Organisation provided information on 'Out@work', the 'Council of Trade Union's network for lesbian, gay, takatāpui⁶⁴, bisexual,

⁶⁴ Māori term used for homosexual, also spelled takataapui.

intersex, transgender and fa'afafine⁶⁵ union members' (NZNO, 2009); Shine's website promoted 'You, Me, Us - Our People, Our Relationships' as an initiative they ran together with OUTLINE NZ and Rainbow Youth; and, finally, the Women's Refuge talked of its consultation services and advocacy by wāhine takatāpui, lesbian and queer women.

Seven other organisations did not offer such services but addressed the diverse sexual identities among their clientele with varying degrees of importance and visibility on their websites. The Kapiti Living Without Violence website, for example, acknowledged in its mission statement that the organisation took 'account of [...] sexual preference' (KLWV, 2012) and the Women's Health Action Trust provided several articles on health issues relevant to lesbian women. The Salvation Army was the only organisation which articulated an exclusionary position on this issue. Its website informed readers in an extensive discussion about the organisations' views on homosexuality and Christianity and concluded that 'the position adopted is that homosexual orientation is not blameworthy but that homosexual behaviour disqualifies one from soldiership or leadership in The Salvation Army' (The Salvation Army, 2012).

Age differences within an organisation's circle of clientele were addressed by almost all (18) websites. Most (17) did so by offering information and/or services for youth and children. This included school programmes (Central Region Eating Disorder Service), services for children affected by violence (Shine) and a union branch for students (New Zealand Nurses Organisation). Only five organisations (also) addressed services for older women (e.g. information on menopause by the Women's Health Action Trust). One of the organisations that did not address age was Wellington Webgrrls, whose name suggests that its work mainly speaks to younger women. The other exception was the Women's Studies Association. I discussed this group's difficulties in connecting with young women in Chapter 5.

Biculturalism, multiculturalism and parallel developments

Reflecting New Zealand's official policy of biculturalism, the recognition of Māori culture and Māori perspectives was given prominent space on the websites of many organisations, with eight acknowledging the Treaty of Waitangi⁶⁶. Kapiti Living Without Violence (KLWV), for example, stated 'KLWV is guided by Te Tiriti o Waitangi and recognises Māori People as Tangata

⁶⁵ Samoan biological males who adopted feminised gender identities (Schmidt, 2003).

⁶⁶ The Treaty of Waitangi (Te Tiriti o Waitangi) is New Zealand's founding document, signed in 1840 by representatives of the British Crown and Māori chiefs. While it is the basis for bicultural acknowledgements across all aspects of public and political life, it is also subject to severe debates and different interpretations of the Māori and English language versions (Orange, 1997).

Whenua'⁶⁷ (2012). The Child Poverty Action Group (CPAG), the New Zealand Prostitute Collective (NZPC), the New Zealand Nurses Organisation (NZNO), The Salvation Army, Women's Health Action Trust (WHA), Women's Refuge and the Women's Studies Association (WSA) all provided similar statements. The website of the Women's Studies Association (2012) offered further explanations: 'This means we have a particular responsibility to address their oppression among our work and activities'. Either in addition to such acknowledgement (CPAG, NZPC, WHA) or instead of it (CREDS, NACEW, NCWNZ), a few websites paid tribute to cultural and ethnic differences among their clientele through broader statements, demonstrating recognition of not only biculturalism but also multiculturalism. For example, CPAG's (2012) website stated that one of the organisation's core objectives was 'to ensure all activities and decisions respect other cultural perspectives'.

These acknowledgements were translated into a number of specific services for key ethnic groups. For example, the NZNO's website introduced a Pacific Nursing Section and Te Rau Kōkiri as a 'campaign to achieve pay parity for Māori and Iwi health workers' (NZNO, 2009). The Salvation Army's website offered multi-faith events and promoted Māori ministries. Both the RWNZ and CPAG websites informed readers about policy submissions made by the organisations that aimed to specifically serve the interests of Māori communities. Women's Refuge not only explained that it ran separate refuges for Māori, Pacific, migrant and refugee women, but that it was committed to 'parallel development' of the organisation (Women's Refuge New Zealand, 2012):

The model of parallel development at Women's Refuge is a system based on partnership consistent with Te Tiriti o Waitangi. It means that tangata whenua and tauwi (a Māori term for the non-Māori people of New Zealand) develop equally side-by-side; resources are shared equitably; we offer culturally appropriate services; and we have an organisational structure consistent with our feminist, women-based orientation.

While this excerpt explained how Women's Refuge practically implemented its cultural awareness, three other organisations barely mentioned cultural or ethnic appropriateness on their website. The New Zealand Division of Women's International Motorcycling Association (NZWIMA), for example, only provided the general statement that it arrived to be a 'network of friends and support for women from all walks of life' (NZWIMA, 2011). Similarly, Wellington Webgrrls did not discuss ethnic diversity on their website, apart from offering a 'welcome' in four languages on their homepage. This lack of cultural consideration seems to be more surprising for the third organisation, the Abortion Law Reform Association (ALRANZ). While a

⁶⁷ Tangata whenua is the Māori term for indigenous people of the land.

few discussions on diversity and intersectionality were included in some of its electronic newsletters, the website itself offered no recognition that its staff or clientele may be culturally diverse. One of my interview participants (twenties, Pākehā), who was involved with abortion law reform groups, offered her view as to why recognition of ethnic diversity might not have priority in this field:

Participant: Pacific Island communities won't necessarily get on board. But there'd be a relatively high percentage of Māori women as well and Asian women, a relatively high percentage of those that we are fighting for. So yeah, Catch 22.

Julia: Why do you think it would be hard to get them on board?

Participant: Especially Pacific Island women, you know, they suffer much more stigma around abortion than Pākehā women do and even Māori women as well. The emphasis is placed so much more on the whānau [extended family] than on the individual.

This statement indicated that cultural differences can be difficult for organisations to appropriately accommodate. The following section elaborates on the tensions and challenges they faced.

Difficult differences

Just because (some) organisations aimed to be inclusive of differences and provide services for a diverse clientele did not necessarily mean that the services provided were accepted and that diverse groups actively participated in an organisation's work. While a large body of literature has discussed how organisations try to 'manage diversity' and to implement cross-cultural cooperation within organisations (e.g. T. Cox, Jr., 1991; T. H. Cox & Blake, 1991), Jones, Pringle and Shepherd (2000) argued that most of this literature reflects the North American context and cannot directly be applied to bicultural New Zealand. However, New Zealand research also confirmed the challenges in creating and maintaining ethnically diverse women's organisations (E. Henry & Pringle, 1996; Mulvey et al., 2000; Vanderpyl, 2004). Drawing on the experiences of my interview participants, I discuss how these women experienced such challenges.

One participant (twenties, Southeast Asian) commented on the genuine attempt of an organisation to implement Māori perspectives into its structure:

They recently developed a kaupapa Māori [Māori ideology/doctrine] kind of practice model. And they help support — what was their name — Hohourongo, I think. Which is... it does the same kind of work but employs specific Māori key workers and social workers in their organisation. [...] And they have a Māori advisory group and, you know, your induction into the team is you get a pōwhiri [welcome ceremony], things like that and a whakatau [welcome speech] and they use lingo as a

lot of places are trying to do now. Yeah, but at the end of the day there is one Māori person in the organisation.

This was a wide-spread problem. Among the 40 women interviewed, 15 criticised some of the groups and organisations to which they belonged for being either completely or dominantly run by Pākehā or European women. Notably, Pākehā and European women themselves tended to be particularly critical of their organisations' 'whiteness' and concerned with issues of inclusiveness, reflecting the arguments I presented in Chapter 5. While such criticism was articulated by staff of the organisations and their clientele (e.g. visitors of feminist student events, users of the AWC library, etc.), perceptions differed between individuals. For example, the ethnic composition of one specific feminist grassroots collective was described differently by various participants; some were positive about the teamwork of Pākehā and Asian women, while others described the collective as 'mainly white'. One Pākehā member of another feminist organisation proudly mentioned that its founding members were ethnically diverse, while another member (twenties, Southeast Asian) of the same organisation stated 'It's really hard to say that women from different cultural backgrounds are working together because of all the, like, meetings and rallies and things that I have attended I am — without a fail — usually the only Asian person there'. It seemed that Pākehā members, compared to Asian members of the same organisation, tended to overplay the significance of individual non-Pākehā members for the inclusiveness of that group.

Elaborating on the meaning that can be assigned to individual members as representatives of entire groups, Yoder (1989) and Scott (2005) discussed the effect of tokenism in organisations and stated that being the only (or one of few) members outside the dominant group increases the likelihood that this person will eventually leave the organisation. This was the experience of one of my participants (twenties, East Asian), who was part of an organisation where she felt other members viewed her as the token 'young Asian woman'. She eventually left this group due to her frustration: 'it's good if I'm visible and I'm there but whenever I say anything it doesn't get valued or doesn't get listened to'.

When discussing the lack of ethnic diversity in organisations, the general perspective among Pākehā women was that they wished to stop dominating proceedings. But the women were uncertain *how* to do this. As one participant (twenties, Pākehā) said of her feminist group: 'Yeah, it's very white [...] I would like to have more voices from different, diverse groups. That would be awesome. How we go about doing this? I don't know'.

Practical strategies to deal with the dominance of Pākehā women within some organisations were mainly focussed on increasing the input of diverse voices through external

means. The *MUSE* magazine, for example, tried to balance the dominance of Pākehā contributors to the magazine by printing interviews with Māori women and covering topics regarded as relevant to women from across different ethnic groups. Other organisations invited guest speakers to their events who represented perspectives from a broad range of cultures and ethnic groups. Such strategies, however, did not change the underlying reasons why mainly Pākehā women belonged to the organisation.

Women often explained this situation by referring to broader problems in New Zealand society (such as institutionalised racism and the patronising behaviour of white women) which they perceived to be reflected at an organisational level. Others offered more specific arguments. One woman, who worked at the Ministry of Women's Affairs (WMA)⁶⁸, noted:

That's [diversity] very challenging for the MWA. There are some [non-Pākehā women] but we are a small Ministry. We've got around, I think, 30 people who work there. So yes, we do have some people who are Māori, we have a woman with an Asian background [...] and we have men who work there as well. I think one of the challenges in government as I understand it in terms of diversity — and this is something that we give a lot of thought to — is finding people from diverse backgrounds who actually have the skills that are needed for the work that we do. I think that's one of the barriers to having a more diverse workforce. And that's across the public service generally. And within our agency it's the fact that we are so small. So you are looking for people who are interested first of all in the agency and the work and who have the skills. You know, yeah, we would probably like to do better but I think we are doing not too badly in terms of our size.

This participant's argument reflected the discussion of the consequences of the increased professionalisation of women's organisations presented earlier in this chapter. This same argument is also articulated within the 'diversity management' literature (T. Cox, Jr., 1991), which draws on the fact that due to socio-economic disparities some ethnic groups — for example, Māori in the New Zealand context (Marie, Fergusson, & Boden, 2008) — tend to be underrepresented among tertiary graduates. While this argument may be applicable to the Ministry of Women's Affairs and other organisations needing high-skilled employees, it was heavily criticised by Grahame (1998). She suggested that discussion of failed inclusivity by dominantly 'white organisations' requires a shift in perspective. In her study of feminist organisations in the United States, Grahame (1998) found that non-white women often felt excluded from the decision-making power within organisations and thus had little interest in joining them. As one of Grahame's (1998, p.390) participants put it: 'Until they [white women] decide to take leadership from us, we don't want to be a part of their organizations'. Maddison

⁶⁸ The Ministry of Women's Affairs is a state feminist institution (see Chapter 8) rather than a women's organisation. However, difficulties regarding inclusiveness are shared across these categories and are particularly relevant for agency groups who require well-educated staff.

(2004a, 2013a) discussed a similar rationale for Aboriginal women being absent from Australian feminist programmes. Therefore, the absence of Māori, Pacific and Asian women in many New Zealand women's organisations is arguably a greater problem for Pākehā and European women than for Māori, Pacific and Asian women: While the latter groups have little reason to join, the former groups often aspire inclusiveness to confront feelings of colonial guilt and white privilege (see A. Jones, 2001; Vanderpyl, 2004).

Conflicts arising from inefficient and belated attempts at sharing power were reflected in the experiences of participants involved in the organisation of SlutWalk Aotearoa in 2011. Although the collective that organised it was small and included at least one non-Pākehā woman, it was heavily criticised for its alleged demonstration of white privilege (see Chapter 5). One participant (twenties, European), for instance, comments:

The organisers organised it and then kind of invited people along. Especially when you work in the New Zealand context where colonisation is such a strong part of the reality of our society, that can be perceived as very lopsided. And also for lots of women of colour or marginalised women identifying with the term 'slut' was a tough one. And that could have potentially been resolved with a meeting beforehand or inviting everyone to be part of it and going 'What do we want to call it here in Aotearoa?'

This comment reflects Grahame's (1998) critique: rather than including women in an organisation with pre-existing power dynamics, inclusiveness requires equal involvement in leadership and decision making from an early stage. However, this approach of equal leadership does not guarantee successful inclusiveness, as another experience by one of my participants illustrated. She helped found a women's organisation that focussed on educational issues and aspired to include Pākehā and Māori members. Some of the Māori women wanted to have either a female (kuia) or male (kaumātua) elder person present at events to make them culturally safe spaces. My participant (thirties, Pākehā) further explained the situation:

[That] didn't mean that they wanted them to be present all the time necessarily but they needed the ability. And for other women in the group the idea — including one person who was a Māori woman — the idea of having any men present [...] wasn't something that they were prepared to do. And for them to be involved in the group that was the bottom line. And for the Māori women — some of the Māori women in the group — that was the bottom line too. [The Pākehā women asked] 'Can you guarantee it was a kuia?' and they were like 'No that's not appropriate for you to make that call actually' [...]. And so the group just melted down. We couldn't come to... you know, there was no compromise.

In this case, differences were so severe that the group did not find a way to overcome them. Although this occurred in the late 1990s, the participant ended the story with a resigned 'I still can't think of a way that we could have resolved that'.

In conclusion, the lack of diversity within many organisations may be the result of arguably well-intentioned but inadequate and belated invitations by dominant group members to members of minority groups, as well as the limited interest of the latter in being used as token members. As the last example showed, differences around basic principles of organising may add to such difficulties.

Working with or for each other?

Despite the challenges of competition for funding and cultural differences, New Zealand's women's organisations do not all operate in isolation from each other. Some of the organisations studied are umbrella organisations and thus fulfill the function of a network themselves. For example, the Women's Refuge has 45 refuges in New Zealand, all integrated under the National Collective of Independent Women's Refuges. This National Collective is also associated with other organisations in the violence sector (e.g. Shakti). Most organisations working in the field of violence are additionally connected through the National Network of Stopping Violence. Similarly, the Māori Women's Welfare League Opotiki is part of the strong and nationwide Māori Women's Welfare League, and additionally collaborates with many other organisations (e.g. PACIFICA). The National Council of Women (NCWNZ), conversely, is an umbrella organisation that coordinates women's organisations that otherwise would not necessarily work together⁶⁹.

Other organisations engaged in alliances with organisations that focussed on similar issues. For example, the Abortion Law Reform Association sustains links to Action for Abortion Rights and Mothers for Choice, and the Child Poverty Action Group's website vaguely stated 'We also work closely with other child-focused organisations' (CPAG, 2012). However, it needs to be noted that these two organisations do not rely on hard-fought funding contracts with the government which, as explained earlier, creates competition.

Links with international organisations were also explained on some websites. The Central Region Eating Disorder Services, New Zealand Nurses Organisation, New Zealand Division of Women's International Motorcycling Association, The Salvation Army and PACIFICA, for example, all maintained alliances with overseas branches of the same organisation or international organisations with a similar work focus.

The quality of these collaborations and networks was seldom explained in detail on the websites and it can be assumed that their depth varied significantly. Therefore, I asked my

⁶⁹ For instance, the Abortion Law Reform Association and the Catholic Women's League New Zealand, both affiliated with NCWNZ, can be assumed to represent differing viewpoints on certain issues.

participants about the nature of their organisations' collaborations. They mainly explained three types: First, the women often referred to relationships between organisations that were based on individual members who also worked for or engaged with other organisations. For example, members of the *MUSE* collective also volunteered for Women's Refuge and members of the Campus Feminist Collective (CFC) also engaged with Young Asian Feminists Aotearoa (YAFA). Such connections were used to exchange information and create informal links between organisations. Second, many organisations supported each other by exchanging work-related knowledge, experiences and skills. For example, they 'swapped' trainings for staff (e.g. Rape Prevention Education and other domestic/sexual violence orientated organisations) or 'bounced off ideas' on various aspects of the organisations' work (e.g. the Auckland Women's Centre and the Waitakere Women's Centre). Third, some organisations provided services for each other: The Eating Difficulties Education Network (EDEN) disseminated brochures to students through the Campus Feminist Collective (CFC), CFC collected donations for Women's Refuge during their 'Thursday in Black' events and the Auckland Women's Centre forwarded clientele to various domestic violence organisations when their own counselling capacities were exhausted. While these three types of interaction were certainly not the only forms of collaborations, they were the most common types discussed by my participants.

Most of these examples did not involve much work *with* each other and rather focussed on working *for* each other or on exchanging knowledge and skills. However, such an approach led to successful projects, as one of my participants (seventies, Pākehā/Māori) explained:

One of the most, to me the most rewarding things I've ever taken part in was again in the early 80s when we [Society for Research on Women] supported the Māori Women's Welfare League who were doing this major study of women's health, Māori women's health in New Zealand. [...] Because they recognised that we had research skills that they didn't have. So we worked in partnership with them and we mentored, really, trained interviewers and things like that. They did the work, they did all the real work. They were the faces of it, they were the ones who did the interviewing. And it was enormously successful.

This woman referred to a project that happened 20 years ago but it is worth mentioning not only because of its success as a research project but also because of the effective way a Māori women's organisation cooperated with a mainstream organisation. It shows that organisations can come together and cooperate when needed without having to merge into one inclusive group.

Conclusion: The role of organisations in the women's movement

At the meso-level of the women's movement in New Zealand, organisations are doing crucial work to support gender equality. As service providers they offer vital help for women in need of support and as advocacy groups they inform the Ministry of Women's Affairs and policy makers about broader structural issues relevant to women's lives.

New Zealand is home to a number of long-standing women's organisations, such as the National Council of Women and National Advisory Council on the Employment of Women, which have been lobbying for women's interest for decades (Else, 1993). However, this chapter highlighted the existence of a range of different women's organisations, all working on issues relevant to women's lives. Their various work foci required the organisations to adopt different and sometimes strategic approaches as to whether they labelled themselves as feminist organisations or organisations for women. Consequently, organisations that rejected such labels often do not get recognised as part of a women's movement. This does not make their work less valuable for women, but it does make it less visible. I agree with Grey (2008a) who stated that the existence of women's organisations alone does not signal an active women's movement. But I argue that an evaluation of what counts as women's organisations needs to be broad enough to include all work that is done for women. Feminists adopting intersectional ideologies seek employment in and engagement with organisations outside the 'typical' women's sector and thus carry feminist work into, for instance, health, anti-poverty and queer organisations. While my qualitative study cannot estimate the quantity of women's organisations in New Zealand, Sawyer and Andrew (2013) argued that women's advocacy organisations are growing in numbers in the Australian context.

It is worrying, however, to find many organisations struggling for funding to such an extent that they have turned into each other's competitors. Through contractualism and partnerships (see Chapter 2), the neoliberal project keeps many of these organisations on a short leash and muzzles their political agency (Grey & Sedgwick, 2013a). For a large number of such organisations it is uncertain how much longer they can sustain their work. Wellington Rape Crisis, for instance, made headlines in 2012 for having to accept financial support from Hell Pizza as compensation for that company's public glorification of sexual assault⁷⁰. This is not an

⁷⁰ In August 2012, the fast food chain Hell Pizza nominated a man who confessed to the sexual abuse of an unconscious person as the winner of its 'Confessional' competition on Facebook. After a public outcry, Hell Pizza donated NZ\$10,000 to Wellington Rape Crisis, which only accepted the donation because financial hardship was forcing it to cut its services at the time (The New Zealand Herald, 2012b).

ideal funding plan for sexual violence organisations and a concerning development for the women's movement overall.

Aimers (2011) argued that specialisation and work focused on a single issue was a consequence of changed funding opportunities that ensured the competitiveness of service-providing organisations. Neoliberal environments welcome this development because it increases consumer choice in such services and forces providers to adopt efficient and competitive structures (J. Clarke & Newman, 1997). I suggest that this process of specialisation was additionally facilitated by feminism's increased recognition of differences among women, which created the demand for organisations serving specific groups of women. However, the example of the Society for Research on Women cooperating with the Māori Women's Welfare League showed that the exchange of knowledge and skills across specialised organisations can lead to successful projects.

Women's organisations that get drawn into restrictive contract arrangements with the state also face the risks of co-option. Increasing professionalisation and a refocussing on government priorities can disconnect organisations from their initial goals. However, Newman (2012) showed in the United Kingdom context that such developments do not necessarily mean that an organisation becomes depoliticised. Those who run these organisations often find ways to frame their aims within the new political opportunities.

Theorising about social movement life cycles has suggested that increasing professionalisation and institutionalisation signal the final stage of a social movement (Christiansen, 2009). For many of New Zealand's women's organisations such professionalisation is noticeable, but not for the reasons suggested by this theoretical approach. Rather than the movement having reached a stage where its successes make the bureaucratic coordination of strategies necessary across organisations, many women's organisations have been forced into formal structures because of changed funding opportunities. While this is alarming, I do not believe this indicates the final stage of the entire women's movement. On the contrary, in the Australian context, Maddison and Sawer (2013) have argued that this development has become *characteristic* of the contemporary women's movement rather than an indicator of its demise. In order to investigate the most formalised type of feminist activity, the next chapter presents a discussion of state feminism.

Chapter 8

State feminism

Introduction

The role of state feminism within women's movements is contested among feminist authors. Defined as 'institutions and policy measures to achieve gender equality' (Hyman, 2010, p.33) and as 'advocacy of women's movement demands from inside the state in advanced industrial democracies' (Lovenduski, 2008, p.179), state feminism can be considered to be part of 'the system' that women's movements often criticise for maintaining patriarchal structures. Thus, the ability of state feminists — or femocrats as they are called in Australia (Sawer, 1996) — to create social change is debatable and some authors remained sceptical about how effectively feminism can push its agenda from within the state (Curtin, 2008; Teghtsoonian, 2000).

However, Sawer (1996, p.ii) stated that the 'women's policy machinery is the daughter of the women's movement' and several other authors claimed that a women's movement needs policy work within the boundaries of the state to be successful (e.g. Dobrowolsky, 1998; Hyman, 2010). During the Second Wave of New Zealand feminism (see Chapter 2), many women deliberately engaged with formal political institutions and government to place and keep women's issues on the policy agenda (Uttley, 2000). This chapter argues that New Zealand's state feminism continues to play a crucial part in the empowerment of women and thus needs to be considered in any conceptualisation of the women's movement in this country.

In the following, I investigate state feminism, which I understand to represent the macro-level of New Zealand's feminist activity. I explore its relationship with other feminist actors at the individual and organisational levels. While this chapter's focus is largely on the Ministry of Women's Affairs (MWA), this is certainly not the only institution that accommodates New Zealand's state feminists. Other government Ministries, the Labour Women's Council and the National Advisory Council on the Employment of Women (NACEW) are further important examples. State feminists can also be found among Members of Parliament, party members and political lobbyists. The Ministry of Women's Affairs, however, is the major advisory institution for gender issues in New Zealand policy making. As two interview participants who worked at the Ministry of Women's Affairs confirmed, not all its staff members identify as feminists.

However, one of them⁷¹ said ‘but even those who don’t call themselves feminists, I think, have a keen interest in women’s status. So you know, I think you just couldn’t work there if you didn’t have that’. Thus, while I include the work of other government departments in my analysis, I refer to the Ministry of Women’s Affairs as the most important institution of state feminism in New Zealand.

Multiple empirical sources were used for the following analysis and a detailed explanation of the data collection process can be found in Chapter 4. In summary, I draw on my interview data and a content analysis of several key government documents. These documents include the annual reports (for the year ending 30 June 2013) of six government departments, namely the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE), the Ministry of Health (MoH), the Ministry of Social Development (MSD), the Ministry of Women’s Affairs (MWA), the Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs (MPIA) and Te Puni Kōkiri (Māori Affairs; TPK). The reports show the progress of the respective Ministry’s work in comparison to their targets and outcomes for that specific year and allow insight into where they place women’s interests within their priorities. Also included in my content analysis is the ‘Briefing to the Incoming Minister of Women’s Affairs’ (MWA, 2011), which explains the work foci of the Ministry⁷² as reported by its staff to inform the incoming Minister of Women’s Affairs Jo Goodhew.

As explained in Chapter 4, the 40 interviews were conducted between December 2011 and April 2012, a time when the National Government was led by Prime Minister John Key. Rowena Phair, Kim Ngarimu and Jo Cribb consecutively held the position of the Chief Executive Officers (CEO) of the Ministry of Women’s Affairs and both Hekia Parata and Jo Goodhew served as Ministers of Women’s Affairs during this time. These shifting leadership roles need to be kept in mind since the following discussion includes participant references to ‘the government’ and the Ministry of Women’s Affairs. Importantly, the interviews in Wellington were conducted between 28 November and 6 December 2011, only a few days after the 2011 election that confirmed the National Government’s second term. Most of these participants were noticeably infuriated or disappointed by this result at the time of their interviews.

This introduction is followed by an exploration of my interview participants’ views on the capability of the government generally and the Ministry of Women’s Affairs specifically to create positive social change for women. Subsequently, I investigate how several government departments have (or rather have not) implemented requirements of gender mainstreaming and recognition of women’s political needs within their work agenda. I then turn to the Ministry of

⁷¹ Since this chapter contains some critical opinions articulated by two employees of the MWA, I do not provide identifying information about these two participants.

⁷² When not otherwise specified, ‘the Ministry’ refers to the Ministry of Women’s Affairs.

Women's Affairs' approach to influencing the policy process and identify its focus on enhancing women's position on the labour market. Because this focus did not seem to satisfy my interview participants' expectations of state feminism, I explore the kinds of policy these women would have liked to have seen implemented and compare their 'wish-list' to the work programme of the Ministry of Women's Affairs. I conclude by suggesting that the priorities of my interview participants are not as contrary to the focus of the Ministry of Women's Affairs as it initially seems and I consequently argue that state feminism is a crucial aspect of the women's movement in New Zealand.

The difficult position of state feminism

Teghtsoonian (2000) argued that many feminists in Western countries are sceptical about how much progress for women can be achieved through working within state structures. In the New Zealand context such scepticism broadly translates into questioning the ability of the Ministry of Women's Affairs and other bodies of the government to enhance gender equality. This section explores how much trust my interview participants had in feminist work at the government level.

How feminists view the government

Notably, all 40 participants were concerned about the current National Government and its approaches to women's issues. However, their concern ranged in its intensity: While Gabriela (25, Southeast Asian), who worked as a policy analyst, said 'I guess, as a public servant [laughs], I think they [the government] are doing the best job that they can do under their ideologies', Donna (56, Pākehā) stated 'I think that John Key is possibly one of the most evil men I have ever seen in real life'. In some instances, disapproval of the government was not directed against the specific government in power but 'government' in general. Three participants said they were not satisfied with earlier Labour-led governments either, while two women who identified as anarchists stated that they generally did not recognise either the government or the state as legitimate authorities. Four more participants argued that no government was capable of achieving sustainable change for women because its available instruments, such as the implementation of policy and laws, were not suitable to address the complexity of problems related to patriarchy and discrimination against women in society. Betty (31, Pākehā) explained:

I think that government can create laws and stuff like that. But I'm not sure how effective that is at actual social change, you know. I think that they have to create an infrastructure that supports that social change but I'm not convinced that government has the weight to fix things.

She and other participants saw the most potential for change in organising at a community and grassroots level, a perspective that reflected neoliberal views of individualised and decentralised organisation and decision-making processes to achieve social change by taking responsibility off the state (see Andrew, 2008).

Most participants also directed their dissatisfaction with government at the National Party and the values it stood for. Seven women said that the National Government represented ‘rich white men’ and did ‘not care about women and children at all’, but only ‘about businesses and money’. Other women considered the government’s neglect of women’s issues as part of National’s *conscious* decision to focus on strengthening the economy. Betty (31, Pākehā) explained ‘they [National] just wanna make money and it’s in their best interest to have women doing a lot of unpaid work’. However, a few participants offered a different explanation, with Ellen (24, Pākehā) stating ‘I don’t think that they know that there are women’s issues’. This theory was elaborated by Alice (24, Pākehā):

[The government] is just such an old boys club. [...] I think they have one woman in their Top 10. You know, if you want a government without any diverse experiences, [...] you gonna have poor decision making in general. [...] I don’t think it’s malicious. It’s not like a war on women like some people have painted it. I think it’s because it’s run by men. They just have no idea about the impact of what their decisions are doing. [...] You know, it’s just completely oblivious to that kind of thing.

John Key and his male colleagues were not the only unpopular personalities within the National Party. Participants also criticised a number of female National politicians. For example, three participants directly addressed Paula Bennett, Minister for Social Development, in their critique of the government. Aiono (45, Samoan/East Asian/European) said ‘She hasn’t actually thrilled me but she does what she does and she is a strong voice. Sometimes her voice is about as useful as a runaway escalator’. The Ministers of Women’s Affairs were also disliked, with some participants criticising Hekia Parata and Jo Goodhew explicitly. For example, Natasha (22, Pākehā) stated:

Hekia Parata did well in not really doing much but looking like she was doing stuff. And Jo Goodhew has never been supportive of women. She voted to appoint a quite prominent pro-lifer to the abortion supervisory committee. She voted against same-sex adoptions. [...] She is quite conservative and I have no faith in her being a good Minister.

Overall, the women interviewed criticised the lack of government consideration of women’s interests. In the following, I turn to my participants’ opinion of the Ministry of Women’s Affairs as the core institution of New Zealand’s state feminism.

How feminists view state feminism

While most of the women interviewed did not mention the Ministry of Women's Affairs at all in their assessment of the governments' work on women's issues, the few women who did talk about it expressed disappointment at the Ministry's failure to be a strong political voice for women in New Zealand. Phoolan (23, Southeast Asian) articulated:

I remember hearing, a few years back after National came in, that they [the government] wanted to do away with the Ministry of Women's Affairs. [...] Since then I haven't heard that they've shut down but I haven't heard much of what they are doing at all.

One participant⁷³, who has been an activist since the 1970s, commented on the difficult relationship between state feminism and feminist activism. She did not refer to the Ministry of Women's Affairs explicitly but talked about the time when the Ministry of Women's Affairs' was established, when a large number of female activists of her generation moved from activism into government employment. However, she and others did not participate in such a move 'knowing that we would have to compromise' and 'also we had children to care for and didn't have enough support to be able to be career women'. This particular participant never regretted her decision of not 'going into the system', however, she claimed:

The women I can think of who remained as feminist activists outside the system and had been single mothers are now facing not only economic issues but also health issues because that kind of violence that you get as an activist does undermine your immune system in the same kind of way that the other kinds of violence do. [...] So we are a group of women who might have been very privileged [...] but are much less privileged than women who were and are feminists who went into the system. And on a bad day I can feel quite bitter about that.

Her words echo Hyman (1994, p.20-21), who stated that given the limited visible impact of 'femocracy', feminists outside government employment 'can reasonably ask if a good income is the main motivation of those within, rather than the attempt to achieve a feminist political agenda'. Thus, women in similar situations may be critical of state feminism for personal rather than purely political reasons.

However, there was acknowledgement among some of the interviewed women that the Ministry of Women's Affairs was constrained in its agency. One woman, for example, complained that the government 'continue[d] to underfund the Ministry of Women's Affairs', meaning it did not have the financial capacity needed to work effectively. Further, it was pointed

⁷³ This particular participant specifically asked for anonymity, therefore, I refrain from providing any identifying information.

out that the Ministry could only work within the parameters set by the respective government of the time. This was confirmed by a woman who worked at the Ministry:

We [the MWA staff] are constrained by the parameters of what the priorities of the government of the day are. [...] I can't come along to a meeting and go 'I think these are the most important things for women and these are my options for fixing them' and then debate that as a team and then, you know, then we advise the government. It's more like we have to work with their priorities and we say 'Ok, so how can women contribute to that and how can you help women contribute to that?' Yeah, it's not necessarily what we as individuals would choose to prioritise.

The constraints this woman spoke of extended to the specific groups of women at the centre of the Ministry's work. For example, Gloria (36, Pākehā), who was a policy analyst, said 'the government doesn't count lesbians as a group or measure outcomes for them. So there is no evidence for [the MWA] to do any work. And that just self-perpetuates'.

Another critique that addressed the focus of the Ministry was expressed by a participant⁷⁴ who worked in the area of violence against women. She talked about how the change from a Labour-led to a National-led government in 2008 influenced the work of the Ministry of Women's Affairs:

I think there's been a shift [in the MWA]... away from violence against women, which implicitly includes children — because when women are safe, children are safe — to more of a focus on children's welfare. So that's a bit of a concern. And I do think that there has been somewhat of a decreased emphasis on violence against women overall. [...] Now people really don't want to talk about sexual violence anymore or put money towards it. There is still a task force faction on violence within families but [the MWA is] struggling to keep that on the agenda as a gendered issue.

Consequently, there was little expectation among my participants that the Ministry of Women's Affairs, or the government more generally, would be a driving force behind feminist struggles in New Zealand. In the following, I explore the grounds for such mistrust, based on the insight's gained from analysing key government documents.

The work of government departments

In order to understand why state feminism had such a bad reputation among the women I interviewed, I explore how well women's interests are reflected in the work of government departments, including the Ministry of Women's Affairs. I start this discussion with a focus on the five annual reports by government departments other than the Ministry of Women's Affairs.

⁷⁴ Regarding this particular topic, this woman did not want to be identifiable.

While these five departments are not specifically institutions of state feminism (although some individual state feminists might work there), they are recipients of the Ministry of Women's Affairs advice. Thus, the level of recognition of women's interests in *their* work reflects the level of success achieved by the Ministry's lobbying.

Gender mainstreaming

As explained in Chapter 2, the Ministry of Women's Affairs introduced *The Full Picture* in 1996 as a guideline for gender mainstreaming. Since then, New Zealand's policy institutions have been advised to adhere to its principles of implementing a gender analysis throughout their work. The most recent Briefing to the Incoming Minister of Women's Affairs (2011) addressed the need for gender mainstreaming by reminding the new Minister of her responsibility to bring a gender perspective into the policy process across all government sectors. Yet, none of the five annual reports gave reason to assume gender mainstreaming was a serious goal for these Ministries. Reflecting Aimers' (2011) concern that gender mainstreaming resulted in a neglect of gender issues in policy development, women⁷⁵ were rarely addressed directly in the documents analysed.

Te Puni Kōkiri briefly mentioned two measures undertaken to explicitly support Māori women, but did not provide any details. While the Ministry of Health's annual report offered numerous references to women as a group with different needs to men, it mainly did so by presenting descriptive statistical information about gendered life expectancy rates and the prevalence of several illnesses for men and women. The Ministry of Health's report also offered information on maternity and breastfeeding services. In such a context, it directly addressed (future) mothers, but it did so mainly with an interest in benefitting the health of their (unborn) children. The annual reports of the Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs and the Ministry of Social Development did not use the term 'women' at all when referring to people for whom they developed policy and services. While it can be argued that the absence of 'women' in these reports was a result of a conscious use of gender neutral language, gender mainstreaming, on the contrary *should* call for an explicit emphasis of people's gendered realities (Teghtsoonian, 2004).

Nevertheless, the five reports addressed the importance of gender equality when reporting on the respective Ministry as an employer. The Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment and the Ministry of Health referred to Equal Employment Opportunities (EEO) to contextualise their concern about equality among staff. EEO is a policy that is mandatory in

⁷⁵ Given the focus of this chapter, the following discussion of gender mainstreaming concentrates on women as a group, although, overall, I understand the task of gender mainstreaming as considering all genders.

central and local government, intending to increase fairness (mainly regarding numerical representation) for employees of socially marginalised groups (Simon-Kumar, 2008).

The other three reports did not explicitly mention a commitment to EEO. However, the Ministry of Social Development's report (2013, p.45) stated 'We aim to have a diverse workforce that reflects the whole community'. It further presented statistical information on the proportion of staff who are women, Māori, Pacific and Asian. The Ministry of Health (2013, p.246) provided similar information and additionally explained its in-house gender pay gap: 'A major influence is that more female staff work part-time'. Te Puni Kōkiri's report (2013, p.56) highlighted that it had 'one of the lowest gender pay gaps in the Public Service' and that 50 percent of its senior management were female. The Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs (2013, p.29) offered the least insight in this regard, briefly stating 'we maintain gender balance at all levels of the organisation'.

'Hidden' women

The reports analysed hardly addressed women as an interest group, but they explained how the respective government department approached certain *issues* that are arguably more relevant to women's lives than to men's and thus meet Sapiro's (1981) definition of women's issues (see Chapter 3). However, the reports did not label these issues as gendered. For example, explanations of initiatives to address domestic violence, such as the "It's not OK"-campaign (MSD, 2013) or the Taskforce for Action on Violence within Families (MSD, 2013), did not offer a gendered perspective. The terminology used was restricted to 'family violence' and did not discuss women as victims/survivors. Similarly, the terminology of 'vulnerable' groups was used across the reports in relation to a range of social groups, such as children and youth (MoH, 2013; MSD, 2013; TPK, 2013), Māori and Pacific people (MBIE, 2013; MoH, 2013), family/community/whānau (MoH, 2013; MSD, 2013; TPK, 2013), teen parents (MSD, 2013), people living in areas of high deprivation (MoH, 2013) or in Christchurch's red zone⁷⁶ (MBIE, 2013; MSD, 2013). Te Puni Kōkiri's report (2013) was the only document that referred to women as a vulnerable group. It did so once, when mentioning its support for Women's Refuge.

Compared to women and most other social groups, children and youth received more attention across the five annual reports analysed. The reports mainly referred to young people either as victims of poverty and abuse who needed help and support, or as future/new participants in the labour market who needed education and training. Often times, children were addressed directly as a target group without reference to their parents as the ones who would

⁷⁶ After the calamitous earthquake in 2011 Christchurch is still in the process of being rebuilt.

(also) benefit from government initiatives. For example, speaking about District Health Board services, the Ministry of Health (2013, p.208) reported that due to the work of this Ministry ‘over 95 percent of children under six years of age have access to free after-hours visits within 60 minutes’ travel time’. Since mothers — in particular sole mothers — are often the primary caretakers who pay for and make time to take children to the doctor, this initiative significantly benefitted them. But when mothers were addressed, this was only in relation to their biological roles as birth-givers and breast-feeders. In all other cases where the emphasis was directed at alleviating the burden of mothers, the gender-neutral terms ‘parents’ and ‘caretakers’ were used in the reports.

The neglect of gendered considerations in the policy process across Ministries was noticed by my interview participants and was one of the major reasons for the women’s mistrust in the government. Many participants condemned recent cuts to health and childcare services, to financial support of organisations in the sexual violence sector and to social security, which some women referred to as ‘beneficiary bashing’. A few women criticised cuts to the Training Incentive Allowance and some considered tax cuts for ‘rich people’ to be a mistake. While these criticisms addressed a broad range of cuts and reforms, the participants emphasised that these measures had gendered outcomes for society that government did not acknowledge. As Djamila (21, South Asian) highlighted: ‘the government tends to be sort of gender blind. And they are blind to a lot of different kind of cultural factors actually. [According to them] we are generic people; we are not, you know, gendered; we are not racialised’.

The work of the Ministry of Women’s Affairs

The above discussion showed that gender mainstreaming did not seem to have much impact on the work of the five government Ministries. Thus, my discussion turns to the Ministry of Women’s Affairs and investigates its scope to influence policy making for women. For that purpose, I draw on the content of the annual report of the Ministry of Women’s Affairs (2013) and the Briefing to the Incoming Minister (2011).

Strategic priorities

In the opening paragraph of her editorial to the Ministry of Women’s Affairs’ (2013, p.4) annual report, which introduced her as the new CEO, Jo Cribb stated ‘New Zealand will benefit when we are increasing women’s economic independence, increasing the number of women in leadership and increasing women’s safety from violence’. The order of the three goals named in

this statement set the tone for the entire report, which emphasises the Ministry's successes related to increased opportunities for women in the workforce and greater gender diversity in leadership positions. Lower priority was given to the Ministry's contributions to reducing violence against women, while even less attention was afforded to the Ministry's fourth emphasis, meeting international obligations (for example, reporting to the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, CEDAW).

The way that the Ministry of Women's Affairs' report framed the outcomes of its work, in particular those related to economic enhancement, often included a justification highlighting the relevance of such work to the economy and New Zealand in general. For example, the focus on 'greater economic independence' of women was introduced as follows: 'Increasing opportunities for women to contribute to the workforce to the full extent of their skills and abilities will assist New Zealand to further develop a productive and competitive economy' (MWA, 2013, p.5). One of the mentioned 'initiatives to enable women to succeed in their employment' was the development of early childhood education policies. While the interpretation of childcare services as supportive of women's careers was certainly true, it failed to additionally acknowledge the advantages of childcare services to mothers outside the workforce. Neither did it emphasise the benefits of childcare services to the personal lives of mothers. It seemed that the Ministry of Women's Affairs avoided explaining the value of its work in terms that did not focus on economic benefits.

Acknowledging differences?

Among the key messages offered to the new Minister, the Ministry of Women's Affairs' (2011, p.1) briefing document stated '[w]omen are diverse. Women's experiences, needs and priorities are not all the same. There are significant differences in outcomes among women, as well as between men and women'. The document continued to point out specific issues that were more relevant for certain groups of women than for women overall. While it did not discuss such issues for all minority and/or vulnerable groups of women in New Zealand (for example, there was no reference to lesbian/queer, migrant and refugee women), it addressed a range of groups. It reported, for instance, that Māori women had a lower life-expectancy and higher smoking rates than non-Māori women, that suicide rates were particularly high among female youth and that women with disabilities had poorer employment outcomes than women without disabilities. Accordingly, I expected to find the Ministry of Women's Affairs' annual report which followed this briefing document, to similarly address such diversity among women. However, the annual report of 2013 offered hardly any discussion of differences among women. Māori and Pacific

women were only addressed once and young women were referred to twice. One group of women who received some attention within the report were women who experienced intimate partner violence. This was also the only group addressed without an explicit focus on enhancing their opportunities in the labour market.

As explained in Chapter 2, from its beginnings in the 1980s state feminism has struggled to incorporate the multiple interests of women within its work foci because of incompatibility with government's neoliberal agenda. My analysis of the Ministry's briefing document and annual report suggests that the strategy of focussing on women in the labour market to ensure *some* women's issues receive attention is still used by New Zealand's contemporary state feminists in the Ministry of Women's Affairs, but this provides a very narrow scope for this institutions' work.

'Dear government, please do...'

Since my interview participants were not satisfied with government's work on women's issues, I asked them what policies they would put in place if they were 'policy-makers themselves for a day'. Their answers covered a broad range of issues. In the following, I provide a summary of the women's 'wish-list' and discuss to what extent these suggestions are, according to the documents analysed, aligned with the Ministry of Women's Affairs' agenda.

Specific suggestions

The most commonly named request, voiced by nine out of the 40 women, was the re-introduction of the Employment Equity Act⁷⁷ or the implementation of a new version of it. Two more women similarly requested a policy to ensure equal pay and pay equity. A discussion of the Employment Equity Act itself was not evident in the Ministry of Women's Affairs' documents. However, the gender pay gap was, if only briefly, addressed in both the annual report and the briefing document.

Emphasising feminism within the school curriculums and including a feminist approach to sex education (including sexual consent) was the second most popular demand of my participants. The women believed that educating young people about feminist ideas would create a society that was more aware of gender inequalities. This aim was not on the future agenda of

⁷⁷ The Employment Equity Act was introduced in 1990 by the Labour Government and promoted pay equity and equal employment opportunities. The subsequent National Government repealed the Act shortly after taking office in the same year.

the Ministry of Women's Affairs. Instead, the briefing document provided the incoming Minister with a list of previous *achievements* of the Ministry, which included 'contributing to improving the effectiveness of sexuality education in schools' (MWA, 2011, p.10).

A policy ensuring free (or at least affordable) quality childcare services that operated outside normal business hours was also on the wish-list of four women. They rationalised this demand by claiming that only such services could create a real choice for women about whether they wanted to stay at home with their children or (re)join the labour market. Offering a similar explanation, two more women requested paid parental leave for fathers⁷⁸. This latter request was not discussed in the Ministry's agenda but as explained earlier, the Ministry of Women's Affairs' annual report supported an improvement of childcare services as an enabler for women's employment. While the 2011 briefing document aimed for 'affordable, quality childcare' (MWA, 2011, p.7), two years later the annual report only noted the Ministry's advice to other government agencies to promote 'access to childcare' (MWA, 2013, p.8) — the focus on the affordability and quality of these services seems to have been lost along the way.

A number of additional policy requests were each named by three participants: a re-introduction of the Training Incentive Allowance for tertiary education, raising the minimum wage and reforming abortion law. The need for a new abortion law was explained by a young woman who stated that, under the current law abortions were technically still named in the New Zealand's Crimes Act and that 'the fact that you have to essentially declare you are mentally unwell to get an abortion is problematic on a number of levels' (Judith, 21, Pākehā). The Ministry of Women's Affairs did not discuss these issues in either of the two documents analysed.

Another law that four participants thought should be changed was the Marriage Act. Two participants wanted government to allow same sex marriages in New Zealand and another two women stated that, if they were in charge, they would abolish the institution of marriage altogether and only permit civil unions for everyone (presumably because of the patriarchal connotations associated with marriage). The interviews took place before the implementation of the Marriage Amendment Act 2013, which removed the first request from the wish-list. The abolition of marriage was not on the agenda of the Ministry.

Four more participants asked for changes in the family court and the sexual violence court systems. The family court was criticised because participants experienced it as intimidating and believed that judgements were based too heavily on formal criteria. For example, one woman

⁷⁸ To date, mothers can transfer parts of their entitlement to fathers, but fathers are not entitled to paid parental leave themselves (see MBIE, <http://www.dol.govt.nz/er/holidaysandleave/parentalleave/partnersfathers/whatisavailable-pf.asp>, retrieved 20 January 2014).

stated ‘when a woman is a non-permanent resident and she has children then they see the father as being more fit to care for the children than that woman, especially when the father is white and [a] citizen. Even though he’s been abusive and stuff like that’ (Chen, 22, East Asian). With regards to the sexual violence court system, the women wanted changes around how cases were processed. Isabella (28, European), who worked for an organisation in the sexual violence sector, explained:

At the moment they [the courts] are very victim blaming. And there is a jury system and I would strongly like a pool of specialised experts, not a jury, that deal with the court case. And that the victim doesn’t have to be at the court case but just do a video interview [...] and the offender actually has to take the stand. Cos at the moment that’s the biggest injustice [...], that the victim has to take the stand but the offender can choose to stay silent. So for the victim that means standing in front of her abuser — or his abuser — and saying all of the story and the defence will often pick that apart.

While the annual report of the Ministry of Women’s Affairs did not provide details, it reported that the Ministry had advised the Ministry of Justice to review family violence courts. A review of the court system for cases of sexual violence, however, was not mentioned.

Funding priorities

Because policy can be a rather complex matter, in many cases the women did not suggest specific policies or law reforms. Instead, they pointed out social issues which they perceived to be neglected by government. Mostly, those suggestions implied an allocation of (more) government funding to support and improve these areas.

In such a context, the education system was named by eleven women. The participants wanted to see improvements to educational access overall, while some women specifically referred to adult and early childhood education. Violence prevention and support for survivors of violence, either in the form of counselling or through women’s refuges, were other popular requests, voiced by seven women. Tackling child poverty more efficiently, providing help for sole parents and expanding affordable health services were similarly common issues.

As a Ministry unable to allocate government funding, the Ministry of Women’s Affairs can only advise other government agencies on potential policy priorities. With regards to early childhood education, the Ministry advised the Ministry of Education to further develop these services, though enhancing adult education was not a priority of the Ministry of Women’s Affairs.

As explained earlier, increasing safety from violence was the third priority of the Ministry of Women’s Affairs discussed in detail in its annual report. Within this priority, family violence

was — as the quotes of my participants showed earlier — given more attention than sexual violence. However, the Ministry aimed to ensure its ‘evidence, analysis and advice on preventing and responding to sexual revictimisation of women is incorporated by relevant agencies in their policy and programme development’ (MWA, 2013, p.15). Thus, the Ministry engaged with the Accident Compensation Corporation (ACC), the Ministry of Justice, the New Zealand Police Adult Sexual Assault Training Review Group and other agencies and organisations for input and peer review of their work. Additionally, the Ministry of Women’s Affairs used its report *Lightning Does Strike Twice: Preventing Sexual Revictimisation* (MWA, 2012) to raise awareness about preventing re-occurrence of sexual violence.

While the briefing document noted that sole parent households were more likely than other household types to be affected by poverty, the annual report did not indicate that the Ministry of Women’s Affairs had picked up on this issue by 2013. Similarly, the importance of healthcare for women was addressed in the briefing document but not in the annual report. Addressing child poverty was not an issue raised in either the Ministry of Women’s Affairs’ report or the Briefing to the Incoming Minister.

General wishes

Some of the participants’ requests went beyond the policy realm. For instance, five women wanted to see more women in powerful positions across the public and the private sector to act as role models and ensure the creation of women-friendly environments within their respective spheres of power. While the women emphasised that this was not something that they perceived policy as responsible for, the Ministry of Women’s Affairs (2013) addressed this issue in its annual report by giving high priority to increasing the number of women in leadership roles.

Another participant demanded a change in societal perceptions about stay-at-home fathers in order to increase their numbers and a further woman wished to address and regulate the gendered division of unpaid work. Neither of these issues were included in the annual report of the Ministry of Women’s Affairs (2013). The briefing document, however, acknowledged that most unpaid work was done by women.

In a slightly different context, Whina (35, Māori) criticised the approach of government agencies in addressing social problems at an individual level, which she viewed, at least partly, as a white European strategy that ‘clashed’ with her own perspective. In the past, she was employed in an institution that worked in the area of child support and she said:

[For the organisation] it was just about that particular child and what that child needed. And so as a social worker it was my role to make sure that that child was

taken care of. [...] Discussions around support that the mother may need in order to care for that child wasn't spoken of. It was just support for the child. [...] So it was just about talking to the mother or talking to the family about what they needed to do in order to help that child. But [they] forgot about resourcing the family enough so that they could do that. [...] So yeah, in my experience [the organisation]'s just being like a horse with blinds on, only seeing what's in front of you and not taking into consideration the whole picture.

As a consequence of this experience, which reflected a Third Way priority on advancing children's needs without considering the circumstances of parents (see Chapter 2), this woman wanted to see a more holistic approach adopted by government agencies addressing child- and therefore, women-related problems. Only⁷⁹ in the context of increasing women's safety from violence, did the Briefing to the Incoming Minister (2011, p.7) note the need for an 'integrated approach across a range of government systems, including health, housing, education, justice and welfare'.

The above comparison of the participants 'wishes' and the Ministry of Women's Affairs agenda showed that while priorities differed, there were some notable overlaps. Moreover, some government departments other than the Ministry of Women's Affairs occasionally took women's issues on board. Of course, these overlaps are small and I do not intend to overstate them. However, I believe it is important to highlight shared interests across state feminism and individual feminism in New Zealand because, while the importance of state feminism grew within the context of neoliberalism, support for such formalised work among individual feminists seems to have declined (see Andrew & Maddison, 2010; Bail, 1996; Maddison, 2002).

Conclusion: The role of state feminism in the women's movement

In Chapter 2, I discussed how the rise of neoliberalism changed the political opportunities for women's issues to be raised as political issues. The impact of this change is reflected in this chapter's analysis, which showed how New Zealand's state feminists working at the Ministry of Women's Affairs struggled to keep women's issues on the political agenda while being constrained by the broader government's neoliberal ideology. I have shown that gender mainstreaming initiatives were seldom apparent within the work of government departments and were only covered through basic and mandatory requirements of EEO. While women were

⁷⁹ However, in 2010 government introduced Whānau Ora, 'an inclusive approach to providing services and opportunities to families across New Zealand. It empowers families as a whole, rather than focusing separately on individual family members and their problems' (Te Puni Kōkiri, <http://www.tpk.govt.nz/documents/tpk-faqwhanaura-2010-en.pdf>, retrieved 21 January 2014).

hardly addressed in the reports of the five Ministries other than the Ministry of Women's Affairs, children as New Zealand's 'future citizens' received much greater political attention.

The Ministry of Women's Affairs placed much emphasis on framing women's interests as economically relevant. When women outside the labour market were referred to, it was only as victims of violence or as a relatively low priority. Thus, my findings support the literature that has argued that neoliberalism necessitates an emphasis on the economic contribution of women and gender equality in order to keep some women's issues on the political agenda (Holli & Kantola, 2007; Sawer, 1996). A consequence of such a 'masking' of women's issues (Curtin, 2008) is that it reduces the support of many individual feminists, including most of my participants. They were frustrated with the apparent invisibility of women's issues in policy development and, therefore, had little faith in the capability of government departments to implement policy for women.

However, my analysis has shown that there was *some* common ground between the women's wishes and the work foci of the Ministry of Women's Affairs. The Briefing to the Incoming Minister often placed a clear emphasis on issues of importance to the women interviewed, including recognition of women's diversity, the vulnerability of sole mothers and the demand for *affordable quality* childcare. This finding is important because it highlights that, although the women in my study held a negative opinion of the Ministry of Women's Affairs, in fact there was some overlap in the priorities they articulated which deserves attention within feminist circles.

Due to the lack of visible outcomes, my participants certainly had good reason to be distrustful of state feminism and the Ministry of Women's Affairs. But given its role as a policy advisory, the Ministry only has limited agency to politically enforce the implementation of gender guidelines and policy. To determine the importance of state feminism for New Zealand's women's movement, one should not simply evaluate the Ministry of Women's Affairs' success in influencing policy for women because political opportunity structures significantly limit the scope of such success. More important is the question of whether the Ministry's agenda and strategies are adjusted to current political opportunities in order to pursue the aim of empowering women within the given limits. The Ministry of Women's Affairs' agenda has been adjusted to fit the neoliberal environment, which certainly hinders radical changes made for women by the Ministry. But state feminism is not expected to overcome these barriers of women's empowerment alone. As Aroha (70, Pākehā/Māori), who had worked for various women's institutions and organisations, stated:

I always considered myself to be a system's feminist, which meant that I was willing to work within the system to bring about change. But I also believed in the importance of there being people in all the levels. There also had to be women outside of the system; the women who threw the bricks into the windows so that the rest of us could say: 'Well, we might not go that far but we believe in the same things that they believe in'.

Employees of the Ministry of Women's Affairs and other state feminists do not (usually) 'throw bricks'. Instead, their role is to negotiate a political space for women within 'the system', which does not prioritise women's issues. State feminists need to be careful not to be so intrusive that the government closes the Ministry down. Many international women's policy agencies in similar positions have either been abolished entirely or have been down-sized to less powerful units (Chappell, 2002; Curtin & Teghtsoonian, 2010; Sawer, 2007). From this perspective, the survival of the MWA can be seen as an achievement in itself (Hyman, 2010). By remaining in existence, it has inhibited policy from becoming the domain of 'rich white men' alone. Sawer (1996) contended that the accountability of women's policy units to government makes conflicts within the women's movement inevitable. I do not deny that the erasure of women as a diverse group within policy is a serious problem. But these conflicts are no reason to ignore the overall importance of state feminism to the broader women's movement.

Chapter 9

Finding New Zealand's women's movement

Introduction

In this final chapter of my thesis I argue that a women's movement exists in contemporary New Zealand. Feminist activity has adapted to changed political opportunities and, thus, transformed the character of the women's movement significantly since its heyday in the 1970 and 1980s. However, this does not mean the women's movement is dead. As I will show, this finding is aligned with international research on women's movements in other neoliberal countries such as Australia and England.

To support this argument, I link the empirical findings presented in the previous four chapters to the theoretical conceptualisation of women's movements outlined in Chapter 3 to demonstrate that feminist activity in New Zealand meets all of the criteria said to be necessary constitute a women's movement. I extend this discussion by reflecting on the three levels of feminist activity (the micro-, meso- and macro-level), and explain how they relate to and complement each other and conjointly form the basis of New Zealand's women's movement.

Because much of my initial research motivation was sparked by the literature that identified the end, or at least the abeyance, of New Zealand's women's movement (see Chapter 1), I also consider why the movement I have identified seems to get (mis)diagnosed in such a way. I argue that this has to do with the altered characteristics of the contemporary women's movement, which make it appear 'invisible' to those who expect the movement to look the same as it did in the past.

In my closing discussion I offer final thoughts on the challenges that the New Zealand women's movement faces today and I appeal for future feminist research that supports the women's movement by generating knowledge that assists feminist communities to overcome conflicts and difficulties. Finally, I contextualise my findings with results of international studies which underline the importance of researching women's movements by adopting a nuanced perspective that considers all levels of feminist activity.

New Zealand's women's movement

In Chapter 3, I introduced Sawyer's (2010) conceptualisation of women's movements as an appropriate approach for examining New Zealand's contemporary feminist activity. In the following, I explain how the empirical findings of my study demonstrate that feminist activity meets all three criteria that Sawyer (2010, p.605) specified as characterising a women's movement:

- a. mobilise collective identity as women;
- b. sustain the challenge of women-centred discourse through periods of abeyance; and
- c. make claims on behalf of women.

The findings regarding each are discussed in turn in this section.

Mobilising 'women'

Despite many participants emphasising that women are a diverse group of people and the importance given to intersectionality issues, I argue that 'woman' as a political category remains an underlying and collective identity for New Zealand's feminists. Superficially, it is easy for me to make this claim because it was part of my study's sampling criteria that the participants identify as women and thus they all shared this identity (see Chapter 4).

But more in-depth analysis has highlighted that my participants placed women as a political category in the centre of their feminist aspirations. I have shown in Chapter 5 that achieving equality between genders was most commonly named as the underlying aim of these women's understandings of feminism. Older women were more likely to frame this demand as 'equality between men and women' while young and queer women more often used the terminology of 'equality between all genders'. But I suggest that this difference in wording was a matter of generation-specific feminist socialisation rather than a reflection of ideological differences: the idea of fluid gender identities have only become widely shared in feminist circles in the early 1990s (e.g. Butler, 1990). Thus, younger feminists and women who identified as queer were more familiar with alternative gender concepts than older women. Most Māori women and some other participants further explained the importance of including men and the whole community in all struggles for social equality. However, while some women emphasised that gender discrimination did not only affect women negatively, all agreed that women — an identity they all shared — were *more* disadvantaged than men.

In Chapter 5, I also suggested that the individual perceptions of feminism as an ideology held by many participants limited the possibilities for collective representation. This seems

contradictory to sharing a collective identity. However, while many women emphasised that their feminist views reflected their personal perspectives only, there was reason for me to assume that many of these women conceived of feminism more broadly. They avoided *articulating* such wider opinions because they were anxious not to display signs of unreflexive privilege and of dominating feminist discourse with their opinions (see Chapter 5). Similarly, their feminist activities often reflected an indirect representation of others and many women assigned political and social value to these activities, as elaborated in Chapter 6. While their individual approaches were often oriented towards personal goals, many women simultaneously tried to provoke social change for other women, even if only on a small scale (e.g. within relationships to others, within their personal living environments). Also large protest marches such as SlutWalk and the Bust Rape Culture march were organised to primarily represent the voices of women and survivors of sexual violence. It is rather ironic, then, that SlutWalk was criticised for its attempt to represent broad groups of women and for not acknowledging diversity within those groups appropriately.

The literature has stated that people who share a collective political identity, such as the identity of women, create a distinction between insiders and outsiders (Ferree & Mueller, 2003; Whittier, 1995). The discussion about the inclusion of transwomen at the Auckland Women's Centre (see Chapter 5) offered a good example for the contemporary relevance of negotiating such a distinction, but also reminding us that 'women' are still at the centre of feminist discussion in New Zealand. This example further illustrated that women's collective identity is, as argued by Whittier (1995), subject to change over time.

Sustaining through abeyance

This second characteristic of a women's movement — keeping a women-centred discourse alive in difficult times — suggests that women's movements go through varying phases of intensity, including abeyance. Indeed, New Zealand's women's movement has been described as being in abeyance since the late 1980s (Coney, 1993b; Grey, 2008a). I do not agree with the gravity that is associated with such an account, particularly in relation to the 2000s when feminism regained some strength. But I agree that New Zealand's women's movement has lost visibility and some authority since the 1970s. However, as Sawer's criterion suggests, it has sustained (varying degrees of) momentum and a women-centred discourse remains evident in the twenty-first century. The women in my study did not describe explicit strategies to consciously maintain such a discourse, but they applied several tactics that contributed to its success.

At the micro-level of the movement, the activities of everyday feminism, interactions with family and friends, individual artwork, writing blogs and other forms of individualised

feminist activity have helped to maintain a feminist discourse. Promoted by individual women, these types of discourse were often contained within small communities, sometimes spread online, but rarely did they cross wider society. Despite the small impact of such activities, my participants valued the small victories they gained from them. For instance, successfully challenging an acquaintance who made a sexist joke, having a fruitful debate on a feminist internet platform and distributing a self-made feminist zine to readers fuelled the women's motivation and enthusiasm for feminist engagement and kept debate about feminist issues alive. In particular, the creation of alternative media (e.g. zines, the television series *WomenPower*) and the use of social media provided new spaces to maintain feminist discourse. Shaw (2013) illustrated how Australian feminist bloggers play a significant role in offering platforms where feminists have discussions and develop ideas together. I discussed similar developments in New Zealand in Chapter 5.

The meso-level of the women's movement offered alternative ways to maintain the feminist discourse. My findings have shown that few women's organisation prioritised feminist terminology and some did not even refer to women specifically. However, their work still focussed on women's issues such as domestic and sexual violence, poverty among sole parent families and eating disorders (see Chapter 7). Other organisations proudly identified their work as being feminist and openly engaged in a discourse about women's issues. Such advocacy work was easier to pursue amongst organisations not depending on government funding.

A further way of keeping a women-centred discourse alive was to bring feminist debate to other areas of social justice that intersect with a feminist agenda. For example, a few women worked for unions, others were part of activist groups such as Auckland Action Against Poverty and some were involved with Occupy Auckland/Wellington 2011 (see Chapter 6). These and similar groups, organisations and movements were not exclusively (or even primarily) addressing women's issues. However, from a feminist perspective, they certainly benefitted from the feminist input provided by the women. While Chapter 3 conceptualised such activities as 'women in movements' rather than part of the women's movement itself, these activities still helped to maintain a women-centred discourse.

The macro-level of state feminism has faced difficulties in keeping a feminist discourse to the fore within government. As discussed in Chapters 2 and 8, women's policy agencies in Western democracies tend to have little impact on policy making (Hausmann & Sauer, 2007) and New Zealand's Ministry of Women's Affairs is unfortunately no exception. Its strong focus on women in leadership and paid work has been criticised by feminists, but this serves the purpose of framing women's issues in a way that is of relevance to a neoliberal oriented

government. While several women's policy agencies have been abolished in the neoliberal context of other countries, New Zealand's Ministry of Women's Affairs has so far managed to remain 'valuable enough' as a government department to avoid this fate. I believe it is important for the women's movement to have an institution that continues, even if with little visible success, to raise political women's issues within the policy process because it helps to keep these issues alive in institutionalised political debates.

Making claims on women's behalf

Sawer's (2010) third characteristic of a women's movement emphasises the claims made by the movement on behalf of women. In the following, I review the main claims expressed by the participants, the organisations analysed in my study and the Ministry of Women's Affairs. These claims range from specific policy suggestions to comparatively vague demands for changes of social norms. Following this summary of claims, I explain *how* these demands were articulated, because the means through which feminists communicate their claims today are diverse.

The meaning of feminism, as expressed by the majority of the women in my study, was to demand equality between genders by improving women's rights and opportunities in society. This is arguably the main, if somewhat broad, claim of the women's movement made on behalf of women. Some participants explained this demand in more depth asking, for example, for an improvement in reproductive (e.g. concerning abortion) and employment rights, including equal pay/pay equity.

Participants who emphasised the relevance of individualised everyday feminism often did not explicitly express the aims for a women's movement but rather emphasised the self-directedness of their activities. For instance, I explained in Chapter 6 how self-improvement and the incorporation of feminist values into personal relationships were primary aims of many young feminists. However, I suggest that women engaged in such activities still made claims on behalf of women, if at a different level and on a small scale. For example, they did not accept sexist environments in their personal lives. In challenging such day-to-day inequalities, they reclaimed their personal sphere as a safe space for themselves and by extension for other women entering this space.

The claims made by women's organisations analysed in Chapter 7 were broad, including a demand for law changes (e.g. abortion rights), political recognition of marginalised groups (e.g. the poor, sex workers) and the compliance of employers with workers' rights (e.g. through union work). Some organisations focussed on supporting specific groups within their communities (e.g. for queer youth, survivors of violence) and others worked on strengthening certain communities

overall (e.g. of ethnic groups, rural communities). Not all of these demands were exclusively made on behalf of women, but they were made by groups that were dominantly or significantly female (e.g. sex workers, nurses, sole parents, youth with eating disorder).

Finally, at the level of state feminism — as represented by the Ministry of Women's Affairs in my study — claims on behalf of women were made by lobbying within the policy process for women's interests. Most of these interests represented the needs of women in employment and survivors of violence. However, I showed in Chapter 8 that the Ministry of Women's Affairs tried (with limited success) to cover a broader range of issues. Many of these demands were also articulated by my participants.

As indicated earlier, the ways in which all these different claims on behalf of women were declared to the public and political authorities were as diverse as the claims themselves. While some conceptualisations of women's movements offered in the literature suggest that a handful of individual key actors tend to present the movements' ideas to the public (Hausmann & Sauer, 2007), I did not identify such specific spokespeople in New Zealand. However, Sawer's (2010) conceptualisation of a women's movement does not refer to key individuals and I do not believe that they are crucial to the existence of a women's movement. Given that 'diversity' is such an important characteristic of contemporary feminism and 'representation' has become a difficult concept to implement, it seems inappropriate to look for a small number of key voices to articulate the claims of a women's movement. The women in my study used a range of avenues to publicise their claims due to the diverse nature of their claims, the different audiences they wanted to reach and the different opportunities available.

This range included individual women communicating with people in their personal environments of their daily lives, street protests carrying messages to the media and the public (e.g. SlutWalk, Bust Rape Culture), social media circulating feminist claims within the online sphere (e.g. Misogyny Busters, the *Defined Lines* video), and petitions raising awareness about the need for political intervention (e.g. to stop the closure of Auckland's 24/7 sexual violence crisis service). Although often limited in their political agency, some women's organisations, with expertise on certain issues spoke out publicly when necessary (e.g. Wellington Rape Crisis on the Hell's Pizza case). The voice of the Ministry of Women's Affairs, meanwhile, was not often heard outside institutionalised environments, but did carry state feminist claims to policy makers. All of these 'actors' contributed to making claims on behalf of women in both the public and political spheres.

Feminist activity in New Zealand, therefore, also meets the third criterion of Sawer's conceptualisation of a women's movement. Given the high importance of intersectionality issues

and the recognition of diversity among my participants, it is important to note that this criterion is not to be interpreted in a way that suggests that *all* claims made by a women's movement need to be made on behalf of *all* women at the same time. Claims that are, for example, exclusively relevant to Māori women, lesbian women, queer women or disabled women still are valid claims of a women's movement. Such a condition does not contradict Sawyer's conceptualisation but rather accommodates an acknowledgement of diversity, which is a key characteristic of Third Wave feminism.

Connecting the three levels of the movement

While not part of Sawyer's (2010) conceptualisation of a women's movement, I need to discuss one more aspect of New Zealand's women's movement in order to fully answer my research questions as listed in Chapter 1. Throughout this thesis I have argued that feminist activity in New Zealand can be categorised into the micro- (individual), meso- (organisational) and macro-level (state) of the women's movement and I discussed each of these levels separately in Chapters 6 to 8. One of the strengths of my research design is that it allows me to relate these levels to each other.

I do not suggest that the three levels of the women's movement act as one entity and speak with one voice. However, they serve different but complementary purposes for the women's movement. Women's organisations at the meso-level provide vital services to many women, even if the neoliberal project has increased the formalisation of women's organisations and limited their political voice. Simultaneously, a neoliberal emphasis on individual agency has facilitated the emergence of personal and informal approaches to feminism on the micro-level of the women's movement, offering feminists new avenues for expressing feminist claims. While individualised feminism lacks the formal characteristics often necessary to initiate changes on a policy level, state feminism provides these structures to the women's movement. Political opportunities are not favourable for this feminist work on the macro-level and its successes are limited. However, New Zealand's state feminists have so far succeeded in maintaining the Ministry of Women's Affairs as a government agency.

The three levels are also, to some extent, interconnected. The distinction between the individual and organisational level of feminist activity is somewhat ambiguous. The feminist grassroots scene in New Zealand hosts small groups of activists, artists and other feminist collectives that operate on an informal level without official membership and constitutional statutes (e.g. Young Asian Feminists Aotearoa, Wellington Craftivism Collective). New social media has enabled the creation of informal collectives that exist only online. Misogyny Busters

(see Chapter 6), for example, is a Facebook group whose main success was to pressure companies into removing their advertisements from Willie Jackson and John Tamihere's Radio Live show. This was achieved because individual people, who otherwise had no connection to each other, could be mobilised for this specific purpose. In addition, Misogyny Busters and the organising teams of other feminist events such as SlutWalk were temporary or one-off feminist activities. They formed for a specific purpose and disbanded when their goals were achieved. However, they still exist as Facebook groups that loosely connect individual members and will inform them once a new group emerges and needs support for a new purpose.

Among the more professionalised women's organisations who act as service providers (e.g. Women's Refuge, Women's Centres), many have ties with the Ministry of Women's Affairs because of their roles as consultants to, and stakeholders in government policy. Although the Ministry allowed more space for such relationships in the early years of its existence than today, it still benefits from the knowledge about the specific needs of women provided by these consulting organisations. Of course, these relationships between the Ministry and women's organisations are coloured by the unequal power dynamics between them.

Links between the micro- and the macro-level of feminism arguably occur because these two levels represent different stages of many 'feminist careers'. One of my participants pointed out that the Ministry of Women's Affairs mainly employed people with high levels of education and/or professional experience, which take time to acquire. Therefore, employees tend to be over a certain age (see Chapter 8). I have further shown that most forms of individualised feminism are particularly popular among younger women. The same women may move on to jobs in institutions such as at the Ministry of Women's Affairs after they have completed their education or worked in women's organisations. Other than that, the support of individual feminists for state feminist work is — despite some shared aims between these levels — limited by the neoliberal context of state feminism. This is one of the weaknesses of New Zealand's women's movement. State feminism would certainly benefit from greater support from the feminist grassroots base.

In summary, while the three levels of the women's movement all have important tasks to fulfil, they do not act entirely disconnected from each other. In combination, I argue that they constitute New Zealand's contemporary women's movement.

The hidden movement

This research project initially set out in search of New Zealand's women's movement because the literature suggested that the movement of the 1970s and 1980s no longer existed. To address

the contradiction between this belief and my empirical evidence, which suggests that there *is* a contemporary New Zealand women's movement, I will clarify why the movement appears to be 'invisible'.

While New Zealand's Second Wave women's movement was often visibly marching on the streets, the Third Wave has a reputation for not engaging in traditional forms of street protest (Grey, 2008a). However, Sawyer (2013) has critiqued scholarly analyses of women's movements that consider only disruptive action such as street protests when measuring the strength of the movement. According to her critique, such assessments are problematic because they hide other feminist activities. I suggest that this critique needs to be considered in the New Zealand context.

In the late 1980s many New Zealand feminists involved in grassroots activism moved into formal jobs in women's organisations and state feminist institutions because this formalised path of feminist engagement seemed to offer more opportunities for themselves and for feminism than disruptive — and publically visible — activism. Indeed, among the participants of my study, many women of working age had paid jobs in women's organisations and state related institutions. Some of these women explained that they avoided attending street protests in their private time because, for instance, they needed some distance from women's issues outside working hours. Moreover, while the presence of representatives of women's organisations and institutions at protests is often helpful for the cause of the protest, some participants argued that organisations have to be careful not to criticise government decisions publicly because of their organisations' reliance on government funding. Such caution was often not only motivated by the sentiment of 'don't bite the hand that feeds you', but also by gag clauses in their funding contracts that actively prohibited advocacy work by the funded organisations. Overall, this confirms the literature's claim of declining feminist street activism.

However, women still occasionally march on the streets and in the last years there have been some feminist protests which have attracted a large amount of people (e.g. SlutWalk 2011, Bust Rape Culture). A significant difference between these examples and the street marches of the Second Wave movement was that the more recent protests have been immediate reactions to specific events that have sparked public debate about sexism and misogyny in New Zealand. In contrast, Second Wave marches were often related to long-term campaigns (e.g. the introduction of a new abortion law, the advancement of lesbian interest). The issue-based character of contemporary activism is typical of Third Wave feminism overall. Compared to long-term campaigns, which can communicate arguments over an extended period of time to mainstream media, issue-based activism receives less attention from mainstream media and therefore, I suggest, is more easily missed by the public — and feminists.

This shift from street activism to institutionalised feminism has expanded the women's movement at the macro-level. However, as I explored in Chapter 8, state feminists in New Zealand have always struggled to be recognised as part of the women's movement. The liaison with government turned this faction of feminism into an accomplice, if not a part of 'the system' that some feminists with anarchist or radical leanings perceive as maintaining patriarchy. While I do not agree with this position, I acknowledge that this part of the women's movement is not always recognised as such and therefore the work it does can be perceived as 'invisible'.

Moreover, despite the Labour-led government's intention after 1999 to improve the political agency of the NGO-sector, including many women's organisations, the Third Way did not overcome government's overall reluctance to address gender inequality because of its perceived incompatibility with a neoliberal agenda (see Chapter 2). This made it difficult for state feminists to draw public and political attention to explicit women's issues, making their work even more invisible. While this development has mainly affected the macro-level of the women's movement, I found that many women's organisations also did not directly address women as their target group or explicitly locate their work in the field of women's issues (see Chapter 7). Wanting to address a broader clientele, and/or being dependent on funding from government and thus having to avoid overt advocacy for women's interest, made the veiling of women's issues a useful strategy for some women's organisations.

On the micro-level of the women's movement, feminist activities have also become 'invisible'. Obviously, feminist activity that is performed individually and within the private sphere is less visible than collective and public events. I argued earlier that many feminists helped to maintain a feminist discourse by bringing women's concerns into other areas of activism and social justice. In doing so, they paradoxically kept the discourse about such issues alive but weakened the visibility of the women's movement because these discourses were then embedded within other areas of social justice. Similarly, young women's use of the internet and social media tools for organising feminist events, holding discussions and sharing information, 'hid' these activities in the online sphere. As explained in Chapter 5, many members of the older generation were less inclined to engage in such online communities and as a result were not aware of the young women's work that was organised online.

Finally, the fragmentation of the women's movement has also contributed to its invisibility. As shown throughout this thesis, contemporary feminism puts particular effort into acknowledging differences between women with various ethnic and sexual identities. Awareness of such differences makes it arguably less necessary, but also more difficult for feminist groups to cooperate across such divisions. This has facilitated the fragmentation of the movement.

While some of my participants perceived such a fragmentation as a benefit, it has also meant the movement is less likely to be noticed as a cohesive entity because only the most vocal factions stand out.

All of these developments and characteristics have contributed to the increasing invisibility of New Zealand's women's movement to the general public and some academic scholars. I agree with Grey's (2008a, p.76) assertion that 'the mere fact that it [feminist activism] is hidden from view is problematic'. But I argue that this invisibility does not mean that the movement does not exist. It only suggests that the movement is constituted in different places and different forms than it was previously. Dean (2010) argued that narratives of the women's movement's decline are significantly influenced by a depiction of the Second Wave movement as *the* authentic women's movement. I believe it is partly academia's mandate to challenge this depiction and draw attention to new avenues of the women's movement, as the following discussion highlights.

Current challenges and future perspectives

New Zealand's contemporary women's movement is not one cohesive and harmonious entity. It is fragmented and struggles with internal tensions and for external recognition. If it was the aim of feminism to create a movement that articulates uniform demands with one voice, then New Zealand's contemporary women's movement is failing. But this is not feminism's aim. The realities of women are complex and so are feminist values and goals (see Larner, 1995).

The widespread acknowledgement among feminists of the different experiences, needs and aims of women with different identities and backgrounds has dissolved the idea of a collective feminist identity and a 'sisterhood'⁸⁰. However, I suggest that it is this collective appreciation of women's differences that *unites* the movement. While this understanding encourages fragmented feminist communities, individualised activities and issue-based activism, these characteristics of the movement simultaneously ensure that the different perspectives among women receive attention. At least in theory they do. Practically, feminists are trying to balance inclusivity, relative privilege and cultural sensitivity within their activities, activism and work, but they face many challenges and struggle often without success. The resulting conflicts, disagreements and misunderstandings within feminist circles are serious, but I do not believe they are fatal to the entire movement.

⁸⁰ Arguably, neither of them *actually* existed in the past, however, their *idea* did (see Chapter 2).

One of the difficulties the contemporary women's movement faces is the compatibility of the different feminist approaches employed by younger and older generations of feminists. This intergenerational divide gets much attention within the literature. But I find it interesting how much Third Wave feminism and its Second Wave predecessor have in common. My findings suggest that feminists identifying with both waves were concerned with similar issues, such as violence against women, the gender pay gap, queer and lesbian issues and abortion rights. What divided the generations was mostly the *framing* of these issues and the methods they favoured to address them.

Although these generational differences, overall, did not seem to be profound when it comes to the content of feminist aims and goals, they created difficulties in the communication between younger and older feminists in New Zealand. As explained in Chapter 5, such tensions led many Second Wave feminists to think of the Third Wave as dismissive of the past women's movement's achievements, while many Third Wave feminists perceived the older generation as arrogant towards younger women. These perceptions caused tangible conflicts resulting in feminist communities often being divided by age and lacking intergenerational cooperation. Nevertheless, some of my participants perceived such tensions as overplayed. While I suggest that these conflicts need to be taken seriously — including by feminist scholars — I propose that the most constructive approach to do so is to focus on the *commonalities* between Second and Third Wavers as starting points for intergenerational cooperation.

Overall, I suggest that feminist research needs to adopt a more optimistic perspective on New Zealand's women's movement. The women's movement exists, but it is neither overwhelmingly powerful nor indestructible and would benefit from supportive research. For instance, best practice models of activism, fruitful projects for women's organisations and successful policy making for women need to be publicised and examined as to why they have worked well. Of course, this does not mean that researchers should put on rose-tinted glasses and praise feminist achievements that do not exist. But they can provide relevant analyses of the challenges and conflicts within feminist circles and provide vantage points for developing strategies to overcome them. They can also offer alternative interpretations of developments that are perceived as problems but may open new possibilities if approached from a different angle. This is how I understand the purpose of research adopting a feminist methodology and I hope that my study has provided a stepping stone for future projects in this niche of scholarly literature.

When researching the women's movement, it is also important to pay attention to the political opportunities available to the movement. For instance, I suggest that the strength of the

women's movement needs to be assessed in relation to its political environment, because a women's movement is more likely to thrive and be visible within an environment that creates supportive political opportunities for a feminist agenda. In New Zealand, neoliberalism has shaped the women's movement's opportunities significantly since the mid-1980s and restricted the political agency of women's organisations in particular. This suggests that research needs to adopt nuanced perspectives on women's movements and consider developments on the micro-, meso- *and* macro levels. While some feminist activity on one level may flourish, it may simultaneously decline on a different level.

Some international studies of women's movements and feminism offer such perspectives. In Canada, Rodgers and Knight (2011) argued that contemporary feminist organisations face serious fiscal constraints resulting from neoliberal policy, just as in New Zealand. Despite the resulting loss of influence on the policy process, the authors suggest that Canadian feminism has survived by 'undergoing a period of adaptation'. This has involved a shift of women's organisations from focussing on political advocacy to providing services, as well as a re-connection with communities for additional support and the adoption of online tools for their purposes (Rodgers & Knight, 2011, p.579).

Maddison and Sawyer (2013) edited a collection of analyses all based on one longitudinal study of Australia's women's movement, providing insight into various aspects of this movement, including women's agency groups, policy agencies, street and online activism and the relevance of global feminism. Similar to my account in the New Zealand context, they stated that in Australia:

We maintain that the women's movement is not dead. While the movement has changed and evolved, it has hidden in some unexpected places and taken on new forms, making it unrecognisable to some who are only too happy to proclaim its early death (Maddison & Sawyer, 2013, p.17).

In their assessment of the women's movement in the United States, Staggenborg and Verta (2005, p.41) arrived at a similar conclusion:

The women's movement survives to the extent that it has developed feminist 'fields' in a variety of arenas, devised tactical repertoires that have challenged numerous authorities and cultural and political codes, and permeated other social movements and public consciousness.

Newman's (2012, 2013) exploration of women's political spaces in the United Kingdom also involved multiple sites of feminist activity, including the personal involvement of women, the work of women's organisations and women's influence on policy in a neoliberal context. She further discussed the role of academic work in her analysis and explored its relationship to

activism. However, she emphasised that the political spaces created and used by her participants transgressed these levels, allowing the women to work from inside and outside the state, institutions, paid work and academia at the same time. This is a helpful way to think about the agency of women's movements because it highlights the flexibility of feminist activity and challenges binary research categories such as state/society, personal/political and autonomous/incorporated.

These international findings mirror many of the developments I have discussed in this thesis and portray the complex dynamics hidden within contemporary women's movements. This leaves me with optimism that more research in this field will omit 'premature obituaries' (Sawer, 2010, p.602) and instead provide critical feminist perspectives on women's movements that assist them to maintain momentum for many decades to come.

Appendix

Consent form

for all participants

(This form will be held for a period of 6 years)



THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND
NEW ZEALAND

Department of Sociology
10 Symonds Street, Level 9
+64 9 373 7599 ext 88614

The University of Auckland
Private Bag 92019
Auckland, New Zealand

Project title: *Where have all the feminists gone? Searching for New Zealand's women's movement in the early 21st century.*

Researcher: Julia Schuster

I have read the Participant Information Sheet, have understood the nature of the research and why I have been selected to participate. I have had the opportunity to ask questions and have them answered to my satisfaction.

- I agree to take part in this research.
- I understand that I am free to withdraw participation at any time, and to withdraw any data traceable to me up to one month after the interview.
- I agree to be audio-recorded.
- I understand that a third party who has signed a confidentiality agreement may transcribe the audio-records.
- I understand that the researcher cannot guarantee my absolute confidentiality but will try to do so by using pseudonyms.
- I understand that data will be kept for 6 years in locked cabinets on University premises, after which they will be destroyed.
- I wish / do not wish to receive the transcript of my interview. Send it to this email address:

- I wish / do not wish to receive the summary of findings. Send it to this email address:

Name _____

Signature _____

Date _____

****** Thank you for your time and support! ******

APPROVED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND HUMAN PARTICIPANTS ETHICS COMMITTEE ON August 12th 2011 for 3 years, Reference Number 2011 / 405.

Participant information sheet

for all participants



THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND
NEW ZEALAND

Department of Sociology
10 Symonds Street, Level 9
+64 9 373 7599 ext 88614

The University of Auckland
Private Bag 92019
Auckland, New Zealand

Project title: *Where have all the feminists gone? Searching for New Zealand's women's movement in the early 21st century.*

Researcher: Julia Schuster

This research is part of my PhD project, which I am currently conducting as a student at the Department of Sociology, University of Auckland. The project is supervised by Dr Louise Humpage and Prof Maureen Baker. It is funded by the University of Auckland Doctoral Scholarship 2011.

Project description and invitation

The aim of this project is to investigate contemporary feminism in Aotearoa/New Zealand. There is ongoing debate amongst feminists and academics about whether the women's movement in western countries has "disappeared" since the 1980s. I want to contribute to this debate by exploring who today's feminists are, what they fight for - if they fight at all – how they go about it. I am interested in whether these can be summarised under the term "women's movement".

For this purpose I am interviewing a number of women who engage with feminism or work in the field of women's interests, and I am inviting you to participate.

What does your participation involve?

Your participation is voluntary. *If* you agree to participate, I will ask you to do the following:

- Read and sign the consent form, which will affirm that you are voluntarily participating in this project.
- Arrange with me a time and place for the interview. The interview can take place e.g. at your home, in a cafe, the university or any other place that is convenient for you and accessible for me.
- Fill in a short demographic information sheet about yourself (e.g. age, educational background, etc.)
- Take part in an interview that will take approximately 1-2 hours. If you do not want to answer any of the interview questions you can choose not to give an answer or turn off the recorder at any time.

What happens to the interview material?

The interview will be audio-recorded and transcribed. You can choose to receive an electronic version of your transcribed interview by email.

Within two weeks after you have received this email, you can review your interview transcript and email any changes back to me. I will only include excerpts from your edited version in research reports.

All data records (printed versions, electronic files) of the interviews and the demographic information sheet will be accessible only to me and my supervisors for six years in a locked cabinet on university

premises (your consent form and your interview/demographic data will be kept separately to maintain anonymity). After the six years, all data will be destroyed.

Information from the interviews will be analysed and published in my PhD thesis, conference contributions and journal articles.

You have the right to withdraw from participation at any time before or during the interview. After the interview, you can withdraw your participation until one month after the interview. If you wish to withdraw, please send an email to my email address below

Anonymity and confidentiality

Your name will not be mentioned in any publication resulting from this project and all information you provide will be kept confidential so that only my supervisors and me will have access to it. It will not be passed on to any third party. However, a paid transcriber will assist with the transcription of the interviews; he/she must sign a confidentiality statement to agree not to pass on any information to any other party.

Please keep in mind that I cannot guarantee your absolute anonymity. There is a chance that I will interview other women you know and/or who know you. It is also possible that someone who reads publications from this project and knows you may identify you because of your involvement in specific events reported in your interview. However, I will try to avoid this through the use of pseudonyms and by removing identifying information whenever possible.

Thank you for your time and interest! Your participation in this project is very much appreciated!

Julia Schuster

Contact details:

<i>Researcher</i>	<i>Supervisor</i>	<i>Head of Department (Sociology)</i>
Julia Schuster jsch136@aucklanduni.ac.nz	Dr Louise Humpage l.humpage@auckland.ac.nz	Prof Alan France a.france@auckland.ac.nz
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For any queries regarding ethical concerns you may contact the Chair, The University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee, The University of Auckland, Office of the Vice Chancellor, Private Bag 92019, Auckland 1142. Telephone 09 373-7599 – 83711.

APPROVED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND HUMAN PARTICIPANTS ETHICS COMMITTEE ON August 12th 2011 for 3 years, Reference Number 2011 / 405.

Demographic information sheet

"Where have all the feminists gone?"

Searching for New Zealand's women's movement in the early 21st century."

PhD thesis at the Department of Sociology, University of Auckland by Julia Schuster

Interview No. _____

Date: _____

Age:	
Ethnicity:	
Current occupation:	
Highest level of education (completed):	
I have _____ (number) child/children at the age(s) of:	age of 1 st child ____ age of 3 rd child ____ age of 2 nd child ____ age of 4 th child ____ ages of 5 th + children: _____
I share my household with (tick all that apply):	<input type="checkbox"/> my partner <input type="checkbox"/> my child/children <input type="checkbox"/> my mother <input type="checkbox"/> my father <input type="checkbox"/> my flatmate(s) <input type="checkbox"/> other: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> no one – I live on my own
Approximate personal yearly net income	<input type="checkbox"/> NZ\$20,000 or less <input type="checkbox"/> NZ\$20,001 – NZ\$40,000 <input type="checkbox"/> NZ\$40,001 – NZ\$60,000 <input type="checkbox"/> NZ\$60,001 – NZ\$80,000 <input type="checkbox"/> NZ\$80,001 – NZ\$100,000 <input type="checkbox"/> NZ\$100,001 or more
In my financial circumstances I usually make ends meet	<input type="checkbox"/> with great difficulty <input type="checkbox"/> with some difficulty <input type="checkbox"/> fairly easily <input type="checkbox"/> easily

APPROVED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND HUMAN PARTICIPANTS ETHICS COMMITTEE ON August 12th 2011 for 3 years, Reference Number 2011 / 405.

Interview guideline

- Do you call yourself a feminist?
- If so: Are there any situations when you hesitate to label yourself as a feminist?
- What does feminism mean to you?
- How else would you describe your identity/who you are? Are there any other labels to describe yourself?
- Is there a hierarchy among those labels? For example, are you a feminist first and then e.g. Māori/a mother/etc. or the other way around?
- Do these different forms of identification always work together or do you have situations where you as a feminist would react in one way but you as a Māori/a mother/etc. would react in a different way?
- Does 'being feminist' shape your personal life? If so, how?
- Can you please tell me the story of how you became a feminist?
- Are you a member of any feminist/women's group, organisation, collective? Can you please tell me what this group/organisation/collective does?
- What are the most important aims of this group/organisation/collective?
- Do you sometimes participate in street level protests?
- Have you heard about the SlutWalk? If so, did you participate and what was your opinion about it?
- Do you engage in any other activities that you consider as feminist/empowering of women?
- Some people argue that feminism is a white and Western concept. Do you agree with that?
- What role does ethnicity play in feminism?
- What role does sexual identity play in feminism?
- What do you think about men in feminism?
- How would you describe the relationship between younger and older feminists in the circles that you are involved in?
- How would you describe feminist networks in New Zealand, for example, between organisations, among activists, etc.?
- What are your most rewarding/most frustrating experiences related to your feminist involvement?
- Do you think New Zealand has a women's movement? If so, what/who is it constituted by? If not, what would be needed to create one?
- What are the issues that a women's movement in New Zealand should work on?

- What role can academic research have in feminism?
- What kinds of information sources do you use to inform yourself about feminist issues?
- How happy are you with how the government deals with women's issues?
- If you were a policy maker for a day, what policies would you put in place?
- Is there anything you would like to add?

List of women's organisations' websites

Name of the organisation	Website
Abortion Law Reform Association	http://www.alranz.org/
Central Region Eating Disorder Services	http://www.eatingdisorders.org.nz/index.php
Child Poverty Action Group	http://www.cpag.org.nz/
Kapiti Living Without Violence	http://www.klww.org.nz/index.php/home
Māori Women's Welfare League (Opotiki)	http://www.opotikimwwl.org/
National Advisory Council on the Employment of Women	http://www.womenatwork.org.nz/
National Council of Women	http://www.ncwnz.org.nz/
New Zealand Nurses Organisation	http://www.nzno.org.nz/
New Zealand Prostitute Collective	http://www.nzpc.org.nz/
NZ Division of Women's International Motorcycling Association	http://www.wima.org.nz/pages/frontPage.php
Pacific Allied (Women's) Council Inspires Faith in Ideals Concerning All	http://www.pacifica.org.nz/
Rainbow Youth	http://www.rainbowyouth.org.nz/
Rural Women in New Zealand	http://www.ruralwomen.org.nz/
Salvation Army	http://www.salvationarmy.org.nz/
Shakti	http://shakti-international.org/shakti-nz/
Shine	http://www.2shine.org.nz/
Wellington Webgrrls	http://www.webgrrls.org.nz/
Women's Health Action Trust	http://www.womens-health.org.nz/
Women's Refuge	https://womensrefuge.org.nz
Women's Studies Association	http://www.wsanz.org.nz/

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