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Feminists Researching Fathering: What do we see through a reconciliation lens?

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Feminists Researching Fathering: What do we see through a reconciliation lens?

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Feminists Researching Fathering:
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Abstract

A reading of the fathering discourses in the Canadian equality feminist communities and the profeminist fathering communities reveals conflicting interests and beliefs, despite a shared goal of "gender equality." This thesis argues that identity conflict theory, most often applied to intractable ethnic and religious conflict, is relevant to the epistemological conflict between equality feminist and profeminist fathering communities. Further to this, it is demonstrated that the literature on the reconciliation of identity conflict can illuminate the challenges and potential for the uptake of a feminist research model focused on reconciliation of this gender-based conflict. Movement along the path toward a reconciliation approach can be seen within equality feminist research communities. The use of a peace and conflict lens to examine gender conflict in Canada draws attention to work being done by reconciliation scholars. This work may provide a map for forward movement toward the reconciliation of gender issues.

Feminists Researching Fathering: What do we see through a reconciliation lens?

Chapter 1: Introduction

A surge of research on fatherhood over the past 10 years has shown that increased father involvement is consistently linked to improved outcomes for children, men, and women (Allen and Daly, 2007). This data presents challenges to a Canadian society where "it is now a well-recognized cross-cultural and historical fact that women take on the lion's share of unpaid work – whether it be housework, child care,... informal caring or volunteer work" (Siltanen and Doucet, 2008, p. 115). Increased father involvement is a concern commonly addressed within the social science literature, where "equal" involvement in active parenting from both mother and father is generally held to be the gold standard (Doucet, 2006). The feminist analysis of this situation presents fathers as unwilling or unmotivated to give up the privileges associated with patriarchy in order to fully participate as active fathers. In contrast, there is a body of literature emerging from the profeminist fathering communities that explores involved fathering as an aspect of life to which men aspire. This literature also notes the barriers to participation that men face (Hawkins, 1997). Other models of fathering, put forward by equity or difference feminists (Van Leeuwen, 1993), men's rights activists (Farrell, 1999), or others, are marginalized within academic discourses on fathering. These varying approaches represent epistemological communities in conflict (Tatman, 2001).

The discipline of peace and conflict studies has the potential to offer new insights when applied to the epistemological conflict identified above. Peace and conflict studies has focused on the reconciliation of identity-based conflict within ethnic and religious contexts. However, it is a contention of this thesis, that it can appropriately and constructively address the reconciliation of gender issues.

Peace and conflict theory posits that identity-based conflict emerges from a perceived threat to deeply held beliefs and interests (Redekop, 2002). According to prominent authors in the field, identity-based conflict can be ended only through reconciliation among the parties to the conflict (Lederach, 1997, Galtung, 2004). For reconciliation to occur it is necessary to move beyond the "us-them" dynamics of identity conflict to find other terms in which to express one's relationship with the 'other.' Reconciliation is achieved by refocusing a concern with the resolution of issues toward the restoration of relationship, along with an acknowledgement of interdependency (Lederach, 1997). Reconciliation also requires a willingness to change and grow (LeBaron, 2003). As well, the past must be addressed in a process that validates both truth and forgiveness (Lederach, 1997).

This thesis examines feminist research on fathering and asks what can be seen when feminist research is viewed through a lens focused on the reconciliation of conflict. Feminists have argued that women's experiences in patriarchal societies need to be researched in context – a context where men as a group have had more access to resources and power than have women. Feminist theory and activism have been both a vehicle and catalyst for the

expression of "equal rights" by women, and while feminists note that much work remains to be done in the achievement of women's rights around the world, it can also be seen that feminist ideals and beliefs have greatly influenced the development of the predominant view of appropriate relations between men and women in Canada as articulated within the social science literature.

In North America, two competing lens have informed feminist thinking and activism about gender issues and family life from the middle of the 20th century to the present. One is the "equality lens," in which gender is considered to be socially constructed. Viewing gender as socially constructed leads to an interest in the removal of gender-based differences in social rights or treatment. The second is that of the "equity lens" in which women and men are considered to have biologically-based, inherent differences which are not currently valued equally, but could be and should be. Within North America, the equality lens has prevailed as the predominant paradigm for "good" relations between men and women, within both women's studies and the social sciences more generally. Andrea Doucet (2006), is a feminist scholar and author of *Do Men Mother?* She notes that for academics examining gender and family life it is a normative act to utilize the equality lens: "Most of the studies conducted on gender divisions of domestic labour are informed by the view that gender differences are to be avoided and gender equality is the gold standard that couples should strive for... the consensus by researchers is that something along the lines of fifty-fifty parenting or an equal division of labour is the ideal or most successful pattern" (p. 24). Within this discourse, men have been on the receiving end of some harsh criticism on their performance as parents. In fact, some academics and practitioners argue that a "deficit paradigm" of fathering has been created – one that has supported the exploration of many valid concerns for those working toward "equal" relationships between men and women, but one which also has generated an almost exclusive focus on the ways that women have been disappointed in trying to live these relationships (Hawkins and Dollahite, 1997).

An approach which counters many of the beliefs and assumptions of the deficit paradigm has emerged from the profeminist fathering communities: the "generative paradigm" of fathering. The term generative refers to Erik Erikson's theory of human development. Erikson asserted that caring for the next generation is necessary for healthy human development. The generative paradigm posits fathers as willing and motivated to become actively engaged in fathering. Proponents argue that men bring significant strengths to parenting work, as well as facing barriers to becoming more involved. The lenses of the equality feminist communities and the profeminist fathering communities represent the work of two groups of researchers whose particular perspectives can be seen to reflect their contrasting needs, interests, and beliefs. They do both, however, show commitment to the goal of gender equality.

Bringing insights from peace and conflict theory to the discipline of feminist theory provides an opportunity to undertake an examination of feminist knowledge production from a fresh perspective. This perspective is one that focuses on the reconciliation of conflict. A reconciliation-focused approach does not invalidate the "oppression of women" as a problem that needs to be addressed. Rather it provides an opportunity to look at what feminists have created in response and asks questions about the new models that feminists are creating to replace the patriarchal society critiqued by feminism. In examining feminist lenses, I am

studying feminist researchers as epistemological communities, possessing produced knowledge bases and resulting beliefs and models for explaining the world.

While there are a number of major stakeholders in the conflict identified in this thesis, I have, in order to make this a manageable project, selected two significant groups within the conflict to analyze: the equality feminist communities and the profeminist fathering communities. The selection of fathering research as a topic, and these two groups as proponents, is significant. The equality feminist perspective has provided the dominant lens for the "ideal" parenting relationship in social science research. The profeminist fathering communities are significantly aligned with the goals of the equality feminist approach, with several distinct areas of disagreement. These two groups have been predominant within the literature on fathering. Thus, these two groups have defined the academic discourse within Canada and North America.

Research Questions

Can peace and conflict theory be usefully applied to an analysis of gender issues in Canada? More specifically, can the use of a peace and conflict lens to analyze the discourses of the equality feminist communities and the profeminist fathering communities, help us to identify the challenges and potential for the development of a reconciliation-focused feminist model for researching fathering?

- Is identity conflict theory relevant to analyzing the epistemological conflict between equality feminist communities and profeminist fathering communities?
- Can equality feminist communities be understood to comprise an identity group engaged in an identity-based conflict?
- What insights are revealed when identity-based peace and conflict theory is applied to a reflexive examination of feminist research on fathering?
- Can reconciliation theory be used to illuminate the challenges and potential for the uptake of a feminist research model focused on the reconciliation of this epistemological conflict?
- Can movement toward reconciliation be perceived within equality feminist approaches to researching fathering?
- What can be learned from an examination of fathering discourses regarding the reconciliation of gender issues more generally in our society?

Purpose Statement

A reading of the fathering discourses in the Canadian equality feminist communities and the profeminist fathering communities reveals conflicting interests and beliefs, despite a shared goal of "gender equality." This thesis argues that identity conflict theory, most often applied to intractable ethnic and religious conflict, is relevant to the epistemological conflict between equality feminist and profeminist fathering communities. Further, it is demonstrated that the literature on the reconciliation of identity conflict can illuminate the challenges and potential for the uptake of a feminist research model focused on reconciliation of this gender-based conflict. Movement along the path toward a reconciliation approach can be seen within equality feminist research communities. The use of a peace and conflict lens to examine

gender conflict in Canada draws attention to work being done by reconciliation scholars. This work may provide a map for moving forward toward the reconciliation of gender issues.

A number of insights are generated from this research project. First, one can see that the themes that are prominent in reconciliation literature pertaining to ethnic and religious conflict can be appropriately applied to gender issues (chapter 2). Second, feminists comprise an identity group engaged in an identity-based conflict (chapter 3). Third, identity theory can be used to identify the groups involved in the conflict along with their interests and beliefs (chapter 4). Fourth, conflict theory can generate a framework for naming, understanding, and analyzing this conflict, as well as identifying the challenges and potential for a reconciliation approach (chapter 5). Fifth, the research of feminist researcher Andrea Doucet is used to illustrate that there is movement within equality feminist thought in the direction of reconciliation. Finally, reconciliation theory may provide a map for forward movement toward the resolution of gender issues. Feminists do not have to "make it up" as they go along. There are precedents available in the form of models and tools from the work of reconciliation scholars. I believe that knowing that feminist communities are involved in an identity-based conflict provides an opportunity and a responsibility for feminist communities to explore the applicability of these models and tools to gender issues in Canada.

Discussion of Methods

The research is primarily text-based, using identity-based conflict and reconciliation theory to analyze an epistemological conflict that can be seen within current research on fathering in the social sciences. This research brings two fields of study together to explore the resulting insights. The power and novelty of this analysis is in the juxtaposition of two theoretical frameworks – that of peace and conflict studies and that of women's studies. Feminist theory is commonly used as a lens through which to view and critique mainstream theoretical frameworks. In this case, peace and conflict theory is the lens through which we view and critique feminist thought. While a peace and conflict lens is brought to bear, it is done so as a reflexive exercise. My interest is in exploring the possibilities for reconciliation of gender issues from a feminist perspective. The use of a peace and conflict lens is designed to assist feminists to move forward in our quest for social justice, with greater understanding of our successes, our power, and possible gaps in our self-understanding.

To the best of my knowledge, these two fields of study have not been brought together in this way before. For this reason, the early chapters of the thesis are concerned with establishing the relevance of conflict theory to feminist thought (chapters 2 and 3). Two major subject areas within conflict studies are highlighted in this effort: that of identity conflict theory and reconciliation. Chapters 4 and 5 are concerned with applying the insights of identity conflict and reconciliation theory to an analysis of a specific conflict to which the equality feminist communities are party. This conflict is that within the social science research on fathering. This shift is made to ensure that the scope of the project is in alignment with the goals of a Masters thesis.

As noted above, the first task of this thesis is to establish the relevance of identity conflict theory – usually applied to identity-based ethnic and religious conflicts – to an examination

of gender issues, and specifically an epistemological conflict between academic paradigms focused on gender equality. The thesis seeks to establish this relevance first through a review of the identity conflict literature, showing gender as an identity marker. Second, identity theory is used to establish equality feminist communities as an identity group engaged in an identity-based conflict. I am using the term "equality feminist communities" in recognition of the many feminist epistemological communities that can be seen to be using an equality lens. This is true as well for my use of the term "profeminist fathering communities." I also use "equality feminist communities" and "profeminist fathering communities" to identify an orientation to gender issues that is grounded in the idea of "gender as constructed" rather than "gender as representing essential characteristics of male and female humans." This particular divide has provided a foundational orientation that drives much of the identity-based interests and beliefs explored in this thesis. So throughout this thesis I will be using the rather awkward phrasing of the plural "equality feminist communities" and "profeminist fathering communities" as each comprising a singular identity group for the purposes of the high level analysis being accomplished in this thesis.

Once the relevance of peace and conflict theory to gender issues has been established, the analysis shifts to focus on a specific conflict. Social science discourses on fathering provide a case of an appropriate size, and with an appropriate literature, for analysis within the confines of a Masters thesis. A stakeholder analysis is undertaken to identify the principal identity groups who are party to the conflict, as well as their interests and beliefs. The resulting stakeholder map (Figure 1) provides the basis for the analysis of this complex, multi-stakeholder conflict.

To make the exploration of reconciliation manageable, a further 'downsizing' is accomplished. First, four themes are distilled from the work of four prominent reconciliation theorists. The theorists chosen for review are accepted and influential individuals within their field of study. Their work comprises part of the foundation upon which other researchers are building. While this review can be seen as limited, my objective is not to do an exhaustive study of the reconciliation literature (or the work of these four theorists), but rather to open up a broad discussion on the helpfulness of reconciliation theory to a reflexive examination of feminist thought. The four themes distilled from the work of these authors are broad and appear repeatedly within the work of these theorists as well as the larger body of reconciliation literature. They encompass four simple orientations; two in time and two in space: the past and the future, relationship to self and relationship to the Other.

A second aspect of the downsizing of the scope of the project occurs by narrowing the number of stakeholders that are examined. Two groups are highlighted in the analytic framework (Figures 2 to 5) used to explore the challenges for reconciliation: the equality feminist and profeminist fathering communities. The equality feminist and profeminist fathering communities both work within a context that places gender equality as the goal of their social activism. The use of two identity groups with the same explicit goal highlights the role of interests in identity conflict. Finally, the work of one feminist researcher is analyzed in assessing the potential for the uptake of a reconciliation-focused feminist model for researching fathering.

This thesis takes as its starting point the question of the relevance of reconciliation to feminist discourses on gender equality. The relatively limited scope of a Masters thesis

requires an ever-narrowing focus throughout the paper. The relevance of reconciliation theory is established for one specific area of conflict between the equality feminist communities and another stakeholder to the conflict. The potential for relevance to other areas of conflict is also established, but must await future research efforts for in-depth examination.

Genesis of the Research

In the mid-1990's I was the coordinator of a provincial women's organization in PEI, an organization that grew out of the second wave feminism of the 1960's to 1990's. Our succession prospects were not good as our membership was exactly 15 years older than it had been 15 years before when Women's Network was incorporated. When we asked younger women who were active at the University Women's Centre (an age group sometimes referred to as the third wave of feminism) why they did not join our organization, we heard that we were "patronizing", "took up all the space", and generally "did not treat them respectfully". We were completely taken aback - this was the kind of behaviour that we existed to fight! How could this language be coming toward a feminist, non-hierarchical, inclusive, volunteer-based organization? Being told that we were behaving in the typical way of the dominant group was chilling, and a good reality check. We did a project to learn more about "Bridging the Gap" between the second and third wave, added third wave books to our library, included men as allies is some of our work, and tried to create short term volunteer opportunities that responded to the structure that younger women seemed to want in their volunteer commitments.

Some time after this experience, I began to interact with men in the men's rights movement. While I was fascinated by hearing this alternative viewpoint, thinking, "Oh, is that what is going on for them?", it has taken time for me to be able to listen to the masculist point of view without having an occasional knee jerk reaction of "No!" I have had to take a deep breath to read masculist writing, and go back over it with an eye for "What is really being said here?", and, "Can I recognize a truth in this person's experience?" I have found that I can and do recognize truth in masculist writings. It is from my interaction with this group that I have taken more responsibility for looking at gender issues more fully from the perspective of both women and men. A specific result of this can be seen in the analytical framework presented in chapter 5. A workshop that I attended a number of years ago was facilitated by Andrew MacDonald and David Shackleton who used a two by two grid to examine power relations between women and men – examining both the "positive" use of power and the "shadow" side of power held by each.

I have also been involved in advocacy work with transgender people and have a commitment to taking a perspective into my work that goes beyond the binary understanding of gender common in Canada. Each additional perspective brings an increased richness of understanding. My interest is in bridging the gaps within our many understandings of gender issues, the gap between the need for both social justice and personal responsibility for change, and the gap between our current situation and what is possible in terms of an ideal peace among the genders.

I came to Conflict Studies at St. Paul University to learn about how insights from within the discipline of peace and conflict studies could be applied to gender issues. I wanted to study

within a department where the focus would be on the reconciliation of conflict, rather than on women or gender. I arrived with the gut feeling that the women's movement in Canada had gotten in a rut of naming women as victim and men as perpetrators and that this was not going to take us to "gender equality." In the last year and a half I have turned my gut feeling into a documented understanding of how the second wave women's movement has made choices along the way to create an epistemic community exhibiting particular beliefs. Those beliefs are being challenged on a number of levels by a number of movements: western relational feminism, the men's movement, gender studies, queer studies, constructionist thinking, international feminism, academic feminism, Muslim women's movements, and womanist thinking, among others. Most feminist activists would agree that we haven't seen many significant societal changes on women's issues in Canada since the mid-1990's. I think that this may be because we need a new approach. The goal of the second wave feminism – that of empowering women – has engendered fundamental changes in our society. It may be that it is time for a new vision. I believe that a reconciliation-focused vision would inspire new level of changes.

In looking for a focused area of research for my thesis, I have encountered a dominant fathering discourse. In this academic discourse, there is a clear conflict to explore between epistemic communities; there is a vulnerable group (children) who experience significant negative impact from the conflict, giving the "parties" to the conflict incentive to do the work necessary to find a resolution; and there are feminist writers who are pushing the boundaries of the feminist paradigm regarding fathers, pointing toward a paradigm of reconciliation. This thesis will use concepts from the literature on reconciliation to identify the challenges and potential for the uptake of a reconciliation-focused feminist model for researching fathering, with the further goal of providing some direction for a reconciliation focus within other feminist research and activism.

Significance of the Study

Equality feminism, generally predominant within North America, has concerned itself with the advancement of women rather than the reconciliation of gender issues. This thesis will undertake to bring a unique focus to feminist research on fathering, one which will bring together the identity-based interests and beliefs of a number of identity groups. The identification of the challenges and potential for the uptake of a reconciliation-focused feminist model for researching fathering lays the ground for the development of a reconciliation-focused feminist model for researching fathering. Such a model has the potential to be helpful to the mothers and fathers who are striving to find new ways of parenting that both support, and emerge from, "gender equality."

Ethical Considerations

The existence of conflicting paradigms of research on fathering has great import in the lives of fathers, mothers, and children. The equality feminist model of researching fathering emerged from a movement to obtain social justice for women – one which addressed the patriarchal hegemonic structures that dominate women's lives and privilege male perspectives. Have we really reached a stage in Canadian society where we can talk about the reconciliation of gender issues without losing our awareness of this larger context? Thomas Kuhn (1970) said that paradigms succeed on the basis of what they offer to the

future, not because they are "more true" in the present. Current feminist lenses are valuable – we still live in a world where the male voice is by and large the public voice, and women can easily remain invisible in this world. At the same time, we need paradigms that point to the potential for future resolution of the conflict. Reminding ourselves that feminist theory is exactly that – theory – provides us with the theoretical space to evaluate our approach for its ability to continue to move us forward toward the social justice outcomes for which we are striving. My research comprises a reflexive and challenging assessment of the interests and outcomes of feminist theorizing about fatherhood, while holding a context that also validates the "long historical tradition of women's work, identities, and power in caregiving" (Doucet, 2006, p. 21).

Limitations of the Research

This study represents a beginning. Neither gender conflict, nor more specifically, conflict between research paradigms on fathering, form a substantive area of study within peace and conflict studies. In the same way, reconciliation is not a concept that has been applied within the fathering literature. Thus, the present work is exploratory. The research outcomes will necessarily be painted in broad brush strokes and await future research to validate or amend the conclusions.

Chapter 2: Literature Review - Identity-Based Conflict and Reconciliation

This chapter provides a review of the literature pertaining to identity-based conflict and reconciliation. The concepts of identity and identity-based conflict are defined, and the development of identity-based conflict outlined. While identity groups are most often thought of as those relating to race, religion, or gender, among other personal characteristics, the concept of an epistemological community as an identity group is presented briefly. (The concept of epistemological communities is more fully explored in chapter 3).

For the purposes of my thesis, four prominent scholars within peace and conflict studies are used to support my approach to the reconciliation of identity-based conflict. These are Jean Paul Lederach, Michelle LeBaron, Vern Redekop, and Jay Rothman. While these scholars represent only a sampling of the peace and conflict literature, they are accepted and influential individuals within their field of study. Their work reflects the current discourses within the field. Two, LeBaron and Redekop, are Canadian, and one, LeBaron, is a woman. From the work of these scholars, four themes emerge that are essential to the reconciliation of identity-based conflict. This review and identification of reconciliation themes allows the concept of reconciliation to be brought to bear on discourses within fathering research.

Identity

Identity is about the "beliefs, values, culture, spirituality, meaning systems, relationships, history, imagination, and capacity to act that form the core of an individual or group" (Redekop, 2002, p. 23). Amartya Sen (2006) notes that "many communitarian thinkers tend to argue that a dominant communal identity is only a matter of self-realisation, not of choice" (p. 5). He contends however, that "there are a great variety of categories to which we simultaneously belong... identities are robustly plural" (p. 19). He continues, "the importance of one identity need not obliterate the importance of others" and that, "... a person has to make choices – explicitly or by implication – about what relative importance to attach, in a particular context, to the divergent loyalties and priorities that may compete for precedence" (p. 19).

Michelle LeBaron (2003), a professor in the law department, and Director of the Dispute Resolution Program at the University of British Columbia, discusses identity in terms of culture. She notes,

> Although definitions of culture are often associated with customs like food and dress, cultures go far deeper. Cultures are shared by groups yet operate mostly beyond the awareness of group members. They are systems of shared understanding and symbols that connect people to each other, providing them with unwritten messages about how to express themselves and how to make meaning of their lives. Cultures gather people into belonging, tied by shared identities, histories, starting points, and currencies.
>
> Cultural groups centre around a wide variety of shared identities, including race, ethnicity, age, nationality, geographical setting, socioeconomic class, able-bodiedness or disability, sexual orientation, language, religion, profession or job role, and gender. It is thus inaccurate to ask which culture someone belongs to, because everyone belongs to multiple cultures. Cultures are living, changing systems that influence our interpretations of the past, starting points, and currencies or values. It is therefore inescapable that they also influence our conflicts (p. 10).

LeBaron argues that cultures operate "as invisible, shared codes, defining 'common sense'" (p. 11). However the starting points – "those places from which it seems natural to begin" (p. 10) – that we use in defining common sense will differ from culture to culture. "Raised in the West, I find it natural to view myself first as an individual. For someone raised in China, it may seem equally natural to view the self primarily as a group member" (p. 10). As well, we all belong to a variety of cultural groups and draw on a unique blend of cultures in determining what constitutes common sense. Thus, LeBaron says, "common sense is not necessarily common" (p. 11).

Tatman (2001) maintains that the foundation of a group identity is a common understanding, or paradigm, of the world. In her book *Knowledge that Matters: A Feminist Theological Paradigm and Epistemology,* she argues that, "a theoretical paradigm is created and sustained not by isolated individuals but by an epistemological community: a group of people who, while they never agree on everything, at least understand each other well enough to engage in what I term 'meaningful disagreement' with one another" (p. 11). The common paradigm is experienced as "truth" by the participants – a "neutral" exploration and identification of the situation being experienced, although it is actually an expression of their identity-based beliefs and interests.

Spiro, as quoted by Goulet (2007), notes five levels of belief, moving from learning about an assertion, to understanding it, to believing it, and fourthly, acting upon it. "The fifth, deeper level of belief, involves a deep emotional attachment to these truths. One's life is then lived as the emotionally satisfying enactment, as a member of a group, of a set of propositions that one knows, understands, and holds as conforming to *the way things are* and/or ought to be" (p. 227, emphasis added). Tatman (2001) also emphasises group membership as an important aspect of paradigmatic beliefs or paradigms. She brings forward "...[Ruether's] insistence that without a community... one's words go unheard, one's thoughts are unthinkable, one is forced to live in conformity with the dominant views, or be considered mad" (p. 253). She notes the "usually implicit assumptions... which saturate... a disciplinary paradigm" (p. 24). Later she states, "these assumptions include 'social values and interests' (p. 144). Tatman makes clear the ways that the *interests* of an identity group are engaged along with their beliefs, further arguing "it would seem... to be the business of epistemically responsible communities to realize that knowledge-making is as much a political and ethical as it is a cognitive process (p. 151).

The Canadian Oxford Dictionary provides several definitions of 'interest.' Among the most salient are: concern; advantage or profit; a legal concern, title, or right; principle in which a party or group is concerned; and selfish pursuit of one's own welfare. Johan Galtung, a renowned peace and conflict specialist, argues:

> When an individual or group pronounces its position on the goals of cities or states they often use the word 'interests.' In doing so they are indicating that these are not randomly chosen goals from a catalogue of goals, but something deeply anchored in the organization, in its very foundations. But interests are often the badly concealed formulations of the goals of the leaders, for instance that a country, town, organization should be bigger and more powerful (2004, p. 2).

Catharine McKinnon, quoted in Redekop (2002), also provides insight into the concept of interests, although she does not use the word. Rather she talks about 'our way:' "We can see why conflicts between worlds may be so hard to handle: they may imply alternative, competing ways of meeting the need for meaning and, therefore, they may be perceived as putting in danger our own way, a way on which all the rest of what we are depends" (p. 34). I will be taking an approach to the concept of interests that melds the approaches of Galtung and McKinnon. Interests, as I will be using the word, means the ways of doing things and goals of an identity group that are threatened when the group is involved in an identity-based conflict.

Identity conflict

Identity becomes of interest to peace and conflict researchers when it is mobilized in ways that generate tension, injustice or conflict. Identity-based conflict or deep-rooted conflict arises from a perceived threat to basic needs, identity, or survival. Redekop (2002) notes, that in an identity-based conflict, one feels that one's identity or existence is in question. In identity-based conflict there is always stories with alternate meanings. And those stories (or interpretations of the facts), are the basis of the conflict. While much of the identity conflict literature focuses on ethnic or religious violence, it is a key point of this thesis that gender conflict is an identity-based conflict and that the theory relating to identity-based conflict and reconciliation holds relevance to the reconciliation of gender issues. Redekop sees gender as a key source of deep-rooted conflict: "...if we can truly bridge the gender gap – seeing the fullness of humanity each in the other – we can transcend any other differences" (p. 151). Johan Galtung includes a section on gender conflict in his book, *Transcend and Transform* (2004). And Jay Rothman (1997) notes that, "although ethnic conflicts are the most intense identity conflicts, they are certainly not the only cases in which we find collective identity to be at the core. Similar roots and existential concerns can be apparent in the needs and frustrations, the hopes and fears, of groups at almost any level of society (p. 6).

Identity-based conflict can be between equally powerful groups or it can be asymmetrical in the amount of power held by each. Olu Arowobusoye notes that "causes, nature, dynamics, and impact of conflict are highly complex... Conflicts... generally are the result of the interplay of a multitude of intervening variables" (2005, p. 36). Typically the allocation of resources appears in conflict as one of these variables. Michelle Lebaron highlights the ways that conflict can become more entrenched over time, when she notes that, "Historical events come to symbolize struggles between groups, solidifying lines between *us* and *them*" (2003, p. 230). Johan Galtung argues that "conflicts have a tendency to broaden in domain by adding more actors, and deepen in scope by adding more goals. Conflicts *align actors* by *polarization* into blocs (alliances) pitted against each other, and *align goals* by *fundamentalization* under labels like freedom, faith" (2006, p. 1, emphasis in original). And Redekop argues that the presence of physical violence is not necessary characteristic of identity-based conflict, as "the negative impact on the emotional and psychological wellbeing of people indicates the presence of other forms of violence" (2002, p. 24).

While identity conflict is usually experienced in negative terms, Rothman points out that it is "also by definition formative. Such conflict contributes significantly to the constitution of disputants' respective and particular identity configurations and expressions" (p. 39). This is

also a theme within the work of Redekop, who works with the idea of "mimetic modelling" between the parties in conflict (2002). The modelling process within an identity conflict usually contributes to identity formation through a polarization of the identities of the parties to the conflict, constricting options, and exaggerating aggressive attributes. However, both authors express the potential of identity conflict to become a source of positive inspiration, leading the parties to the conflict to "make common cause with each other to nurture their respectively higher selves" (Rothman, p. 39), or as Redekop puts it, leading the parties to develop mimetic "structures of blessing" (2002, p. 255).

The creation of a successful identity-based social movement involves the mobilization of specific beliefs and specific interests among group members. This process will necessarily marginalize some potential members whose beliefs and interests vary from that of the predominant group. Each member or potential member of the identity group has multiple and overlapping beliefs, interests and personal identities including those relating to religious, political or ethnic affiliation(s), gender, and sexual orientation, among a multitude of others. An identity group names specific identity-related issues as salient to the experience of social justice by the membership of that group. If there is sufficient recognition of the salience of the identified issues among potential group members, and other necessary capacities and resources are present, a social movement may emerge. It is important to note that while the group working for social justice bases its identification of salient issues on how group members are negatively affected - or oppressed - by these issues, the very processes that lead to this identification can become a source of oppression in themselves. Hence, Chela Sandoval, as quoted by Ross (1998), argues that, "even the most revolutionary communities come to prohibit their members' full participation; every marginalized group that has organized in opposition to the dominant order has imported [the] same desire to find, name, categorize and tame reality in a way that ultimately works to create marginalized positions within its own ranks" (p. 244). This can result in specific members leaving or being ejected from the group (or potential members not joining), and the development of splinter groups with differing expressions of both identity-based beliefs and interests.

As well as legitimizing particular identity-based beliefs and interests of group members, identity group processes work to construct the Other who "we" are working against in our fight for justice. The same process of selection occurs: the ascription of identity markers to the opposing group serve to define the interests and beliefs of "our" group. The complexities and contradictions inherent in the identities of the members of the opposing group are reduced to a single monolithic identity that actually, and ironically, serves the needs of the oppressed group in mobilizing its members, but not in seeing options for reconciliation of the conflict. In the introduction to *Violence, Identity and Self-Determination,* de Vries (1997) states, "the creation of an identity group – even (or perhaps especially) an identity group which is created to fight for "justice" can often be the site of new oppressions that emerge from the struggle itself" (p. 2). Here I have identified two sites of new oppressions – first, the exclusion of some potential members through a narrowed definition of identity and interests of the oppressed group, and second, the reduction of the actual complexity of the identity beliefs and interests among those named as belonging to the opposing group to consider only those beliefs and interests that the oppressed group identifies as salient to their oppression.

This construction of the salient can be a source of power for an identity group. If the group is successful in having its struggle for justice accepted by the larger society as one deserving of support, the conditions required for social justice are now defined in terms of the oppressed identity group's beliefs and interests. The voices of individuals and groups who have differing beliefs or experiences are muted, raising questions regarding the search for social justice. If – and as – conditions improve, (or, as is more usually the case, certain conditions improve in some places and times) and the group maintains it's identity as "oppressed," further discrepancies may emerge between the stories of oppression being told by the identity group and the experiences of others in relation to the power held by that group.

As we will see in later chapters the dynamics that have been identified above are evident in the epistemological conflict between equality feminist communities and profeminist fathering communities being explored in this thesis.

Reconciliation of Identity-based conflicts

Conflict resolution is a term that has been applied to efforts to end conflicts that range from the application of mechanistic strategies of management to spiritual transformation of the participants. John Paul Lederach (1997) maintains that reconciliation falls toward the transformation end of the continuum, requiring a shift "away from the concern with the resolution of issues and toward a frame of reference that focuses on the restoration and rebuilding of relationships" (p. 24). He further suggests that a reconciliation approach is required to resolve identity-based conflicts. Other scholars within the field support this approach: Galtung (2004) argues that there are five basic outcomes to a conflict: win-lose, lose-win, both lose, compromise, or win-win. The last outcome requires 'transcendence.' "Transcendence... is the art of finding a both/and formula. In doing so the conflict is transformed because we have modified and twisted the goals a little. If this transformation is accepted and in addition is sustainable, then we can talk about a 'solution.'" (p. 17). According to Rothman (1997), identity-based conflicts "are often destructive, but with the right analysis and approach they may become enormously creative and transformative. All conflicts, but intense group identity conflicts in particular, provide significant opportunities for dynamism and growth" (p. 7). Michelle Lebaron (2003) also argues for the need for transformation: "Resolving conflict is ultimately about change. If we stay the same, we risk continuing negative relational cycles, comforting ourselves with the rightness of our positions while facing the bitter fruit of our divisions. Change happens at multiple levels – within us, between us, and among us (p. 231).

The work of four prominent reconciliation theorists is presented below in more detail. These are Jean Paul Lederach, Michelle LeBaron, Vern Redekop, and Jay Rothman. I am proposing (in later chapters) to apply the work of these scholars to illuminate the challenges and potential for the uptake of a reconciliation-focused feminist model for researching fathering. There may be a tendency for feminists to think that the gender conflict in Canadian society is so deep and so scarring of relations between women and men, and the structural inequities are so entrenched, that reconciliation is beyond the possible range of feasible options. It should be made clear that the work of these reconciliation scholars is done in the context of conflicts that include emotional, physical and structural violence that is endemic and entrenched within the societies in which they are being experienced, often to

the point of civil war and genocide. The theoretical positioning of these scholar/practitioners is grounded in experiences of conflict that tear apart societies.

Lederach (1997) articulates three "working assumptions... [that] undergird a conceptualization of reconciliation" (p. 26). First, he proposes that "*relationship* is the basis of both the conflict and its long-term solution... [This suggests that] reconciliation is not pursued by seeking innovative ways to disengage or minimize the conflicting groups' affiliations, but instead is built on mechanisms that engage the sides of a conflict with each other as humans-in-relationship" (p. 26). Second,

> engagement of the conflicting groups assumes an *encounter,* not only of people but also of several different and highly interdependent streams of activity. Reconciliation must find ways to address the past without getting locked into a vicious cycle of mutual exclusiveness inherent in the past... At the same time, reconciliation must envision the future in a way that enhances interdependence (p. 27).

Finally, "reconciliation requires that we look outside the mainstream of international political traditions, discourse, and operational modalities if we are to find innovation" (p. 27). Lederach suggests that we need to go beyond rational discourses to "the creation of the social space where both truth and forgiveness are validated and joined together, rather than being forced into an encounter in which one must win out over the other or envisioned as fragmented and separated parts" (p. 29).

Lederach sees reconciliation being built upon paradox,

> that which links seemingly contradictory but in fact interdependent ideas and forces. Kenwin Smith and David Berg have suggested that paradoxes are a natural part of group life. To deal with them constructively it is necessary to identify the opposing energies that form the poles of the paradox, provide space for each, and embrace them as interdependent and necessary for the health of the group (p. 29).

In reconciliation processes, Lederach sees the opportunity and the need to deal with three specific paradoxes. The first is that inherent in "an encounter between the open expression of the painful past, on the one hand, and the search for the articulation of a long-term interdependent future, on the other hand" (p. 31). The second involves the seeming contraction in the need for both exposing the truth of what happened, and "letting go in favor of renewed relationship" (p. 31). Finally, reconciliation brings together the concepts of justice and peace, "where redressing the wrong is held together with the envisioning of a common, connected future" (p. 31). Lederach argues that

> the way out of these paradoxes is to embrace both sources of energy. A paradox can create a binding and crippling impasse when only one of the sources is embraced at the expense of the other – in other words, groups lock into one element in opposition to the other. The basic paradigm of reconciliation, therefore, embraces paradox. It suggests, for example, that a focus on relationship will provide new ways to address the impasse on issues (p. 31).

LeBaron (2003) argues that responses to conflict often address only the material and communicative dimensions of conflict. She believes that it is essential to address a third dimension – the symbolic.

> The symbolic dimension is that part of conflict outside our analytical reach – it evokes our identities and ways of making sense of the world when they collide with the identities and meaning of others.

> This dimension reminds us that all conflict is relational and all cultural conflict involves us at the unconscious parts of our beings, those parts where meaning is made and identity constantly formed and reformed. Since all conflict is relational, finding constructive ways to relate to each other is our central task, no matter what the issues or precipitating events of the conflict (p. 114).

While she identifies "finding constructive ways to relate" as the central task, she notes that this is "not as easy as simply wanting to relate, and it often requires surmounting perceptions of the other as misguided, less capable, less able to access 'common sense,' or even evil" (p. 114). We have to go beyond integrative technique and good communication skills "to draw on mindful awareness of self and other, our capacities to connect, our imagination, and our intuition in reaching across the chasm of conflict" (p. 114).

A willingness to experience deep personal change is required to engage successfully in reconciliation work:

> Realizing our potential to belong to shared pictures is the heart of the work of bridging cultural conflicts. This work is accomplished within, between, and among us. We are always moving, either stepping toward this potential or away from it. It begins inside us as we welcome those parts of us that digress from our comfortable inner habits of perception and meaning-making, inquiring beyond the worlds we know. It continues as we dialogue with the conflicts within us, conflicts born of different cultural identities with contradictory messages about how to be and what to do. Gradually we come to be at home with the unique cultural mix that is always in flux inside us, a mélange of messages from family, race, ethnicity, gender, class, generation, age, place, time in history, sexual orientation, able-bodiedness or disability, discipline, workplace – the list is long and ever-changing (LeBaron, 2003, p. 291).

LeBaron suggests that one of the challenges of reconciliation work is how we can "make choices and judgments in ways that acknowledge multiple starting points yet remain grounded in our lived experience and respect deep-seated values" (p. 294). She suggests that as we engage with the Other in a process of dialogue and respect, we can gain experiences that help us "replace enemy images with complex and caring faces" (p. 294). If we undertake this process "with a commitment to honor all experience – theirs and ours – a third culture may emerge where our differences are not the only focus of attention. When we work from this third culture, we can make more inclusive choices and informed judgments" (p. 294).

Redekop (2008) presents a model to reconcile deep-rooted violence that approaches reconciliation as both a goal and a process. As a goal reconciliation has two parts: "The first... is to get out of the mimetic structures of violence. At this stage, people can co-exist without hurting one another and without fear of attack. The second part of the goal is to establish a mimetic structure of blessing" (p. 9). Redekop sees reconciliation as a process containing at various times a number of elements which he organizes under the following headings: prerequisites, meta-requisites, discursive and symbolic processes and key results areas for reconciliation. The three prerequisites are: (i) that one or the other of the parties to the conflict, or a third party, have a vision and mandate for peace, (ii) that safety is assured by a cessation of overt violence and/or intimidation, and (iii) that the satisfaction of immediate survival needs is assured so that the focus can be on the demanding processes of reconciliation. The meta-requisites are: (i) a framework of teachings that may include stories, proverbs, and analysis, that "provide motivation and insight to keep the process going" (p. 11), (ii) gradual reciprocated initiatives in tension-reduction (GRIT), whereby gradual trust is built, and (iii) the building of institutions that support new relationships between the parties to the conflict. Redekop sees the need for five discursive and symbolic

processes: (i) dialogue to enable and enhance mutual understanding, (ii) truth-telling to create shared understandings of what has occurred, (iii) expressions of acknowledgement of harm done, remorse, and apology, (iv) expressions of victimization, and openness to forgiveness, and (v) justice and mercy. Redekop notes that "some form of mercy or generosity of spirit may be combined with positive balancing measures to craft a profound forgiveness" (p. 12). The key results areas are: (i) re-orientation of relationship, which "may demand inner changes of identity, attitude and orientation in relation to the other" (p. 12), (ii) healing of traumas and memories, (iii) transformation of structures to ensure that systemic imbalances are addressed, and (iv) transcendence. Redekop suggests that "transcendence can be understood in terms of transformation, achieving a higher level of consciousness or the result of spiritual events, experiences and disciplines" (p. 12).

Jay Rothman (1997) maintains that "identify conflict is about who we really are and what we care about most deeply. Such conflict may be creatively transformed when adversaries come to learn, ironically perhaps, that they may fulfill their deepest needs and aspirations only with the cooperation of those who most vigorously opposed them" (p. xiii). Rothman presents a four stage dialogue and reconciliation process which he calls the ARIA (Antagonism, Resonance, Invention, and Action) Framework. The ARIA framework begins with an invitation to each party to articulate the problem. This invitation results in the surfacing of differences, blame, emotions, and the opposing solutions sought. The second step requires the participants to begin a deep exploration and articulation of what goes on inside them:

> Reflexive reframing begins with reorienting the self (and one's primary identity group) in conflict, that is, moving from blame and victimhood to respective responsibility and volition... Next, reframing moves from polarizing Them and Us to finding and forging common ground; Us and Them become, at least in part, We. Third, disputants get past attributing negative disposition to their adversaries. Disputants begin to gain an analytical empathy for situational constraints and understand what make the other side tick. Finally, reflexivity leads to a shift from projecting one's own darker sides onto adversaries to acknowledging such attributes in oneself, which can lead to profound self-awareness and ownership (p. 40).

The third step in the framework is that of invention, wherein the participants generate practical solutions to their conflict that respond to new understandings of themselves and the other. As a result of this phase, "a new understanding of interdependence and its positive potential can replace fighting and antagonism. It should be clear to everyone by now that all disputants are in the conflict together, and they have to get out of it together" (p. 55). The final action stage, involves creating plans for implementation of solutions that have emerged from the previous three stages.

All of these approaches to reconciliation require a movement beyond the summing up of harms and determination of punishment that is common to Western approaches to justice. According to these authors, for reconciliation to occur it is necessary to move beyond the "us-them" dynamics of identity conflict and to find other terms in which to express our relationship with the "Other." At first this movement from 'us' and 'them' to a larger 'we' can seem to necessitate loss of self-identity. One may anticipate compromise or a softening of positions on important issues. These conflict scholars insist that taking a reconciliation approach is, not only the only way through the conflict, but also the way that will result in benefits in terms of self-knowledge and capacity to become more ourselves. They also assert

that it will increase our ability to meet our human needs and provide a sustainable resolution to the conflict.

Four Reconciliation Themes

Reconciliation requires us to revisit our understandings of ourselves and the Other, as well as the past and the future. In examining ourselves we must be open to growth and even transformation of who we believe ourselves to be, the structures that support our identity, and our relationship with ourselves and the Other. Thus, a willingness to change and grow is the first reconciliation theme that I will use to explore the reconciliation of the epistemological conflict between the feminist research communities and the profeminist fathering research communities. The second theme, acknowledgement of interdependency, reflects the change that is required in our orientation to the Other and to the conflict. Reconciliation requires that we move "away from the concern with the resolution of issues and toward a frame of reference that focuses on the restoration and rebuilding of relationships" (Lederach, 1997, p. 24). Thirdly, reconciliation leads us to modify our goals in the conflict from "winning" to joint benefit. And finally, reconciliation demands the creation of shared truths or stories about what has happened between the parties in the conflict. Shared stories can only come about when there is a resolve to bring all that has happened to light coupled with the intention to move beyond those events.

These four areas are explored below as four reconciliation themes that emerge from the literature.

(i) Willingness to change and grow

Identity conflict tends to lead to the rigidification of identity markers, so that the delineation of the participating groups becomes more acute and steeped in traditional ways (or what people think of as traditional). The range of acceptable characteristics of 'our' group generally becomes narrower, with less grey areas or tolerance for differences. It is often thought that conflict resolution will require the Other to change, so that our group can survive intact. Conflict reconciliation, on the other hand, demands an acceptance of the complexity of identities and the constant interplay of identities within us. Conflict resolution is fundamentally creative because it requires the finding of new ways to approach old problems in order to generate sustainable solutions. In shifting our approach from needing to "win" to actually resolving the conflict, we revisit and revise our identity-based interests and beliefs. In revising our identity-based interests and beliefs we reassess and recalibrate our relationship with self and other. The paradox of conflict reconciliation is that rather than diluting our identity, this more complex understanding our both our group and the Other has the potential to reflect our deeply held beliefs and needs more clearly and with greater nuance.

(ii) Acknowledgment of interdependency

Groups in conflict often see themselves as each others' opposite. In conflict, relationships between the groups are minimized, denied, or cut off. Each group's survival can seem to depend on the defeat, or even the annihilation of, the Other. Valued identity characteristics can begin to form around the differences between our group and our enemy, who may be imbued with lesser capacities than our group, or even seen as evil. Ironically, this very emphasis on difference from the Other is a strong indicator of relationship. LeBaron says,

"all conflict is relational" (2003, p. 114), indicating that it is *only* those with whom we have a relationship, with whom we can have a conflict. Acknowledgement of interdependency allows the parties to the conflict to begin to work on finding a co-creative solution to the conflict. As Rothman notes, the "disputants are in the conflict together, and they have to get out of it together" (p. 55).

(iii) Transformation of goals

Reconciliation requires a shift from trying to "win" the conflict, to finding solutions that works for all the parties to the conflict. Rothman suggests that a protracted identity conflict can be resolved once adversaries "come to learn... that they may fulfill their deepest needs and aspirations only with the cooperation" (p. 13) of the Other. Galtung speaks of transforming the goals to find the win-win. And Robert Kegan suggests going beyond even the win-win solution to an acceptance that our own identity is built around only a partial understanding of who we are:

> [It is one thing to seek a win-win in conflict...] it is quite another to seek a process that uses the conflict to transform ones identification with one's own "side," one's sense of inevitability or intractable integrity, one's need to have that side "win' even if the other side also wins. It is one thing to provide mutual assurance of respect of the integrity of the other's position. It is another thing to mutually suspect that what passes for integrity (one's own and the other's) is also an ideology, necessarily partial, and an unworthy prize, finally, over which to risk one's entire treasure (Kegan, 1994, p. 318-19).

LeBaron speaks of the "third culture" (2003, p. 294) that may emerge as we replace the images of the enemy that we have created with experiences arising from contact with individuals from a culture with whom we are in conflict. The creation of this third culture allows "more inclusive choices and informed judgments" (p. 294). Each of these authors emphasizes that the goals which will generate a sustainable peace are those that fulfill and even transcend the identity-based needs and ambitions of the parties to the conflict.

(iv) Creation of shared stories

Addressing the wrongs of the past can be a particularly difficult aspect of conflict reconciliation. Each group has created its own (often mutually exclusive) story(ies) of the conflict. These stories support the identity interests and beliefs of the respective groups. One group may feel that they have been victimized in the situation. Another group may feel that they have been demonized. Creating shared stories requires a sharing of responsibility for the past. It also requires finding some way past the need for retribution to a need for peace. Lederach talks of three paradoxes that must be reconciled in finding these new stories: the painful past and an interdependent future, the exposure of the truth of what has happened and letting go of that truth to embrace relationship, and redressing of wrongdoing and "envisioning a common, connected future" (1997, p. 31). The creation of shared stories challenge group attachment to the identity-based interests that have been prioritized by the group.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have defined the concepts of identity, identity conflict and reconciliation. Four reconciliation themes have been drawn from the work of four prominent scholars who research identity conflict and reconciliation. The concepts reviewed in this chapter will be

used in subsequent chapters to (i) identify equality feminists as an epistemological community engaged in an identity-based conflict and (ii) to argue that reconciliation theory can be appropriately and usefully applied to this conflict.

Chapter 3: Feminism Engaged in an Identity-based Conflict

As noted in chapter 2, peace and conflict theory has been applied primarily to violent religious and ethnic conflicts. These conflicts usually involve societies which have experienced protracted violence, civil war, perhaps even genocide. Thus the task of chapter 2 was to sketch out the parameters of identity conflict and reconciliation theory so that we can begin to understand its relevance to the reconciliation of gender issues in Canadian society, a society that is considered comparatively peaceful. One of the significant claims of my thesis is that feminists can be viewed as a party to an identity-based conflict. This task requires an approach that first distinguishes feminism as an "identity group" within Canadian society. While most scholars speak now of feminisms (plural) rather than feminism (singular), there was at one time (not long ago) a focus on the common experience of women in a patriarchal society that led feminists to think in terms of a singular feminism that responded to the needs of all women. Problems with this approach quickly became apparent to many Women of Colour, lesbians, women with disabilities, working class women, indigenous women, and others: envisioning women's oppression as a "common" experience of all women, in fact privileged the experience of White, heterosexual, middle-class women. This second perspective has also become common understanding among feminist scholars.

The Second Wave Feminist Identity – A "Common Experience" of Oppression

The use of an identity theory lens allows us to examine the development of the feminist "identity group" from an unusual perspective. Feminist lenses are most often found within academia as tools with which to critique mainstream knowledge production. As well, over time feminists have engaged with internal criticisms and developed powerful tools for reflexive analysis. But feminist theories are rarely critiqued from an external theoretical perspective. Most often feminist lenses are either employed or ignored. In this chapter, I use identity theory to look *at* feminist lenses, rather than the more familiar view *through* a feminist lens. This view shows that feminists form an identity group that is rooted in a broad but common epistemological understanding, and further that this group is engaged in an identity-based conflict.

Feminist academics themselves have identified feminism in group identity terms. In *Feminist Consequences* (2001), editors Bronfen and Kavka note,

> Perhaps with some nostalgia, many of us who call ourselves feminists look back to the peak of the second wave in the 1970s, to a feminism that in retrospect seems to have had a clear object (women), a clear goal (to change the fact of women's subordination), and even a clear definition (political struggle against patriarchal oppression). ... the terms through which we might now seek to define feminism have been refined, pluralized, displaced, and/or deconstructed to the point where they hardly seem available anymore... The problem is not the death or the end of feminism but, rather, coming to terms with the fact that its political, strategic, and interpretive power has been so great as to produce innumerable modes of doing... that have moved well beyond the mother term, already fractured at its origin (p. ix – x).

And Lyn Hankinson Nelson, in her chapter in *Feminist Epistemologies* (1993), notes,

> it is currently appropriate and useful to recognize feminist communities as epistemological communities, to recognize that such communities have generated bodies of knowledge, adopted standards, and developed categories of which each member of these communities accepts some – while recognizing that not all members of feminist communities agree on all things and that there may be no single belief that is held by all feminists (p. 150).

Both of these authors allude to aspects of group identity discussed in the identity literature, such as meaning systems, goals, and beliefs. While Nelson argues that there "may be no single belief held by all feminists" it is clear that there must be *something* that allows the category "all feminists" to exist. When an epistemological community or group of communities generate knowledge (even, as Tatman notes, knowledge about which they engage in "meaningful disagreement") they are developing a group identity that reflects what LeBaron calls the "invisible shared codes defining common sense" (2003, p. 10). Today most scholars talk about 'feminisms' rather than 'feminism', acknowledging the many, and sometimes conflicting, strands of feminism. However there is, beneath the varying concerns and approaches, a common purpose – one that may be invisible at times to members of the feminist identity group because it represents a common starting point – but one that operates to maintain a common commitment. In *After Eden: Facing the Challenge of Gender Reconciliation,* Mary Stewart Van Leeuwen (1993) supports this contention with her observation that "...international feminist critiques have begun to expose crucial blind spots within Western feminism. Nevertheless, while quarrelling with [Western] feminist theory as it exists, these critics *share with all feminists a commitment to the defense of women*" (p. 72, italics added).

The second wave of feminism, in the mid-to late 1900s, brought to public consciousness the idea of women having a common experience of oppression. Second wave feminism was predominantly a White, heterosexual, middle-class movement. To this group, it became 'obvious' that the oppression of women was the foundational oppression – one upon which all other oppressions were built. Second wave feminists developed their common understanding, or paradigm, through the strategy of telling their stories in consciousness raising groups in the 1960's. Over the following several decades that common understanding coalesced into feminist theory that asserted (i) the common experience of oppression held by all women in societies where hegemonic power is held by men, and (ii) the right to equality with men.

While feminism itself can be seen as an identity group, we can also look at various epistemological communities that exist within the feminist identity group as identity groups in their own right. The dominant public voice of feminism through the later second wave to the present has been that which can be represented as an "equality lens." The equality feminist lens views gender as the construct of a society, rather than a feature of biological difference between the sexes. Viewing gender as socially constructed leads to an interest in the removal of gender-based differences in social rights or treatment. This position developed in response to centuries of writing by men that consistently used theories of gender difference to posit the superiority of men over women. In the face of this consistent use of research on biologically-based differences between women and men over many centuries to "prove" women to be inferior to men, equality feminists have seen "difference"

as a barrier to gender equality. The concept of gender was therefore "incorporated into second-wave feminism... to differentiate between sex as a biological 'fact' and gender as socially constructed, and hence socially alterable" (Marshall, 2000, p. 48). In a 1998 article entitled, "Doing it Fairly: A Study of Postgender Marriages," Risman and Johnson-Sumerford argue that "one project for feminist social scientists is to locate and make visible the power of gender in families and occasionally to highlight when that power begins to diminish, *to show that gender is a social institution*, and, therefore, social change is possible" (p. 24, emphasis added). The authors also reference Lorber (1994) as arguing that "we can only eradicate inequality by moving beyond gender as an organizing system for all social institutions" (p. 24). Within North America, the equality lens has prevailed as the predominant paradigm for "good" relations between men and women, within both women's studies and the social sciences more generally.

Equity, or difference, feminism was and remains a marginalized voice within feminist discourses in the social sciences. In the equity view, women and men are considered to have biologically-based, inherent differences which are not currently valued equally, but could be and should be. Equality feminists have tended to judge a view that values differences between women and men as anti-feminist.

Over the past several decades, feminism has developed from a community with a foundational belief in an experience of oppression common to all women in patriarchal societies, to a more mature epistemological community encompassing numerous women's communities, with an accompanying, and ongoing, internal debate and challenge. Alexis Walker, in a 2004 article in the *Journal of Family Issues,* notes,

> Thirty-five years ago, feminist theorists and researchers focused on family might have gathered in one room excited to find others who saw the world in the same way. It is no longer, however, we (i.e. unitary feminist voice) and them (i.e. hostile and uninformed others; Rapping, 1994). With maturity, our own and feminist family studies, we have developed a variety of theories and practices and simultaneously created healthy disagreements among us (p. 990).

Application of Identity Theory

Identity theory can be applied to an analysis of feminist history to help us to understand the development of this "variety of theories and practices" referenced by Walker. The first observation that emerges when identity theory is applied to the understandings of early second-wave feminism is revealed in the use of the categories of "woman" and "man." Common sense does seem to justify the employment of these categories to most people. It is only when we dig deeper into issues of gender and identity that the complexities that are more easily visible in terms of race (e.g. mixed heritage) or class (e.g. changing class through education or accumulation of wealth) become apparent. Western feminism has encountered this complexity as women of colour, indigenous women, working class women, lesbians, third wave feminists, transgender women and others, have raised their voices, asserting that their identity needs and interests are not reflected in a feminist theory that asserts the common experience of women. As early as 1991, Marlee Kline, referencing second wave feminism, noted, "We can no longer speak of gender relations as though they can be separated from race and class relations, nor continue to focus on women's alleged

common experiences, common interests and common enemies, nor assume the feasibility of a universal and all-encompassing feminist theory" (p. 53). Fertile ground for this message was certainly provided by the rise of post-modernism. Within the post-modernist approach, "woman" as a category no longer exists at all. Alcoff and Potter put it succinctly:

> Indeed the ontological status of woman and even of women has shifted for academic feminists in light of influential arguments showing that women, per se, do not exist. There exist upper-caste Indian little girls; older, heterosexual Latinas; and white, working-class lesbians. Each lives at a different node in the web of oppressions. Thus, to refer to a liberatory project as "feminist" cannot mean that it is only for or about "women," but that it is informed by or consistent with feminism. It seeks, in current feminist parlance, to unmake the web of oppressions and reweave the web of life (1993, p. 4).

This understanding has gained ascendancy within the feminist academe, with qualifiers and disclaimers about the limited view and experiences of the authors in virtually every feminist article or book published within the last decade or more.

The identity theory lens also indicates that the process of identity group formation necessarily involves the use of power and the declaration of "real" knowledge (what's "in" and what's "out"). Feminism began with naming the struggle for equality as a conflict of feminist marginalization with mainstream knowledge production. Alcoff names it as a "clash... [of] commitment[s]". Women's understandings were "out" and conventional knowledge was "in":

> The history of feminist epistemology itself is the history of the clash between the feminist commitment to the struggles of women to have their understandings of the world legitimated and the commitment of the traditional philosophy to various accounts of knowledge – positivist, postpositivist, and others – that have consistently undermined women's claims to know (1993, p. 2).

However, this story of women's marginalization within a patriarchal hegemony has been, as noted earlier, challenged over the past several decades. The critiques of those who felt that the story being told regarding the "struggles of women" did not reflect their experience have been heard within the academe and a new reflexivity is prevalent within feminist literature. As Doucet argues in a 2006 article:

> Questions about who produces knowledge (Code 1991, 1995; Mohanty, Russo, and Torres 1991)... have become critical in contemporary feminist, postmodern, and postcolonial climates. Women of color working within Western contexts and feminists working with Third World settings have highlighted 'otherness,' exclusion, racism, and ethnocentrism (p. 40).

The perspectives of a number of feminist communities regarding their relationship to equality feminism are presented briefly below to illustrate the conundrums presented by the second-wave belief in women's "common experience of oppression".

Christine Walsh's dissertation, *Engaging Difference: Replacing the Search for Essentials in Feminist Theological Ethics with a Conversation of Difference* (2005) provides a useful overview of the critique from Women of Colour. Walsh explores the paradigm shift that she says is required in Euro-American feminist ethics, in order for the work toward liberation of all women to proceed. Her review of the questions, evaluations, and criticisms posed by Women of Colour identifies four factors that need to be addressed. The first factor is the normative use of the words "woman" or "women." As White feminists have become aware

of the range of experiences that are held by women beyond that of the White, middle-class, straight woman, adjectives have been added "... to indicate to the reader what group of women is being referenced, or whose experience is being reflected upon" (p. 48).

The use of normative language renders some women invisible and also suggests that these same women are not to be "considered fully women unless they conform to this 'normative,' white, middle-class, western idea of 'woman'" (p. 49). White feminists must go beyond the use of the disclaimer to indicate that theirs is only a partial view. "Using a more descriptive or adjectival language [throughout their work] reveals an awareness that the writer is situated within a complex web of relationships" (p. 50). This change in language also needs to lead to a change in the assumptions and methodologies of feminist work.

The second critique involves the lack of attention that is paid to the experiences of women other than the normative feminist experience. There is an ignorance of the "images and resources of strength and resistance to be found in the tradition of women of color [and an erasure of] contemporary work being done by women within those cultures to resist oppression" (p. 51). Thus, White feminists may start a dialogue around issues pertinent to Women of Colour, not realizing that this dialogue is already in process within the community. Such initiatives can sap community energy rather than support it.

Solidarity is also identified as a problematic concept. White feminists started with an assumption of a common experience of oppression for all women that would "unify all women across lines of class, race/ethnicity, sexual preference, age, or religion" (Walsh, p. 53). Walsh argues that, "women of color, unlike white feminists, understand solidarity not through common experiences of victimization, but through common commitments to specific goals" (p. 54). This is a very different starting point and allows one to see the dangers of the former view: "Bonding as 'victims,' white women liberationists were not required to assume responsibility for confronting the complexity of their own experience" (bell hooks, quoted in Walsh, p. 55). Walsh continues to paraphrase hooks, "This notion of shared victimization as solidarity masks the ways in which women oppress other women by allowing them to believe that they are only victims and not victimizers" (p. 55).

Lastly, many "women of color reject the white feminist assertion that patriarchal oppression is the umbrella under which other oppressions are sheltered. Further, women of color reject the implication that once this overarching patriarchal oppression is dismantled other oppressions will unravel" (p. 55). They suggest that the intersections of gender, race, class, and other dimensions affect everyone. "Euro-American feminist proposals that approach the double and triple burden of women oppressed by race and class still miss the analysis from women of color that these factors are not additional burdens, but that they are factors that either enable or block one's ability to make choices" (p. 56). Starting from the assertion that gender is the underlying oppression, leads one back to the suggestion that White women's experience is normative and that White women are not affected by racism. This again allows White women to mute or deny both their privilege and their part in the oppression of non-white people.

International feminists have also challenged the idea of a normative category of 'woman' whose oppression within patriarchy is the foundational problem. Roksana Bahramitash, of the Simone de Beauvoir Centre for Women's Studies at Concordia University, (2005) points

out how Western feminism has normalized Western women's experience even while seeking to support Asian women. She summarizes three characteristics of "feminist Orientalism" as identified by Parvin Paidar:

> First, it assumes a binary opposition between the West and the Orient: The Occident is progressive and the best place for women, while the Muslim Orient is backward, uncivilized, and the worst place for women. The second characteristic of feminist Orientalism is that it regards Oriental women only as victims and not as agents of social transformation; thus it is blind to the ways in which women in the East resist and empower themselves. Therefore, Muslim women need saviors, i.e., their Western sisters... The third aspect of feminist Orientalism assumes that all societies in the Orient are the same and all Muslim women there live under the same conditions (p. 222).

Rebecca Foley (2004) in an article in the *International Feminist Journal of Politics* highlights the value given to communitarianism by Muslim women and Asian cultures generally, in contrast to the Western focus on autonomy:

> In an attempt to come to terms with modernity without becoming western, Malaysian Muslim women provide a challenge to the feminist conception of rights based on the liberal notion of individualism... That rights can be based on concepts other than individualism helps to break down the western grand narrative concerning human rights. The dominant western model is not the universal model and articulations of non-western conceptualizations of rights are highlighting this (p. 70).

The articulation of communitarian goals such as strengthening families as well as women's roles as mothers has challenged Western feminists committed to "women's concerns" to see these concerns in a wider societal framework. Foley suggests that Western feminists have marginalized women who pursue a "separate but equal thesis" common in Malyasia and described by Foley as an "equity strategy" (p. 71). She says,

> By accepting that the equity activists provide an example to feminists of an alternative way to fight for rights, conceptions of feminism in the West and non-West may be shifted somewhat. Alternative bases to feminist activism can be accepted along with recognition that a focus on the individual can be considered too narrow in many cultural and political contexts (p. 71).

Myrna Cunningham (2006), in *Development,* writes about the experiences of Indigenous woman within the feminist movement. She notes,

> When I ask some Indigenous women why they think of feminism as a white women's movement, they reply with some rendition of the following analysis. They see that the dominant feminist paradigm is based on an unacknowledged model of centre and periphery. In this model, Indigenous, African-descendent, and poor women occupy the periphery and must accept the ideas and conceptualization of feminist as defined by those at the centre. In other words, we Indigenous women are expected to accept the dominant picture of what constitutes women's oppression and women's liberation. The trouble is, this picture is only a partial match with our own experiences. Elements of our experience that do not match this picture are denied or marginalized (p. 56).

Issues of class are outlined by Van Leeuwan (1993) in her discussion of how viewing autonomy as a signal of women's liberation has often led to a focus on the experience of upper-class women at the expense of others. "...the 'absolute freedom' of some has too often come at high cost to others, who for low pay not only do field and factory work but also do the cleaning, maintenance, and child care that allow elite men and women to "shape their destinies'" (p. 78).

Lastly, from my own experience, I would also assert that the message of the inadequacy of the "common experience of oppression" thesis was incorporated into feminist thought in part through the experiences of those early White, middle-class, heterosexual, feminist activists with each other. The development of women's consciousness raising groups led to the creation of many separate spaces for women under the banner of "women's space is safe space." These spaces provided a necessary opportunity for women to name their experience in a patriarchal society. They also provided the opportunity to learn that women, as human beings, have the capacity to, and do, oppress each other – even within racial or class groupings. The idea that women would provide safety for each other from a dangerous "common enemy" (a.k.a. men) can be seen in hindsight as flawed.

As early as 1993, Van Leeuwen suggested that academic feminists were coming to grips with the ramifications of this normative crisis.

> ...the international feminist dialogue has challenged the terms of Western feminism. Gradually a significant question has begun to emerge: Has feminism, which has understood itself to be the voice of all suffering women, unconsciously created its own hegemonic voice that has excluded realities crucial to many women? Many white feminists have begun to acknowledge that their analysis presumed a woman who was white, Western, and privileged... Feminist scholarship in the West has provided new tools for understanding the way that gender relations operate. But bedrock feminist understandings no longer seem so clear or so simple (p. 94).

She concludes, "this shaking of confidence in received feminist understandings has brought a much-needed breeze of humility into recent feminist scholarship" (p. 95). While it can be seen that there has indeed been a shaking up of feminist understandings, it should be noted that the critiques of indigenous women, women of colour, and international feminists presented above are current. Cunningham states,

> Even now, after decades of international conferences, discussions, publications, and much hard work, issues that are a matter of life and death for Indigenous women – racism, for example, or the exploitation of the earth's resources – are relegated to a tagged-on conceptual category called 'diversity' in the dominant feminist paradigm. In fact, the homogenizing tendency of the women's movement sometimes recreates the same frameworks of discrimination and cultural degradation through which national governments exploit Indigenous Peoples, especially indigenous women (2006, p. 56).

In my experience, the second wave Canadian activism that developed in the 1960s to 1980s was a complex blend of equality and equity feminist thought. It held as ideals both gender equality without regard to gender roles, *and* the uniqueness of "women ways of knowing." These two beliefs resulted in internal contradictions that were not addressed within the movement, but that have come to light as second wave Western feminism encounters other feminisms. Women in the Muslim women's movements, Womanist movement, third wave feminists, and others have challenged the beliefs of Western second wave feminism on a number of fronts (the challenges not necessarily being consistant within themselves). They have been challenged as beliefs that emerged from the interests of White, educated, heterosexual Western women, rather than as truths about the nature of the world "revealed" by Western feminism. As Western culture has tended to portray itself as "ahead" of other cultures on a progressive road to global liberal democracy, second wave Western feminist activism also portrayed itself as ahead of other cultures in how the sexes "should" relate. That there has been bitter condemnation of this position in the intervening years since second wave feminism has articulated its vision of gender equality should not be surprising.

Identity theory asserts that the common paradigm developed by an epistemic community will be experienced as "truth" by the participants – a "neutral" exploration and identification of the situation being experienced as it is. And although it is currently fashionable to speak of many aspects of second wave feminism as "essentialist", my experience in the 1980s included, as common understanding among radical feminist activists, the need to include the views and experiences of everyone in order to have a full understanding of any situation and the potential for a positive intervention. Of course our feminist "everyone" at that time included only women, not men. So we spoke to "every woman" and made judgments about the world and how men treated women and the privilege that men experienced. We explored the disadvantages that women experienced and the advantages that men experienced in our society. And we talked to each other about it for 20 or 30 years and convinced ourselves that in fact our paradigm was reality for everyone, not just for every woman.

Now it is commonly understood by adherents to feminist paradigms that second wave feminism did not represent the experience of "every woman" – even those it explicitly did include - and I think that by extension we can assume that it did not capture the experience of "every man" either. Tatman, when speaking of the adherents to a common paradigm, says that "their words only make sense when they are spoken and heard within the rhetorical space specific to their epistemic community. One of the epistemological issues that follows from this is that access to such epistemic communities and rhetorical spaces is limited, limited in power-riddled, non-innocent ways" (p. 11). Feminism has been engaged in a significant internal debate/dialogue/conflict regarding issues of power among groups of women, some mobilized by Western feminism, and others marginalized. After several decades of sometimes bitter fighting among equality and difference feminists, equality feminists have been forced to come to terms with the ways that equality feminist thought does not resonate with all women. An issue that the equality feminist communities have yet to grapple with is how the equality feminist paradigm is riddled with power in respect to not just to how we name women's experience, but men's as well. How this might be true, and what it might mean, is what I would like to explore next.

Feminist Conceptions of Men

As gender has become a category for academic thought, one of the concerns of academics within women's studies has been that gender studies did not emerge from a political project as women's studies did. "It is all too socially convenient to abandon the uncompromising polarity of woman/man in favour of a more neutral term, a term which seems to suggest that the interests of the sexes have now converged and that the differences in life changes (not to mention economic rewards) that exist between women and men are matters of choice" (Evans, 1990, p. 461). A more recent article, written by a group of faculty on their experience of transitioning from a Women's Studies curriculum to a curriculum that explicitly includes both Women's Studies and Men's Studies, notes that in the early years of their Women's Studies program, "men figured into our courses as the holders of patriarchal power and the oppressors of women, but also as a group that needed to be rehabilitated in order to end sexism and violence against women. Clearly, we were not yet thinking in terms of men's own need to be liberated from harmful gender stereotypes..." (Berila et al., 2005, p. 42). In her section of the article, Berila notes that the introductory course is now, "not

strictly about women and feminism. I suspect that in the very early twenty-first century, few of our students would enroll in a course trumpeting political struggle and the rebirth of the feminine, although I am not convinced that we have won most of the political and social battles of feminism" (p. 43).

In my view, it is the successes of feminism that have led feminists to this point of having to reach beyond the original theorized relationships between women and men in order to move the feminist agenda forward. Below I outline two models that support this assertion. Womanist identity development theory is a model of gender-related identity development that is argued to apply to women across racial/ethnic, class, and other lines (Moradi, 2005, p. 225). The model proposes that womanist identity development consists of four stages. In the first, "pre-encounter", women conform to rigid societal values. In the second stage, called "encounter", women become more aware of sexism and identify with womanhood; in the third, "immersion-emersion", there is the idealization of womanhood and a search for positive definitions of womanhood. The final stage, "internalization", involves the integration of a personally defined positive view of womanhood into one's identity "without undue dependence on either sexist societal norms or the antithetical positions of the women's movement" (p. 227). Berila et al. outline a similar sequence for the development of women's studies programs in quoting from Mary Kay Thompson Tetreault's "Feminist Phase Theory: An Experience-Derived Evaluation Model". Tetreault's stages are:

> ...the familiar absence of women at stage one; noting the absence of women at stage two; complementary but equal conceptualizations of men's and women's spheres and personal qualities at stage three; reclaiming women at stage four by using women's activities, not men's as the "measure of significance"; and the fifth stage, "multifocal, relational scholarship" that provides a 'gender-balanced perspective [...] which serves to fuse women's and men's experiences into a holistic view of human experience' (p. 34).

Over the past four decades as women, and women's studies, have moved through these phases, Western feminists have come to have the capacity to hold more nuanced and complex views of gender, racial, sexual orientation, and class issues. Feminists can allow more ambiguity in their appreciation of the ways that the category of women can contain both oppressed and oppressors; understanding for instance, that White women can, consciously or unconsciously, use their privilege in ways that devalue the experiences and expertise of Women of Colour. Feminists also acknowledge that men, the oppressing group in relation to women, can be oppressed in terms of class or ethnicity. However, as Sociology Professor Caroline New notes, "sociologists of gender hardly ever discuss the possibility that men are oppressed on the same dimension as women, i.e. in respect of gender relations" (2001, p. 729).

New proposes that in understanding oppression, we should "focus... on the institutionalized nature of oppressive social relations, so that oppression can sometimes exist without a clear or enduring oppressor group" (p. 730). In developing this idea she notes that a common conception of oppression is that of "zero-sum": "Here oppression is a relationship between groups, in which the oppressor group acts in ways that harm or disadvantage the oppressed, in order to gain corresponding benefits" (p. 730). In zero-sum terms, it can be difficult to identify a group as oppressed unless we can clearly identify an oppressor or beneficiary of

the oppressive situation. New brings forward an example, first articulated by Abberly, of people with disabilities as an oppressed group in our society:

> ... the identification of an oppressor group is tricky – the entire group of non-disabled or 'TABs' (temporarily able-bodied) can be seen as beneficiaries when considered as taxpayers, but become losers when considered as family members, potential carers and likely future members of the group of disabled people. Abberley...concludes that the main beneficiaries of the oppression of disabled people is 'the present social order, or, more accurately, capitalism in a particular historical and national form' (p. 731).

Building on this example New considers that men can be defined as oppressed systemically within patriarchal societies, but not by women:

> ... I shall argue that both women and men are oppressed, but not symmetrically. While men are positioned to act as systematic agents of the oppression of women, women are not in such a relation to men. Yet unsurprisingly, given the inescapably relational character of gender, the two oppressions are complementary in their functioning – the practices of each contribute to the reproduction of the other. In particular, the very practices which construct men's capacity to oppress women and interest in doing so, work by systematically harming men (p. 730).

New positions her argument as a unique one. "Almost all of those who now describe men as oppressed are part of the anti-feminist backlash, who deny the oppression of women and even see women, especially feminists, as oppressors of men" (p. 729). She is clear in her presentation that she is seeing the oppression of men as arising out of the current social order, rather than out of feminist activism. She notes four features of men's oppression that are often named as arising out of hegemonic or minority masculinities, and as a "minor cost of privilege". These are: the subordination of men to organizational goals, the obligation of men to kill or be killed in the service of the nation-state, the harsher sentences given to men by the justice system for many crimes, and the functioning of alcohol and drugs "to keep men enduring aspects of their lives that cause them distress" (p. 743). Rather than seeing these experiences as a minor inconvenience associated with holding hegemonic power, New identifies these "practices and their effects as aspects of men's structural positioning... and as genuinely oppressive to *men*" (p. 741, emphasis in original). She sees resistance among feminists to encountering men as "oppressed" as emerging from the "zero-sum notion of oppression. It seems as though if men are oppressed, they are not responsible for the abuse they perpetuate. But in fact the oppression of men, if we recognize it, in no way detracts from the serious and horrible nature of the oppression of women" (p. 743). I would agree with New that men are oppressed within Western society; in fact it seems to me that they *must* be. Both men and women must act within the parameters prescribed for them by gender in order for the system to work. Both are punished in ways that are devastating to one's conception of self – one's identity – if they deviate from the prescribed path. Feminism has successfully expanded the script for women, but how far that script can shift is limited without a corresponding shift in the acceptable script allocated to men.

If the premises of this analysis have merit, and I believe that they do, a further question becomes apparent. Once identity theory leads us to begin to grapple with the possibility that men can be both oppressor and oppressed in terms of gender relations, we must examine the possibility that women can be both oppressed and oppressor. Identity theory would suggest that the creation of an identity group for the advancement of that group necessarily generates a determination of the "Other" in terms that will reduce the value of that Other. We have

already accepted that women may and do oppress other women. Are there ways that women hold systemic power within our society; power that has been used either to maintain the status quo in relation to men, or to further feminist ends? In exploring this question, we must remain aware that we are exploring it within the context of the continuing asymmetrical power between men and women worldwide. However, having created a feminist paradigm that was based on developing an identity group with a perceived "common enemy", identity theory would suggest that at the very least, feminists must examine this creation as "theirs", rather than as a "neutral" description of reality. This line of thinking is followed below, with the presentation of the work of several scholars whose writing suggests ways that feminism has "created" the Other that it opposes.

bell hooks (2004) is a prominent feminist thinker who is ruminating on the feminist articulation of the experience of men and the ramifications for forward movement. She notes how feminists have focused on the advantages of men within a patriarchal society without addressing the oppressions that they face:

> "...reformist feminist focus on male power reinforced the notion that somehow males were all powerful and had it all. Feminist writing did not tell us about the deep inner misery of men. It did not tell us the terrible terror that gnaws at the soul when one cannot love. Women who envied men their hardheartedness were not about to tell us the depth of male suffering... the truth that we do not tell is that men are longing for love. This is the longing feminist thinkers must dare to examine, explore, and talk about. Those rare visionary feminist seers, who are now no longer all female, are no longer afraid to openly address issues of men, masculinity, and love" (p. 5).

hooks also points out how feminists have at times idealized women, at the expense of boys and men:

> "feminist idealization of motherhood made it extremely difficult to call attention to maternal sadism, to the violence women enact with children, especially with boys... women are shockingly violent toward children. This fact should lead everyone to question any theory of gender differences that suggests that women are less violent than men" (2004, p. 63-64)

And Radhika Chopra (2001), in her article, "Retrieving the Father: Gender Studies, "Father Love" and the Discourse of Mothering," argues that "the motherhood discourse has been generative of its crucial Other: the Phallocentric Patriarch and the Absent Father... Crucially, it is precisely when 'fatherhood' and 'masculinity' were subjected to a critical feminist gaze that issues of the eclipse or the muting of men emerged" (p. 447).

Michael Messner is a professor and author who has written extensively on men and masculinities. A more complete summary of his analysis of the men's movements will be presented in chapter 4. Here I would like to focus on how, according to Messner, feminists intervened in the development of the men's movement. Messner notes that the early men's movement focused on both the ways that women *and* men were oppressed within a patriarchal society. He then argues that, "by the early to mid-1970s, as feminist women began to criticize men's liberation, these radical men began to move their discourse more clearly in the direction of de-emphasizing the costs of masculinity and emphasizing the ways that all men derive power and privilege within a patriarchal society" (p. 271). The group of men who made this shift to focusing on the "ways that all men derive power and privilege" became the profeminist men's movement. The group that began to focus more exclusively

on the oppression of men became the men's rights movement, a movement that emerged in response to feminist criticism and that feminists have identified as "anti-feminist."

Looking at this situation through an identity theory lens suggests that the two concerns of the men's movement, which require complex analysis, but are not inherently contradictory, have ended up in opposition to one another, at least in part, through the intervention of another party to the conflict. According to Messner, the men's liberation movement split in two – one part identifying with their identity as "oppressors" the other with their identity as "oppressed" – at least partially as a result of pressure from the feminist movement. Each of these movements captured an aspect of the experience of men within a patriarchal culture. During the early decades of the men's and women's liberation movements, the capacity to hold the paradox contained in the reality of men's privilege *and* men's oppression was not present.

Feminist Epistemology

Feminist research has focused on "challenging gender inequality and empowering women" (Taylor, p. 358). Issues of representation raised by Women of Colour, lesbians, working class women, disabled women, and others, have forced feminist academics to think deeply about their relationship to their research participants. "Feminists have emphasized, and reflected on, the "tensions" and "dilemmas"... involved in coming to know and represent the narratives, experiences, or lives of others... they have noted the dangers of presuming to know, speak for, or advocate for others" (Doucet, 2006, p. 40-41). Efforts have, at varying times, sought to reduce power differences, identify the social location of the researcher, and to understand women as agents of change as well as victims of oppression. Through this work, a rich discourse on reflexivity and accountability has developed.

While the majority of feminist efforts toward reflexivity have been directed to researching women's marginalization and empowerment, a voice is forming in the literature that notes discrepancies in the ways that researchers address male and female experience. Presser (2005) notes that "studies of accounts of male violators typically do not focus attention on the contexts in which men present these accounts" (p. 2067). On the other hand, "in qualitative studies of female offenders, feminist criminologists tend to emphasize marginalization in past and present contexts" (p. 2068). She argues that feminist researchers "should also expose the marginalization of those violent male subjects who speak to us" (p. 2068). Doucet notes that "feminist scholars have made significant contributions to both mainstream and alternative thinking around issues of power, knowing, representation, reflexivity, and legitimation in methodological and epistemological discussions" (p. 42). However she says, "...several areas of work still require attention. Such areas include the challenges for feminists in making sense of, and theorizing, men's experiences" (2006, p. 42).

According to feminist epistemologist Lorraine Code (1993), mainstream epistemological paradigms assume that:

> ...verifiable knowledge – knowledge worthy of the name – can be analyzed into observational simples; that the methodology of the natural sciences, and especially physics, is a model for productive enquiry; and that the goal of developing a "unified science" translates into a "unity of

> knowledge" project in which all knowledge – including everyday and social-scientific knowledge about people – would be modeled on the knowledge ideally obtainable in physics (p. 25).

Feminist epistemologists have taken a different tack, arguing that, "to be *adequate,* an epistemology must attend to the complex ways in which social values influence knowledge, including the discernible social and political implications of its own analysis" (Alcoff and Potter, 1993, p. 13, emphasis in original). Lorraine Code expands on this argument and poses a question to epistemological communities:

> ... the scope of epistemological investigation has to expand to merge with moral-political inquiry, acknowledging that "facts" are always infused with values and that both facts and values are open to ongoing critical debate. ... [The] assumed innocence [of "objective" descriptions] licenses an evasion of the accountability that socially concerned communities have to demand of their producers of knowledge. ... Evidence is *selected,* not found, and selection procedures are open to scrutiny. Nor can critical analysis stop there, for the funding and institutions that enable inquirers to pursue certain projects and not others explicitly legitimize their work. ...What, then, should occur within epistemic communities to ensure that scientists and other knowers cannot conceal bias and prejudice or claim *a right not to know* about their background assumptions and the significance of their locations? (1993, p. 30, emphasis in original)

Code's answer to this question includes the responsibility of epistemic communities to "pose alternatives" (p. 30) to mainstream epistemologies, as well as to analyze "the political and other structural circumstances that generate projects and lines of inquiry" (p. 31). She adds that

> the task is intricate, because the subjectivity of the inquirer is always also implicated and has to be taken into account. Hence, the inquiry is at once critical and self-critical. ... Conclusions are reached and immoderate subjective omissions and commissions become visible in dialogic processes among inquirers and – in social science – between inquirers and the subjects of their research (p. 31).

Helen Longino is an American philosopher of science who has argued influentially for the significance of values and social interactions to scientific inquiry. Longino argues that in any research project the "set of background assumptions... include social values and interests" (Longino in Tatman, p. 144) that influence research directions.

> One way to make these background assumptions visible (and thus to limit the influence they have on shaping knowledge claims) is to include in already established epistemological communities 'representatives of alternative points of view' who hold different interests and social values (Tatman, p. 144).

Equality feminist communities have been able to do this (at least to the degree of talking the talk) with other strands of feminism, in response to criticisms of the privileged position occupied by White, educated women. But acknowledging the possibility of interest and value laden theory with regard to women's relationship to men has been slower to come. This may be because of one of the value-laden assumptions of equality feminism – that of women's marginality from, and men's more privileged position with regard to, the centre of society.

Alcoff and Potter note in their introduction to *Feminist Epistemologies*, that, building on Marxist theory, "feminist arguments... established... the marginality of women" (1993, p. 6). They also note that Bat-Ami Bar On, in her chapter in the book entitled "Marginality and

Epistemic Privilege," argues that more recently "feminists have theorized multiple axes of oppression. The result of this more complicated social grid is that the notion of a single centre becomes displaced, which problematizes the use of a margin-center ontology and raises new questions about the relationship between the multiple oppressed groupings" (p. 6). It is the success of women at the margins of equality feminist thought in challenging the values and interests of white, educated Western women, that have contributed to the displacement of the "single centre" and to the understanding of the integral relationship between knowledge and power.

"Longino is aware, however, that it is by no means an easy task to alter the composition of an epistemological community, particularly when embracing certain background assumptions and value judgments is a factor influencing (or determining) one's potential membership in such a community" (Tatman, 2001, p. 144). Longino argues that "a community's practice of inquiry is productive of knowledge to the extent that it facilitates transformative criticism" (Longino, 1993, p. 112) . She identifies "four criteria... as necessary to achieve the transformative dimension of critical discourse" (p. 112). These criteria are:

1. There must be publicly recognized forums for the criticism of evidence, of methods, and of assumptions and reasoning.
2. The community must not merely tolerate dissent, but its beliefs and theories must change over time in response to the critical discourse taking place within it.
3. There must be publically recognized standards by reference to which theories, hypotheses, and observational practices are evaluated and by appeal to which criticism is made relevant to the goals of the inquiring community...
4. Finally, communities must be characterized by equality of intellectual authority. What consensus exists must not be the result of the exercise of political or economic power or of the exclusion of dissenting perspectives; it must be the result of critical dialogue in which all relevant perspectives are represented. (p. 112-113)

Feminist epistemologists have asserted an intimate connection between power and knowledge production, arguing that knowledge production is accomplished by communities who generate knowledge through collaborations, consensus processes, political struggles, negotiations and other activities (Nelson, 1993) rather than revealed by a disinterested, objective observer. Code says, "there can be no doubt that research is – often imperceptibly – shaped by presuppositions and interests external to the inquiry itself, which cannot be filtered out by standard, objective, disinterested epistemological techniques" (p. 30-31). Far from being objective, "research is legitimized by the community and speaks into a discursive space that is prepared for it" (Code, p. 31). Feminist epistemologists have come to understand the many assumptions behind the knowledge claims of epistemic communities through the work of critically analyzing the knowledge produced within mainstream epistemological research, and through the internal critiques of equality feminist thought by women who have been marginalized by this thought. Thus Code concludes that feminist epistemological efforts must be both "critical and self-critical" (p. 31).

The work of these feminist epistemologists articulates how epistemological communities can "attend to the complex ways in which social values influence knowledge" (Alcoff and Potter, 1993, p. 13) in order to be accountable for how the interests and beliefs of the community affect knowledge produced by that community. Interestingly, the analyses and

conclusions offered align significantly with the work of reconciliation scholars. Reconciliation scholars refer to identity-based communities' beliefs about the Other in similar terms to those used by feminist epistemologists referring to epistemological communities undertaking social science research. Code says of research that "evidence is *selected*" (1993, p. 30, emphasis in original), and Longino notes the "background assumptions... [that] include 'social values and interests'" (in Tatman, 2001, p. 144) and influence research directions. Code argues that epistemological communities have a responsibility to "pose alternatives" (1993, p. 31) to mainstream epistemologies; that the "political and other structural circumstances" (p. 31) should be analyzed; and that "inquiry... [should be] at once critical and self-critical" (p. 31). Longino argues that knowledge production requires "transformative criticism" (1993, p. 112). She looks for "publically recognized forums" (p. 112) for critical debate, change in the beliefs and theories of a community over time in response to this debate, evaluation practices, and "equality of intellectual authority" (p. 113).

The parallels to the work of reconciliation theorists are evident. LeBaron talks of "invisible, shared codes, defining 'common sense'" (2003, p. 11). Redekop's reconciliation model emphasizes a vision or mandate for peaceful alternatives to the current situation and the transformation of structures. The need for transformation is a recurring theme among reconciliation scholars. Longino's four criteria can also be recognized in the reconciliation literature. For example, Redekop's model proposes a framework for public dialogue and debate, foresees "changes of identity, attitude and orientation in relation to the other" (2002, p. 12), enabling the situation to be more fully understood and changes made with respectful and respected contributions from all parties to the conflict. The parallels between the analysis and directions proposed by feminist epistemologists and reconciliation theorists supports the contention of this thesis that reconciliation theory has relevance for feminists in undertaking the kind of reflexive exercise proposed by feminist epistemologists as necessary.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have demonstrated how identity theory can inform a reflexive review of feminist thought. I have indicated that feminism has developed to the point where a more nuanced understanding of identity is possible. This development has allowed marginalized voices within the feminist movement to be acknowledged. Now, as we use the lens of identity theory to analyze the relationship of interests to identity, we are at the cusp of seeing the ways that feminism may hold hegemonic power in relation to men. We will now turn our attention to expanding our understanding of gender issues within a framework that acknowledges the paradoxes and ambiguities of women's and men's experiences of power and identity, and thereby focuses on the reconciliation of these issues. In the following chapters, I explore this potential within a defined frame of reference: that of the academic clash of ideas between the equality feminist communities and the profeminist fathering communities. I first introduce the larger group of stakeholders before looking at the possibilities for reconciliation between these two more specific groups.

Chapter 4: Stakeholder Analysis of Fathering Research

The current chapter undertakes an analysis of the stakeholders in social science research on fathering.[1] A stakeholder analysis is an important step in analyzing an identity-based conflict. As noted in chapter 2, conflicts "have a tendency to broaden in domain by adding more actors, and deepen in scope by adding more goals" (Galtung, 2006, p. 1). An identity-based conflict rarely involves only two groups, or a fight over one goal. An understanding of the complexity of the actor groups, their relationships, their prioritized interests and their beliefs is important to the development of an appropriate approach to the reconciliation of the conflict. In this chapter, the conflict theory literature presented in chapter 2 is used to structure the analysis of fathering discourses. Use of conflict theory allows us to unpack the identity-based beliefs and interests that have led to the development of conflicting research paradigms related to fathering. Figure 1 presents the stakeholders who are undertaking knowledge creation work with regard to the roles of women and men in the family, as well as their interests and beliefs. While this chapter presents the range of stakeholders involved in the conflict, later chapters focus on the equality feminist (yellow in Figure 1) and the profeminist fathering communities (light blue in Figure 1). A dotted line is used in Figure 1 to outline this focus. The work of Andrea Doucet is presented in this chapter as an example of feminist research on fathering that is pointing toward a feminist reconciliation focused model for researching fathering.

The Stakeholder Map

This thesis argues that using identity theory to structure this review of the fathering literature allows us to see how the development of feminist identities and interests have impacted, and will continue to impact the achievement of "equality" for women within the family structure. The overview of identity theory presented in chapter 2 reveals several points of interest for our exploration of the fathering literature. These points are laid out below and will be used to structure the discussion of the stakeholders to the conflict:

(i) the creation of a successful identity-based group involves the mobilization of specific beliefs and interests among group members.

(ii) this process will necessarily marginalize some potential members whose beliefs and interests vary from that of the predominant group.

(iii) the conceptualization of the Other by an "oppressed" group is entangled in internal dynamics of identity formation and identity maintenance. The picture of the Other that emerges from the identity-based beliefs and interests of the oppressed group may be essentialized and/or inaccurate.

(iv) if the oppressed group is successful in gaining the sympathy of the larger society, this created Other may become a new site of oppression.

Figure 1 (page 37) introduces the groups within the fathering discourses that exemplify each of the points above. The figure presents three umbrella groups across the top of the page: the mobilized identity group is the equality feminist communities (shown in yellow in centre of figure). The marginalized are equity feminists (shown in orange on left side of figure). The

[1] In order to contain the scope of this project, this analysis focuses only on those stakeholders whose self-identified goal is progressive movement toward gender equality or equity. I have not included groups in this analysis whose identified goal is a reversion to patriarchal values.

Other are two streams of the men's movement: the profeminist fathering communities, and the men's rights communities (shown in light blue and dark blue respectively on the right side of the figure). The identity belief for each group is shown in the second row of the figure. Below that are the prioritized interests of each group. The fourth row presents the paradigmatic beliefs that have emerged from the identity-based interests of each group.

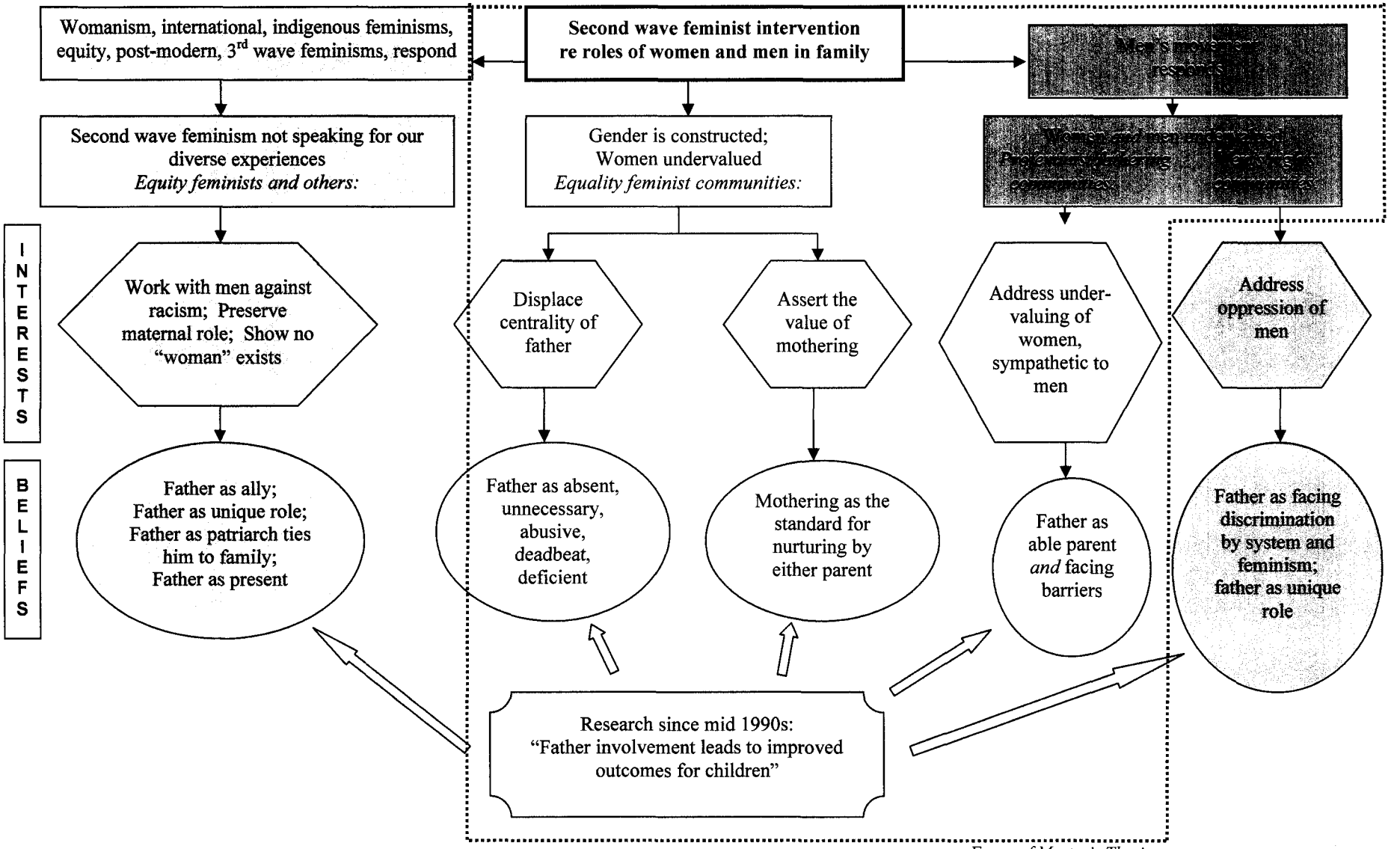
Figure 1 also shows research from the mid-1990s and on indicating that father involvement leads to improved outcomes for children (green box at bottom of figure). This research "pushes" on the paradigmatic beliefs of each group to move forward in their understanding of fathering. I am particularly interested in this thesis on the effect that this research is having on equality feminist community's willingness to move in the direction of reconciliation in relation to other epistemological beliefs regarding fathering and men and women's roles in the family.

The Mobilized: Equality Feminists

Second wave Western feminism began as a primarily middle-class, heterosexual, White movement. It developed in a context of major economic, technological and demographic change in the latter half of the 20th century. These changes both exaggerated and made evident to middle-class women a societal undervaluing of "women's work" as well as a collective desire to not be restricted to the home. Jessica Weiss (1999), writing about changes in fatherhood during the latter half of the twentieth century, notes that "commentators and journalists attribute the "new," enlightened father of recent decades, active in his children's nurture and care, to the feminist critiques of gender roles and family dynamics that brought long-held notions of fatherhood and motherhood into question in the 1970s and to the increasing labor force participation of mothers" (p. 375). However, she argues that an earlier generation of women – the parents of the baby boomers – were instrumental, along with post-war family experts, in "the construction of a more participatory, communicative, and involved middle-class fatherly ideal sometimes with and sometimes without their husbands' cooperation..." (p. 375).

The new model emphasized the importance of a father-child connection without addressing parental responsibility. "Experts packaged fatherhood in nightly parcels of play without adjusting the balance of work between men and women in the home" (p. 378). Women were seen as responsible for facilitating this shift. "... advisors still assumed that women controlled and modulated the emotional content of the home, in effect regulating the ability of men to father" (p. 378). Women's "efforts met with varied, and often limited, success in practice; for the most part the ideal remained exactly that. But they did succeed in remolding the ideal" (p. 375). It remained for the feminist movement to take on the implementation of the new fatherhood ideal, and also to expand it to address the division of responsibility. With the entry of large numbers of women into the work force, this concern acquired added urgency. "Feminist critiques of family life lambasted the inequity of American gender roles – criticism that finally questioned a division of labor that experts had long accepted" (p. 384).

Figure 1: Stakeholders' Map: the Roles of Women and Men in the Family – Interests and Beliefs



The motivation of women during the early period in second wave feminist history emerged from their experiences growing up in post-war families. Second wave feminists were part of the baby boom generation. They had watched their mothers try to engage their fathers in a more participatory fatherhood model, primarily without success. "... in the postwar years, couples fought over or hammered out often unsatisfactory compromises between new expectations and customary responsibilities and suffered the consequent disappointments..." (Weiss, p. 386). The ideal of engaged fatherhood was not being enacted. This discrepancy between the desired feminist ideal and actual experience led to the realization that there were two requirements necessary to achieve "equality" between a mother and father within the family. The first related to deconstructing the central and authoritative place held by the father in the family. The second requirement was recognition of the value of the mother's role. In these interests lay a goal of creating a level playing field between the mothering and fathering roles. Both of these interests were expressed within feminist discourse. Radhika Chopra (2001), notes,

> Feminist discourse on mothering and motherhood, particularly the feminist approach within the object relations theory, focused on the almost exclusive link between women, motherhood, and mothering as a single gendered role and practice. In particular, Chodorow's (1978) The Reproduction of Mothering was seen as a seminal work that sought, as did other feminists texts, to displace the centrality of the father and the Oedipus complex as the source of gender identity and subjectivity (p. 446).

The "centrality of the father" referred to by Chopra reached back to the colonial era in North America:

> In the colonial era divine right granted the father superior right over the mother to the custody and control of his natural (but not illegitimate) children and child servants and apprentices... The divine plan granted paternal authority, including the authority to utilize the children's labor, but also required heavy paternal obligations of support, vocational, moral, and religious training... As head of the household, the ever-present father supervised all economic and social aspects of its operation (Mason, 1994, p. 163).

In the changed social conditions of the 20th century the father's role had changed. Feminists were challenging the central authority held by the father who was in fact not present to "supervise all economic and social aspects" of the operation of the family.

In identity theory terms, we can see that second-wave feminist activism began with a collective acknowledgement of the gap between a desire for equality and an experience of inequality. This understanding motivated feminist activism and was expressed through the prioritized interests of the women's movement – displacing the central and authoritative position attributed to the father in the family, and asserting the value of the mother's role. As part of this work feminists have documented women's experiences as sole nurturer to the family. Weiss, for example, analyzed data from longitudinal studies with baby boom-era families. She notes that, "these... [post-war mothers] believed they had parented on their own. They interpreted their husbands' commitments to career as indicating a lack of interest in family life. Having married with the expectation of parenting through togetherness, they were bitterly conscious of having parented alone" (p. 384). In their work to displace the centrality ascribed to fathers, feminists have focussed on the identification of areas where men have not met the needs of their children and partners. Fathers have been named as, and shown to be, in various places and times, absent, abusive, unnecessary and deficient. Feminist conceptions of the "absent father" and the "deficient father" are noted above.

Regarding the "abusive father," the Fact Sheet from the Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women (2002), states that,

- Over a quarter (29%) of Canadian women have been assaulted by a spouse
- A minimum of one million Canadian children have witnessed violence against their mothers by their fathers or father figures
- In 1997, fathers accounted for 97% of sexual assaults and 71% of physical assaults of children by parents
- Around the world, as many as one woman in every four is physically or sexually abused during pregnancy, usually by her partner

The "unnecessary father" is seen in Judith Stacey's (1993) comment: "[While] the consequences of divorce for children are not trivial ... the most careful studies suggest that it is not the loss of a parent, but a hostile emotional environment preceding this loss that causes most of the emotional damage to children" (Stacey, p. 547). Out of this documentation process came two corresponding paradigmatic beliefs: the single-gendered nature of nurturing on the one hand, and the deficits of men in fulfilling an "equal" role with women on the other. These beliefs were held in the context an understanding of "gender as constructed." Thus men were not inherently deficit in undertaking nurturing roles, they were seen as unwilling and unmotivated to do so.

While I have painted a picture that is coherent and viable, it is of course a simplification of the very real contradictions among a variety of interests and beliefs that exist at both the individual and group level among the group which I have named as the "mobilized" in this conflict. These internal contradictions are recognized and discussed by peace and conflict scholars. Sen talks about identities as "robustly plural" (2006, p. 19) and speaks about the "divergent loyalties and priorities that may compete for precedence" (p. 19). A successful identity group prioritizes specific issues to which group members give precedence. For the purposes of this research, I will identify the "equality feminist communities" as an identity group which draws on the idea of 'gender as constructed' as a foundational concept. As discussed in the methods section, this juxtaposition of the plural "equality feminist communities" with the singular "identity group" is an awkward phrasing. Nonetheless, it is important to recognize the many feminist epistemological communities that fall under the umbrella of "equality feminist communities," while also recognizing a significant distinction that draws one line between the parties to the conflict.

Barbara Marshall (2000) has noted that feminists were acting on an "... emancipatory impulse in distinguishing gender from sex in a move to de-essentialize the former" (p. 43). She also speaks to feminist critiques of this move "for reinforcing a nature/culture dualism and for reifying sexual dimorphism." (p. 48). However, she argues that,

> While accepting that there are contradictory and contested meanings associated with any manifestation of gender as a male/female distinction, feminism remains committed to an approach 'which analyses how this distinction reproduces inequalities between men and women at every institutional level. It therefore authorizes the marking out of certain categories – namely women – as relatively disadvantaged' (Kandiyoti, 1998: 145). (p. 71)

While the equality feminist communities therefore, have a commitment to equal treatment of women and men, they also see gender as authorizing the "marking out of ... women... as relatively disadvantaged" (Kandiyoto, quoted in Marshall, p. 71). This can sometimes result in similar conclusions being reached in both the equality and equity feminist communities. However, the underlying reasoning will be different between each of these groups. This difference is illustrated in the work of Susan Boyd (2003), a Law Professor at the University of British Columbia and the author of *Child Custody, Law, and Women's Work.* In this book she puts forward the suggestion that it is appropriate for women to receive custody of children more often than men (as is the case in Canada at the current time) because "mothers tend to perform childrearing in our society" (p. 6). Further to this she argues, "This approach does not imply that women have a property claim to children: *it is not based on essential differences between women and men*, but rather on social patterns of caring" (p. 4, emphasis added). While Boyd refuses "essential differences between women and men" she sees the emergence in the 1980's of a justice system which emphasized gender neutral language and assumptions as "obscur[ing] the deeply structured gendered patterns of parenting that continued to exist in Canadian society" (p. 19).

The Marginalized: Equity Feminists

As predicted by identity theory, equality feminism has a lesser-known counterpart: equity or difference feminism. Difference feminists are also interested in addressing issues of inequality between women and men, but they use an "equity lens" to do so. Within the West, difference feminists have responded to the identified interests of equality feminists with a variety of concerns. Mary Stewart Van Leeuwen et al (1993), in their ambitious year long academic study to examine "gender roles... within the context of a Christian worldview" (p. xiv), argue that, "one of the hallmarks of feminist thought, religious and secular, is a rejection of dualisms" (p. 165). "However, there is one dualism that sometimes remains in feminist theology – namely, a dualism between men and women" (p. 166). They further identify "relational feminism as a current of thought that acknowledges certain complementary differences between women and men and focuses on women's childbearing and nurturing capacities in relation to men and children" (p. 56). They suggest that while difference feminism has been muted within second wave theory and activism, there is a renewed emphasis on this approach. "French feminism, historically more comfortable with accepting differences between men and women, has given birth to a feminist theory that takes difference as its starting point" (p. 94). As well, international feminists have insisted that "women's issues be discussed in the context of larger community concerns" (Van Leeuwan, p. 106). For instance, as noted in chapter 3, rather than focusing on the importance of the autonomy of women as individuals, women from Asian cultures sometimes bring more communitarian goals such as strengthening families (Foley, 2004), which can lead to a view of fathers' and mothers' roles as unique and complementary.

The "Other": The Men's Movements

The early men's liberation movement focused on both the oppression of women and men's own experience of oppression within a patriarchal society. These two streams of thought are now reflected in the profeminist men's movement and the men's rights movement respectively. The work of Michael Messner, a professor and author who has written

extensively on men and masculinities was referred to briefly in chapter 3. In his analysis of the men's liberation and men's rights movement, Messner traces the development of the men's movements. He notes that while "most men responded with either hostility or stunned silence to the women's liberation movement" (p. 256), some men began to engage with these ideas. Messner argues,

> ... [the early men's] liberation discourse walked a tightrope from the very beginning. First, movement leaders acknowledged that sexism had been a problem for women and that feminism was a necessary social movement to address gender inequalities. But they also stressed the equal importance of the high costs of the male sex role to men's health, emotional lives, and relationships (p. 256).

The men's liberation movement eventually split into two movements: the profeminist men's movement, and the men's rights, or masculist, movement. The profeminist movement focused on men's privilege within a system that oppressed women. The men's rights movement focused on the symmetry of the experience of oppression for both women and men, with an emphasis on individual experience. Messner critiques the men's rights movement for "avoiding the issue of their own positions of privilege within race, class, and gendered hierarchies" (p. 265). He also notes,

> ...these activists are not arguing for a return to patriarchal arrangements and traditional masculinity. To the contrary, men's rights advocates are critical of the way masculinity has entrapped, limited, and harmed men, and they want to reconstruct a masculinity that is more healthful, peaceful and nurturing. *More important,* they do not see feminism as the way to accomplish this improvement in men's lives. (p. 269, emphasis added).

Messner's critique is interesting in terms of an identity group analysis. What Messner sees as "more important" is that the men's rights movement does not identify with feminism, rather than that the movement is "not arguing for a return to patriarchal arrangements". Not identifying with feminism makes the men's rights movement expressed interest in gender equality suspect.

In contrast, the men's rights movement would identify itself as the "movement for real gender equality" (Shackleton, 2003, Issue 61, p. 18). A "Vision for Gender Equality" appearing in *Everyman: A Men's Journal*, begins with the statement:

> This document begins to articulate a vision of gender equality and gender justice inside the larger context of establishing authentic equality for all members of our society. It seeks not to repudiate the achievements that women have made, nor the work left to do, but rather, wishes to advance an awareness of the important areas of systemic discrimination against men. (2003, p. 46)

Messner traces the emergence of the profeminist men's movement from the men's liberation movement, which:

> ...initially focused a great deal on the costs of masculinity, as well as on the institutional privileges afforded to all men under patriarchy... but by the early to mid-1970s, as feminist women began to criticize men's liberation, these radical men began to move their discourse more clearly in the direction of de-emphasizing the costs of masculinity and emphasizing the ways that all men derive power and privilege within a patriarchal society... in the place of men's liberation, these radical men posited a men's politics of antisexist practice, focused mainly on sexual violence issues... By the 1980s profeminist men's organizations... had clearly positioned themselves in opposition to men's rights organizations. (p. 271)

As suggested in chapter 3, it appears that the two concerns of the men's movement, which require complex analysis, but are not inherently contradictory, have ended up in opposition to one another, at least in part, through the intervention of the feminist community. According to Messner, the men's liberation movement split in two – one part identifying with their identity as "oppressors" the other with their identity as "oppressed" – at least partially as a result of pressure from feminists. Each of these movements captured an aspect of the experience of men within a patriarchal culture. During the early decades of the men's and women's liberation movements, the capacity to hold the paradox contained in the reality of men's privilege *and* men's oppression was not present.

The profeminist men's movement aligns with the equality lens of the equality feminist communities. Levant and Pollack edited an important contribution to the literature entitled, *A New Psychology of Men,* in 1995. In the introduction to the volume they state:

> The new psychology of men views gender roles not as biological or even social "givens" but rather as psychologically and socially constructed entities that bring certain advantages and disadvantages and, most important, can change. This perspective acknowledges the biological differences between men and women but argues that it is not the biological differences of sex that make for "masculinity" and femininity". These are socially constructed from bits and pieces of biological, psychological, and social experience to serve particular purposes (p. 2).

The profeminist men's movement also articulates a sympathetic view toward the barriers that men face in moving toward gender equality generally and in fathering specifically. In *Becoming a Kind Father: A Son's Journey,* law professor and freelance journalist Calvin Sandborn (2007), summarizes the price of patriarchy for men. He argues, "just as patriarchy brutalizes women, it brutalizes him. This is the cost of the father's armor" (p. 16). The profeminist men's movement also places current conceptions of fathering in a historical perspective, which Brooks and Gilbert, writing in *A New Psychology of Men* (1995), argue is necessary to overcome a significant "change-resistant force...[that of] essentialist beliefs (the idea that traditional fathering is inherent to men's makeup and unchanging across time)" (p. 268).

In Canada the views of the men's rights movement can be found in *Everyman: A Men's Journal.* This journal was published quarterly for over 15 years, until 2005. In reviewing *Everyman* over the course of several years (2003 to 2005), one finds that the men's rights movement aligns with equity or difference feminism in that they have a conception of gender "equality" that distinguishes inherent differences between women and men. This identity group tends to see women and men as equally disadvantaged, with women holding more power within the family, and men within the larger society. Many men within the movement have experienced divorce and were shocked to find out that they would no longer have "parenting rights" with their children when custody was automatically given to the mothers. They have problematized this practice, arguing that the breadwinner role is as important a parenting role as that of the hands-on parenting role. They have named the role assigned to fathers after divorce as that of "wallets" – valued only for the monetary contribution that they may bring. The men's rights movement is looking for the unique contribution that fathers bring to the family in response to articulations of gender equality that seem to make them unnecessary. Their movement exists as a direct rebuttal to the

equality lens of feminist theory that positions fathers as absent, abusive, unnecessary and deficit.

The Oppressed: Fathers?

As has been argued earlier in this paper, the interests that become prioritized in the development of an identity group seeking social justice, lead to the identification of the Other as having certain identity characteristics. These characteristics are seen to be blocking the oppressed group from achieving their prioritized interests. The creation of this Other can become a new site of oppression. For equality feminists, seeking equality in the family, the Other was/is men, seen as benefiting from the inequality and unwilling to change. Chopra argues that feminists generated a framework,

> that produced the hegemonic version of the father as a distant, or absent, figure. This framework has had a profoundly pervasive influence on images, policies, and practices that have informed the construction of fathering as invested with authority but divested of nurturing 'care.' (p. 447).

Hawkins and Dollahite (1997) the editors of *Generative Fathering,* fit within the profeminist articulation of gender issues. They see a need for change by men, and they see a need for new approaches to articulating that change in order to support men in their process. In their book, they argue that, "a prominent way of thinking about fathering is that it is a *social role* that men generally perform inadequately. This approach springs from a deficit model of men (Doherty, 1991)... that is evident in much of contemporary family scholarship on men and fathers. Within this paradigm, fathers are willingly uninvolved with their children and unmotivated to change" (p. 3).

The editors of *Generative Fathering* note:

> There is, unfortunately, some validity to this general portrait of deficiency; it accurately and tragically describes too many fathers... It fails to describe many good fathers, however. Regardless of the deficit paradigm's descriptive validity, we believe a perspective of fathers as generally deficient in their paternal role is not the best place to begin to understand and encourage better fathering (p. 3).

Clearly the deficit paradigm captures a truth. But it also creates a truth. If we go back to Spiro's definition of belief (chapter 2), we are reminded that "the fifth, deeper level of belief, involves a deep emotional attachment to these truths. One's life is then lived as the emotionally satisfying enactment, as a member of a group, of a set of propositions that one knows, understands, and holds as conforming to the way things are and/or ought to be" (in Goulet, 2007, p. 227). Tatman argues, "that knowledge claims made [by epistemological communities] with cognitive authority shape the structure of society and of the world, thereby enabling some communities (human and non-human) and harming others; ... no knowledge claim made by an epistemological community is ever the only or the final word on the subject" (2001, p. 151).

Can we from this perspective understand the power of a paradigm – even a paradigm created in the service of social justice – to mire an identity group in an "old reality" and prevent it from moving forward toward the social justice being sought? The deficit paradigm of fathering has become as common, and therefore comfortable, as an old shoe, within both

feminist and social science writing on men and fathering. There is ample evidence for its "truth." And, by relating to it as truth, equality feminist communities do not have to take responsibility for the ways in which they sustain its existence.

This is the peril of all oppressed groups. We create a new paradigm to oppose the oppressive paradigm that is endemic in the larger society. We can see that the old paradigm is in fact a created reality. We can see that it is "power-riddled in non-innocent ways" (Tatman, 2001, p. 11). But we see our new created reality as "conforming to the way things are and/ought to be" (Goulet, 2007, p. 227). We do not notice the power that we hold in creating this new "reality." Having seen our truth as a paradigm, we can take responsibility for it. We can search out other contrasting or even conflicting paradigms and explore what truths these paradigms might offer to help us shake loose from our conviction that our beliefs represent reality.

Generative Fathering presents one such opportunity. The Hawkins and Dollahite state that this book "provides a conceptual beginning for going beyond deficit perspectives of men and fathering, and exploring how to approach scholarship without assuming men lack interest in or desire to care for the next generation" (p. 1). The authors assume, and "believe this assumption is consistent with good research, ...that most fathers want to be good dads and many bring significant strengths to that work" (p. 8). The term 'generative' comes from,

> the late Erik Erikson's theory of human development across the life cycle... [in which] he argued that active caring for the next generation, a task he called generativity, was essential for healthy adult development for both men and women. Generativity is the process of expanding one's concern beyond the self and intimate dyad to include one's children and the next generation (p. 9).

Rather than thinking about fathering from a role-inadequacy perspective, Hawkins and Dollahite present a model of fathering as generative work. They note that their model is not value-neutral: it is meant to "suggest what is possible and desirable" (p. 18). Four areas of work are identified as emerging from four fundamental conditions: (i) the ethical work of providing resources for growth, following from the dependency of children, (ii) stewardship work, following from the scarcity of resources under which fathering takes place, (iii) developmental work, following from ever-changing conditions, family processes and structures, and (iv) relationship work, following from interdependence among family members (p. 23). The authors "suggest that men have the desire, the imperative, and the ability to do fatherwork" (p. 32).

In contrasting the interventions that result from the deficiency and generative paradigms, they note,

> A therapeutic strategy that begins with the assumption that fathers cling immaturely to power and privilege will employ different tools from one based on the view of fathers as caring and concerned but struggling to enact their highest aspirations. Similarly an educational program built from the assumption that fathers are not especially interested in being close to their children until some expert convinces them they should be would differ from one in which fathers are viewed as wanting to be close to their children but facing significant barriers to the achievement of that desire (p. 11).

They sum up the contrasts between the deficit paradigm and the generative paradigm as follows:

> We argue that the role-inadequacy perspective is limited in its ability to facilitate personal transformation in fathers because (a) it does not give adequate attention to the processes of paternal growth and maturation (it is nondevelopmental); (b) it misconstrues the motives, feelings, attitudes, and hopes of most fathers (it is inaccurate); (c) it creates significant barriers to personal transformation rather than encouraging change (it is narrow) (p. 9).

Above, Hawkins and Dollahite provide three clear points of difference with feminist conceptions of fathering. Each challenges the "truths" about fathers presented in feminist literature. How equality feminist communities relate to these points of difference will be based substantially on how willing they are to move beyond thinking of the beliefs of their communities as truth.

Identity conflict theory makes clear how identity group interests are engaged in a struggle for social justice. Once we have clearly delineated the oppressions that our identity group experiences; once we fully understand them as oppressions; once we have gained the sympathy of the larger society, can we begin to expand our "we" to include the Other? Can we begin to think of the power that we hold as well as the oppression that we experience? Can we begin to think of how this larger "we" can work through the power dynamics to create a new story that provides the potential for social justice to emerge? Can we see *ourselves* as the creators of a paradigmatic belief of the Other that is inaccurate, narrow, and does not allow for growth?

New Research focused on Improved Outcomes of Father Involvement

New research on fathering challenges equality feminist communities to carefully consider this possibility. Donna Lero (2006), notes that, "although scholarly interest in fatherhood emerged in the early 1970s and 80s, the bulk of studies and policy work on fatherhood is very recent – much of it dating from the mid-1990s onwards" (p. 3). The veritable explosion of research initiatives, articles, books, and conferences has resulted in a considerable body of research,

> ...to support conclusions that
> - positive, engaged fathering can benefit children's cognitive, social, academic and emotional development and encourage children to develop more positive gender role perspectives of men and women
> - Men's involvement in fathering has the potential to positively affect men's health and well-being, foster personal growth, and create opportunities for men to be more involved in their communities...
> - Men's active role with children and greater involvement in and responsibility for child care supports women, providing opportunities for more egalitarian relationships at home and supporting mothers' involvement in employment and other spheres of activity (p. 3).

The Father Involvement Research Alliance (FIRA) and the Father Involvement Initiative – Ontario Network (FII-ON) are representative of the work being done in this area in Canada. FIRA "is a cross-Canada research network which aims to foster and undertake research in the area of father involvement" (Hoffman, p. 5). In 2003 FIRA received funding from the Community-University Research Alliance (CURA) program of the Social Sciences and

Humanities Research Council (SHHRC) for a five-year research project. It is part of FIRA's mandate to "design strategies aimed at sharing new knowledge with practitioners, academics, policy makers and the general public" (FIRA website, accessed December 23, 2008). FII-ON, which was "launched with the support of the Ontario Region Healthy Child Development section of Health Canada, is a broad-based coalition of organizations and individuals who promote the active involvement of fathers in the lives of their children and the inclusion of fathers in community services" (Hoffman, p. 5). Father involvement organizations are firmly focused on fathers as "an important resource for enhancing the well-being of families and the healthy development of children. [They see that] increasing attention and investments towards father-inclusive practice in community services for families has great potential to contribute to increased gender equity in our society and to enhance the well-being of Canada's families and children" (Hoffman, p. 4). These organizations have generally avoided the identity-based conflict between the feminist and men's movements articulation of gender relations in the family (both of which focus on the deficit paradigm from differing points of view), by focusing on a generative approach to fathering. John Hoffman is a leading writer on fatherhood issues in Canada. In a 2007 FI-ON document he writes,

> It's important to distinguish father involvement initiatives from the father's rights movement, which has been in the public eye for a longer period of time. The father's rights movement comprises groups primarily interested in advocating for fathers in the area of divorce – family law reform, child custody and access, and child support payments. While discussion of father involvement must take into account all factors that can affect fathers, including those related to divorce and separation, the father involvement initiatives and networks... focus on *human development – how families, children, mothers and fathers themselves are positively affected by increased responsible father involvement.* (p. 3, emphasis in original).

FIRA (2006) has produced an *Inventory of Policies and Policy Areas Influencing Father Involvement,* in which they suggest a framework for policy and program development:

> In contrast to a perspective that begins with problematizing fathers' behaviour, we suggest that there are two concepts that are useful to bear in mind in developing a framework for further policy and program development. The first is the concept of population health...[which recognizes the] positive contributions that fathers can make to children's healthy development... and fathers' own development. ... A second conceptual framework... is that of social inclusion [which] describes both the goal and process of ensuring that individuals... have the opportunity to fully develop their talents and abilities, and that they have the opportunity to be full participants in society (p. 8).

Father involvement programs and organizations have had difficulty establishing themselves with funders.[2] The focus on the paradigmatic beliefs of the feminist equality lens (the single-gendered nature of nurturing, and the inherent deficits of fathers in fulfilling an "equal" role with women) within social science and feminist work has spilled over to funders of social change projects. Funded projects/organizations focussed on father involvement have been almost non-existent in Canada until the last 10 years or so. Ed Bador, Chair of the New Father's Cluster within FIRA, commented in his presentation at the FIRA conference in 2008 that "social agencies were suspicious of involvement by men." However he added,

[2] I have been told this in personal conversation with both organizational representatives and funders. Funders have perceived work focussed on fathers as potentially coming from the men's rights perspective, and thereby "anti-feminist" or "anti-woman."

"there has been a tremendous change within agencies [over the past five years]... one of the most positive changes I've seen."

In October 2008, I attended the fifth annual FIRA conference in Toronto, Canada. In keeping with FIRA's mandate to undertake knowledge mobilization, this conference brought together both academics and service providers. These two groups comprised two "camps" among the conference attendees[3]. A clear orientation toward 50-50 parenting as the ideal could be seen among the presentations made by academics at the conference. In the service provider camp, were many dads who had spent years working to justify funding for, and to develop, programs to support fathers to become involved more closely with their children. Success has begun to be experienced, as over the past five to ten years there has been a great expansion in programs available. While there were many issues being discussed at the conference, there were two recurring themes that stood out for me as conflictual between the profeminist fathering communities represented by the service providers, and the academics from the equality feminist communities. These were: (i) questions regarding the essential or unique contribution of fathers, and (ii) the exclusion of "provisioning" as a parenting responsibility within discussions of father involvement. While there was considerable emotional intensity in the interactions of participants around these themes, there was also a curious sense of ritual in the questions asked of presenters and the answers provided. The questions and answers were both well crafted, as if they had been asked a number of times. The presenters and questioners seemed to already know where others stood.

While there is a clear consensus among FIRA participants that father involvement improves outcomes for children, men, and women, there is no consensus on why this is the case. Service providers, in trying to gain funding for father involvement programs, have been asked to justify their requests in terms of the contribution that fathers make. Their own "common sense" experience as fathers, as well as research showing that father involvement makes a positive difference in child outcomes, leads them toward seeing the contribution that fathers make as an essential one, uniquely different to that of mothers. Feminist social science academics are generally unwilling to accept the idea of an essential and/or unique contribution of fathers. In his keynote address at the FIRA conference, Joseph Pleck, a professor of Human Development and Family studies at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, and a co-originator of the concept of paternal involvement,[4] explored and evaluated the possible explanations for the positive research outcomes related to father involvement. In introducing his topic he acknowledged the tension around the issue of "why" when he told a humorous story giving advice to anyone about to tell an unpalatable truth – that they should have "one foot in the saddle" while doing so.[5]

The second area of tension between the academic camp and the service provider camp visible at the conference, was the exclusion of provisioning as a parenting responsibility. Father involvement has by definition referred to activities related to the hands-on care of children traditionally done by women. While the conference presentations were uniformly supportive of father involvement, the very terms that define "father involvement" serve to make the provisioning aspect of parenting invisible. A number of the research presentations

[3] David Long, Associate Professor of Sociology, King's University College, personal communication.
[4] FIRA Conference, presenter biography.
[5] Joseph Pleck, keynote address. FIRA Conference, October 23, 2008.

exploring the contributions of mothers and fathers to hands-on parenting found that fathers contribute less in terms of hours and responsibility. Since provisioning is not included in "father involvement," the time spent by fathers in provisioning is invisible. The inclusion of provisioning (or not) is significant since when included as a parenting function it evens out the time spent by mothers and fathers in family responsibilities. Siltanen and Doucet (2008) state that

> Canadian statistics from the General Social Survey 1998 indicated that while women and men averaged a total of 7.2 hours a day engaged in paid and unpaid work, there was a distinct gender division of labour, with women spending an average of 2.8 hours a day on paid work and 4.4 hours on unpaid work. Men's situation, on the other hand, represented an almost perfect reversal of these numbers (p. 115).

Interestingly, two keynote speakers at the conference brought forward "provisioning" as an aspect of care that has been neglected. Scott Coltrane, Dean of the University of Oregon College of Arts and Sciences, and a long time researcher on fathering, spoke regarding the promotion of father involvement. He included provisioning in his list of fathering practices. The other items on his list were: availability, interaction, responsibility, and family labour. Andrea Doucet, in the closing keynote to the conference, also addressed this aspect of parenting. She said, "We need to begin to see... [breadwinning] again as a form of care." She argued that there are two reasons for this. One is that production and consumption are being more closely linked. The second was that women are taking on more breadwinning responsibilities. She suggested that breadwinning be added as a fourth responsibility to those of emotional, moral, and community responsibilities of parenting that she identifies in her book. Doucet referenced Pleck's advice to have one foot in the saddle at the beginning of her presentation, noting that she herself might be well advised to keep this advice in mind.

Chapter 2 showed how the construction of an identity group is generative of beliefs about the Other that are taken as truths and thereby perpetuate a conflict rather than lead the way to reconciliation. Once we see our truth in this light, we can look for evidence that 'proves' this has happened in the case of our identity group. In this chapter, we have seen that feminist conceptions of fathering have resulted in the creation of a specific perspective of men as fathers. The paradigm of generative fathering, developed by men as an alternate articulation of the experience of men as fathers, provides the evidence that we need to first notice that our truths are actually beliefs, and second, to question the rightness of these beliefs. But where do we go from there? Andrea Doucet is a feminist scholar researching fathering who is doing paradigm challenging work. I argue that her work is indicative of how a reconciliation approach could provide a way out of the impasse that has been generated by the belief in equal parenting as the "gold standard" (Doucet, 2006, p. 24) within feminist and social science research. Doucet herself identifies a number of areas where she diverges from the mainstream of equality feminist thought. The following section presents an overview of her book, *Do Men Mother?,* with particular emphasis on identifying where she pushes on the equality feminist model. In chapter 5, I will use a peace and conflict lens to analyze where her work is in alignment with a reconciliation approach and where it is not.

The Work of Andrea Doucet

Sparked by her own experience of shared parenting and by the "unsolved puzzle" of why "the connection between women and *domestic responsibility* persist[s]" (2006, p. 11), Andrea Doucet has been researching fathering for almost 20 years. She has written numerous articles on feminist epistemologies and methodologies, on gender and care and fathering and mothering, and on parental leave and father-focused policies (Doucet's website, accessed October 16, 2008). In 2006, she published *Do Men Mother?,* a book which draws its title from a "question that has often been asked, assumed, or argued in scholarship and popular thinking on men, women, and mothering" (2006, p. 218). The book presents the results of a study involving 118 primary-care fathers, and identifies three aspects of care: emotional responsibility, community responsibility, and moral responsibility. Doucet provides three key aims of her study:

> to *describe, name, and understand the care that men take on,*... to unpack the concept and issue of *responsibility/ies* for children, ... [and] finally... to speculate on what happens to men, to masculinities, and to the relations between men and women when men are centrally involved in one of the most female-dominated and feminine-defined areas of work, practice and identity" (p. 15, emphasis in original).

Doucet has been careful in her positioning of this work. In a recent article reflecting on the development of her book, she notes that her "research on fathering began with an encouragement of active fatherhood and openness to the political and personal potential of men taking on a greater share of the responsibility for children (2008, p. 81). As she proceeded with the project she became aware of "unexpected tensions in taking such an approach" (p. 81). She notes that in constructing knowledge we are working in relationship with our own and other epistemological communities. Our work can be heard and used by other epistemic communities to "promote differing knowledge claims and ultimately competing political goals" (p. 83) than that of our own community:

> The epistemology of reception that awaits any positive work on fathering is that some fathers' rights groups, particularly the most militant and anti-feminist ones, may use this information to make their case that fathers are better parents than mothers. Moreover, support for men's involvement in family life, can unwittingly turn into a completely different set of arguments; these can include, for example, arguments about essential differences between women and men or how fathers should be involved with their children, no matter what the cost to women... (p. 82).

In response to her research on fathering, Doucet received "probing and antagonistic e-mails from members of fathers' rights groups, asking [her]... about the aims of [her]... work and about [her]... relationship to feminist groups" (p. 81-82). She notes, "the barrage of letters and queries... moved me to be clear on my research aims and to publically articulate" them (p. 82). She also notes that she received "stony stares [from some feminist colleagues who were] clearly wondering how I could allow my work to by usurped by groups who are often anti-feminist or, more generally, anti-women" (2006, p. 19-20). In chapter one of *Do Men Mother?*, Doucet lays out her approach:

> Theoretically and politically, the feminist position that guides my work on fathers calls for the inclusion of men where it does not work to undermine women's own caregiving interests. That is, my feminist position on fathering is one that works toward challenging gendered asymmetries around care

> and employment, encouraging and embracing active fathering, while always remembering and valuing the long historical tradition of women's work, identities, and power in caregiving (2006, p. 30).

Doucet's work seeks to widen understandings of fathering dominant within social science research – that which holds equal participation and involvement in parenting as the gold standard. This standard emerges from a belief in gender as constructed. Even while holding equal participation as the standard for which to strive, equality feminist communities have posited that fathers' participation in parenting is unnecessary (gender is constructed – women can offer what is needed), and one in which fathers are unwilling to participate because of the loss of power they would experience. The most obvious overarching theme in Doucet's work that entails a widening of the dominant understandings in feminist research, is the approach with which Doucet began her work – the "encouragement of active fatherhood" (2008, p. 81). Dominant approaches within feminist thinking have, as noted earlier in this thesis, been determined by the interests of feminists in displacing the centrality of the father and asserting the value of mothering. That Doucet has felt compelled to position her work so carefully is evidence of its radical nature.

A further aspect of the widening of the equality framework by Doucet is that of moving away from an approach to equality and difference as dichotomous (with a concomitant focus on equality feminism as the "right" approach), toward charting a path between equality and difference. She sees a "growing consensus by feminist scholars that in certain theoretical and historical contexts, the concepts of gender equality and gender differences are highly interdependent, 'so that any adequate analysis must take account of the complex interplay between them' (Bock, 1992, 10; Bock and James, 1992; Offen, 1992)" (2006, p. 25). Specifically with regard to parenting, she notes that "many theorists have argued that the dilemma of both valuing care and challenging the conditions under which it is performed can best be addressed through a theoretical and political strategy that straddles *both* equality and difference" (2006, p. 29).

In *Do Men Mother?* Doucet brings forward three insights gleaned from her research that can inform theoretical debates on the concepts of gender equality and gender difference. The first is an analytical shift from "equality to *differences* and, moreover, from differences to *disadvantages* and to the *difference difference makes"* (2006, p. 25, emphasis in original). In this shift her work is informed by "feminist legal scholar Deborah Rhode and particularly her point that the critical issue should not be difference but the difference difference makes (p. 233). Doucet argues that "*differences do not always lead to disadvantages* and *difference does not always mean unequal"* (p. 233, italics in original). Her "belief is that gender difference, unlike dominant approaches in feminist sociology, can co-exist with equality and, indeed, what should be emphasized is gender *symmetry* rather than gender equality (p. 233, emphasis in original).

Second, Doucet "interrogates the terms on which equality is framed and then creatively envisions the potential that arises from incorporating both the traditionally feminine and masculine in our understanding of what is valuable and significant in social life" (p. 233). She argues that using a maternal lens to study fathering parallels research efforts criticized by feminist scholars: that of using a male-centred lens to study women. (She does add a caution to this on page 249, noting that "the structural backdrop that accompanies these questions is different, asymmetrical, and indeed unequal") Third, she maintains that "we

must employ different lenses and hearing aids when we study men in female-dominated domains of social life" (p. 234).

> With regard to the issue of emotional responsibility, a maternal lens misses the ways that fathers promote children's independence and risk taking, while their fun and playfulness, physicality and outdoors approach to caring for young children are viewed only as second best, or invisible, ways of caring. Similarly, in terms of growth or community responsibility, the use of a maternal lens means that we miss the creative ways that fathers are beginning to form parallel networks to those that have traditionally been developed by and existed for mothers (p. 223).

Doucet identifies several other problems associated with the use of a maternal lens to study fatherhood: (i) the maternal lens posits that there is an ideal type of mother with which to compare fathers, (ii) identity (as father) is separated from the work being done (nurturing), and (iii) the participation of other mothers who may be part of the care network are made invisible. (p. 223-224). Ultimately, she says,

> Rather than comparing fathers to mothers, we require novel ways of listening to and theorizing about fathers' approaches to parenting. More effective questions to be grappled with are ones that explore how fathers enact their parental responsibilities and ultimately how they reinvent fathering (p. 224-225).

Much social science research on fathering has focused on discovering (i) if men can "do" mothering (i.e. nurturing), or "be" mothers, and (ii) how much nurturing (i.e. mothering) men are doing. The general outcome of using this maternal lens to research fatherhood has been to show men lacking in terms of the level of nurturing that they engage in compared to mothers. Doucet notes that most studies of men who are engaged in shared parenting have "taken the position that these fathers are mothering" (p. 9). Her response to the question "Do men mother?" diverges from this position. While Doucet agrees with these scholars that men *can* mother, she argues that they *do not* mother "because the everyday social worlds, the embodied experiences of women and men, and the larger 'gender regime' (Connell, 1995, 2000) do not permit eliding of the two institutions and distinct identities" (p. 224). Furthermore, men name their activities as fathering not mothering, and she argues that they are

> actively reconstructing masculinities to include aspects of traditional feminine characteristics. Fathers' narratives... are filled with visible and inchoate contradictions, which tell how fathers are both determined to distance themselves from the feminine but are also, in practice, radically revisioning masculine care and ultimately our understandings of masculinities (p. 237).

Doucet's third point on equality and difference takes note of efforts within the workplace to simultaneously strive for equality "in social conditions set up around a male work norm while simultaneously questioning the terms under which that equality would be achieved, and thus altering those terms while still working towards them" (p. 234). She suggests that in relation to caregiving we must take a similar approach, both valuing care work and striving to change the conditions under which it occurs. "In addition to the valuing of care, we must also call for structural and ideological changes including viewing and counting housework and childcare as *work* in census data and in natural GDP accounting; the importance of universal high-quality childcare; and flexible working options for both parents (p. 235).

As noted earlier in this thesis, research on parenting has generally taken as a starting point the desirability of an "equal" division of labour. Doucet found that the goal of 50/50 parenting raised a number of concerns. First she argues that measuring an equal division of labour is problematic: "Coming up with clear definitions of equality is confounded by methodological difficulties in getting information about who does what, the ways in which housework standards are tied up with what it means to be a good mother or father, and how women may come in... at the end of their working day and take over domestic labour from their male partners" (p. 105). She maintains that the identities of motherhood and fatherhood lead to different emphases in the work undertaken by women and men. She also found that the relational aspects of caring work resulted in ambiguity about who was doing what work and when. Work can be multi-tasked with other priorities, playing with children can be seen as work or not, and different standards for what 'should' be done, can all call into question assessments of "equal" participation. Rather than focusing on measuring equal time spent in domestic tasks, Doucet argues that equality can "perhaps best [be] judged against how ones' participation in domestic life allows for personal, social, economic, and political opportunities outside the home, all of which aid in the larger struggle for women's and men's social and economic equality" (p. 233).

Doucet also argues for "widening current understandings of domestic work and responsibility" (p. 227). She argues for the inclusion of non-routine maintenance work (such as house repairs and car maintenance) and community work within conceptions of domestic labour, as areas where fathers make strong contributions. Doucet identifies, as an original contribution to the discourse, her argument for the addition of community work to domestic responsibility, "so that responsibility resides not only in domestic spaces but also between households" (p. 228).

Similarly, the stories of the sixty-six stay-at-home fathers in her study represent an expansion in our understandings of parenting and paid work. Each of these fathers has fashioned a "unique relationship between their unpaid and paid work activities" (p. 228). Doucet finds that these "stay-at-home fathers are building new models of employment and fatherhood, which represent not only changes in the institution of fatherhood but also potential shifts in relations between women and men in the social institutions of work, home, and community" (p. 229). She argues that while "women are more likely to choose part-time work while they raise children... this study demonstrates that fathers are also seeking creative alternatives to managing paid employment and caregiving" (p. 229).

Doucet put considerable effort into obtaining a diverse sample of fathers for her study. In her analysis, she "incorporate[d] insights from feminist intersectional theory in order to reflect on where and how social class, ethnicity, and sexuality can matter in caregiving" (p. 26). She notes that in parenting, "issues of intersectionality play out in varied ways, with *gender* often being the main axis of differentiation" (2006, p. 234, emphasis in original). She notes structural disadvantages experienced by fathers within ethnic minorities, "especially recently arrived immigrants" (p. 235) and the mediating effect of high income partners or community resources in middle class neighbourhoods; disadvantages based on education levels and earnings of Aboriginal fathers; and "difficulties in gaining social acceptance as caregivers... faced by gay fathers" (p. 236). Doucet notes that the experiences of "men of low income or lower social status as well as gay men highlight the constantly shifting gender borders and that the everyday spaces that men and women inhabit represent power and processes of

inclusion and exclusion" (p. 205). Overall, she finds that, "the intersections of gender, class, and sexuality can act as powerful resources for masculinity to cushion, or exacerbate in a negative way, men's active fathering roles, particularly in community settings" (p. 236). However she also notes one concern that is common to the experience of men across these differences:

> ...examples from my interviews with fathers illustrate the subtle fears that persist in community settings about close relations between men and children, particularly between men and the children of others. Such suspicions differ between rural and urban areas and seem to be more pervasive for low-income fathers and gay fathers. Nevertheless, in spite of differences between men, the gendered quality of such scrutiny cuts across class, ethnicity, and sexuality (p. 236).

Doucet's book also explored two questions regarding masculinity that are current in the literature. The first is "*do* fathers who are primary caregivers put masculinity on the line, or do they reconfigure that same line according to what is defined as masculine or feminine? Second, [she]... wanted to know whether engaged fathering confirms or challenges current theoretical understandings of masculinities" (p. 237, emphasis in original). She found that men are "actively reconstructing masculinities to include aspects of traditional feminine characteristics" (p. 237) such as those required when caring for young children. She also found that the fathering stories that she encountered in her study showed fathers who were creating new forms of masculinity through the development of:

> practices and identities of caregiving that go beyond current conceptions of masculinities and femininities and may reflect philosophical and political concepts of self, identity, and subjectivity that embrace varied degrees of dependence, independence, and interdependence as well as varied versions of 'relational autonomy' (Friedman, 1993, 2000) (p. 239).

Doucet states that,

> Whereas dominant approaches in this field of study assume that men and women are interchangeable disembodied subjects within and between households, my work emphasizes that fathers and mothers are embodied subjects who move through domestic and community spaces with inter-subjective, relational, moral, and normative dimensions framing these movements (p. 239).

She notes that both fathers and mothers referred to how their embodiment as men or women affected their expectations around parenting. The differences begin with women's experience of pregnancy, birth, and breastfeeding, and continue with men's more active style of parenting, and the 'social gaze' felt by men. Doucet did not begin with embodiment as an area of active inquiry, but it demanded her attention: she was "astounded... [by] the *weight of embodiment* in fathers' narratives" (p. 239, emphasis in original). While acknowledging the importance of one's embodiment in terms of gender, Doucet found in her research that "there are contexts – times and spaces – when, indeed, embodiment does matter a great deal and there are other contexts where it is negligible or inconsequential" (p. 239).

Maternal gatekeeping is a term that has been coined in a growing body of literature that "explores and explains how some mothers, in and outside marriage, demonstrate ambivalence about highly involved fathering. They may thus act as gatekeepers in order to mediate and control paternal involvement" (p. 229). There are three dimensions that have been identified as gatekeeping behaviours: (i) mothers setting rigid standards for housework and/or childcare, (ii) gender differentiation in parenting, and finally, (iii) mothers holding a

unique mothering identity (p. 230). Doucet found that while the first two gatekeeping behaviours noted above were less significant to her research participants, the mothers in her study did "hold on to a special mothering identity...this is a moral identity, which encompasses how women and men feel they *should* act in society. It also relates to the symbolic power of mothering, which is something the majority of men and women refer to" (p. 230). She notes that a "unique finding from this research... [is that maternal gatekeeping] also occurs in *communities,* between mothers and *other* fathers ...[perhaps in places where] male embodiment is viewed as intrusive or threatening, either to women or children" (p. 231-2). Doucet wonders whether,

> ...there [is] any relation between women's sense of responsibility as expressed by a need to protect children and the extreme gender-differentiated experiences of women and men regarding issues of violence and sexual abuse? Could it be that there is a symbolic relationship between women's maternal gatekeeping and a larger societal fear that hovers around the history of male violence and sexual abuse? (p. 232).

Her final insight in this area is that while maternal gatekeeping can take the form of blocking men's parenting participation, it is also women

> ...who lead in taking down [the]... gender border, or opening the gate, so that men can also participate fully in parenting. This idea of opening and closing borders or gates provides for a more dynamic concept of maternal gatekeeping an the recognition that while it may occur in particular spaces and times, it does shift and change and even disappear (p. 232).

Finally, Doucet notes moral transformations that occur in both women and men when fathers "are actively involved in caring for their children" (p. 241).

> Specifically, three key ways in which this happens [for fathers] are personal generative changes...; their recognition of the value and difficulty of caregiving work; and their commitment to join women in the sharing of work-family responsibilities. In addition to these changes, one of the most radical points emerging from this study relates to the work's political implications and to the potential role of men in the social recognition and valuing of unpaid work (p. 241).

The moral identity of mothers can also begin to widen to "embrace more masculine aspects and women, like men, thus move between masculinities and femininities" (p. 243). She found that some women noted ways that they have learned from the more relaxed styles of their male partners. In the words of one mother: "For a woman it's a lot of work to stay at home because she creates a lot of work. And men, when they stay at home, they don't create work. They create fun and play, and then when they have to work, they get down to it and they work. And they don't do the whole stress trip" (p. 243).

Doucet's research leads her to believe that "change and evolution must be built into our understandings of parenting domestic life" (p. 244). She argues that this is an important issue because "there is a tendency... for observers of domestic life, to overemphasize gender differences in parenting and to downplay gender similarities. ... [in the] interviews... men and women vascillated on who took on emotional and community responsibilities, in what contexts, and at which times" (p. 244). Doucet sees this vacillation as a conflict between

ideological beliefs that people hold about what mothers and fathers should do, and what is actually happening in practice. She says,

> Ideologies about gender and parenting act in taken-for-granted ways, much like 'the "spontaneous" quality of common sense' with its transparency its 'naturalness,' its refusal to examine the premises on which it is grounded' (Purvis & Hunt, 1993, 479). In spite of the power of ideology, the stories told throughout this book reveal the potential elasticity of gendered agency in dominant social structures and the promise of greater opportunities for women and men to make choices based on inclinations, skills, interests, and lifestyle issues rather than on the dictates of gender (p. 244).

Doucet can be seen to be making a critical contribution to moving the discourse on fathering forward within an equality feminist perspective. She notes that, while her intention in her work was "to simultaneously investigate the stubborn link between women and domestic responsibility and to encourage fathers' unpaid caregiving work, [she] was always vaguely aware of the alarming political and theoretical traps that may await feminist research on fathering" (p. 20). I contend that one aspect of these "political and theoretical traps" can be explained by identity theory. The expression of interests on behalf of an identity group leads to the creation of paradigmatic beliefs that are perceived as "truths." Thus, challenging these beliefs – for instance by researching men who are "stepping up to the plate" as fathers, and who are doing it differently than mothers – can be perceived as problematic by others within the group.

Conclusion

This chapter drew on identity conflict theory to structure the presentation and analysis of stakeholder groups within fathering discourses in North America. Emphasis has been placed on the beliefs and interests of the equality feminist community and the profeminist fathering community, as these two groups will form the core of the analysis in the next chapter. Viewing the feminist paradigm on fatherhood through a conflict theory lens allows us to see how this paradigm brought to light truths about fathers, and also created truths about fathers. These "truths" have identified issues important to feminists about family roles held by men and women. It is a contention of this thesis that the challenges and potential for the development of a feminist reconciliation-focused model for researching fathering can be illuminated through the use of the insights of reconciliation scholars. This contention will be developed in chapter Five.

Chapter 5: The Challenges and Potential for Uptake of a Reconciliation-focused Feminist Model for Researching Fathering

As discussed in chapter 2, peace and conflict theory scholars identify a reconciliation approach as necessary to the successful resolution of an intractable identity-based conflict. Chapter 3 showed the equality feminist communities to be involved in an identity-based conflict between epistemological communities. Chapter 4 narrowed the focus to analyze the interests and beliefs of the conflict stakeholders related to fathering research. Now, in chapter 5, the primary focus will be on the equality feminist communities and the profeminist fathering communities. While acknowledging changes required in both groups, this chapter focuses on equality feminist communities. First, I consider the challenges if alignment with a reconciliation approach to the conflict is to be pursued. A framework is presented for analyzing the interests and beliefs of the stakeholders in terms of the focus (or not) on reconciliation. The conflict is then further scrutinized with respect to the four reconciliation themes identified in chapter 2. This analysis illustrates the challenges to the prioritized interests and beliefs of the equality feminist communities to achieve a sustainable resolution based on reconciliation principles. Second, the potential for the uptake of a reconciliation-focused feminist model for researching fathering is explored. It is a contention of this thesis that there *is* movement within equality feminist thought in the direction of reconciliation, and that the work of Doucet illustrates this movement. A review of Doucet's work shows both (i) that reconciliation theory is relevant to the fathering discourse, and (ii) that Doucet's work does point toward a reconciliation approach. As well as showing positive movement toward a reconciliation focus, this chapter also demonstrates where there is a lack of alignment with reconciliation theory within equality feminist thinking.

The Challenges of a Feminist Reconciliation-focused Model for Researching Fathering

In this section, a framework for analyzing the epistemological conflict between equality feminist communities and profeminist fathering communities is presented. The framework then provides the basis for the application of the reconciliation themes to the conflict. The result is an articulation of the challenges with which equality feminist communities would have to grapple in order to move toward a feminist reconciliation-focused model for researching fathering. These challenges are worth engaging, as a focus on reconciliation among epistemic communities researching fathering has the potential to generate significant positive impacts for a vulnerable group (children) who are currently negatively impacted by this epistemological conflict.

The Analytical Framework

This section presents an analysis, through a reconciliation lens, of the respective foci of the knowledge production activities of the equality feminist communities and the profeminist fathering communities. (The interests of the men's rights movement are also highlighted to a degree). Such an analysis makes it possible to examine how the identity-based interests of the stakeholders lead them to establish oppositional positions with regard to each others' interests. The conflict between epistemological communities being analyzed in this thesis can be presented in a diagram form. A two by two matrix provides the analytical structure to

look at the beliefs held by the researchers about mothers and fathers. In this matrix I have positioned "research on mothers" and "research on fathers" across the top, and "deficit parenting" and "generative parenting" down the side (Figure 2). The resulting quadrants can be labeled quadrants one to four starting from the top row and moving from left to right.

As discussed in chapter two, identity theory suggests that the mobilization of an identity group necessarily involves the prioritization of interests. In chapter four, it was shown that for equality feminists, these interests were positioned in opposition to patriarchal conceptions of the relationship between women and men, and specifically, for the purposes of this project, mothers and fathers. Two primary interests were (i) to displace the centrality of the father, and (ii) to assert the value of mothering. These two interests led to two identity-based beliefs: one being that fathers are unwilling and unmotivated to take on an equal share of parenting responsibilities, (the father as deficit), and the second being that mothering represents the idealized standard for nurturing (maternal lens as the standard measure of generative parenting). These interests and beliefs have dominated the focus of much of the feminist research done on fathering within the social sciences. Two guiding research foci of the equality feminist community can now be represented in the top right hand quadrant (Quad 2) and the lower left hand quadrant (Quad 3) of the diagram.

Figure 2:

	Research on Mothers	**Research on Fathers**
Deficit parenting	**Quad 1**	**Quad 2** Father as deficit *(equality feminist)*
Generative parenting	**Quad 3** Maternal lens as the standard measure *(equality feminist)*	**Quad 4**

When an identity group, such as the equality feminist communities, forms to fight for social justice, the group's focus is on rebutting the hegemonic beliefs that oppress their group. That rebuttal may be experienced by group members as the whole story. But Figure 2 makes visible what was previously invisible from the standpoint of the interests and beliefs of the identity group: that the stories of the oppression of women (Quads 2 and 3) do *not* comprise all the stories to be told. Two quadrants (Quads 1 and 4) are ignored in the stories of oppression. Research that fits into these two quadrants will be identified as outside the beliefs of the group, or worse, as aligned with opposing groups. Therefore such research is experienced as outside the "truths" known to the group seeking social justice and may even be said, by members of the group, to be "against" the group. (It could more accurately be

said that this research would be contrary to the prioritized interests of the mobilized portion of the identity group). The oppressed group may through its efforts gain the hegemonic power within a society to define the issues that exist between the groups in conflict. If this happens, the refusal to acknowledge the parts of the story (Quads 1 and 4) which are not in the interests of the oppressed identity group provide the opening for the "new oppressions" referred to by de Vries (chapter 2) which can "emerge from the struggle itself" (1997, p. 2).

The two quadrants that are neglected in the expression of feminist interests are: quadrant 1, which speaks to the ways that mothers can be deficient in their parenting, and quadrant 4, which speaks to the ways that fathers engage actively with fathering. Research and activism from the men's movements have filled in the gaps in quadrants 1 and 4. As detailed in chapters three and four, the men's movement emerged in the 1970's in response to the second wave feminist movement. Their first response was to engage with the women's movement to end the oppression of women. In so doing, they realized and began to articulate the ways that men are oppressed in patriarchal society. Over time, the men's movement split into two main groups along these lines: the profeminist men's movement, and the men's rights movement. The profeminist men's movement has aligned itself with feminist articulations of women's oppression, and has also been the source of research to show how men want to engage in fathering work that is generative in nature. The men's rights movement has taken a more reactive stance, feeling unjustly attacked by feminist analyses of gender issues. The men's rights movement has worked to show the places and ways that women can be seen to be in a deficit position in terms of their mothering. Both men's movements have worked to show how fathers want to engage, and are engaged, in fathering work. While the profeminist men's movement has focused primarily on father involvement, the men's rights movement has also highlighted the "breadwinner" role as a parenting function.

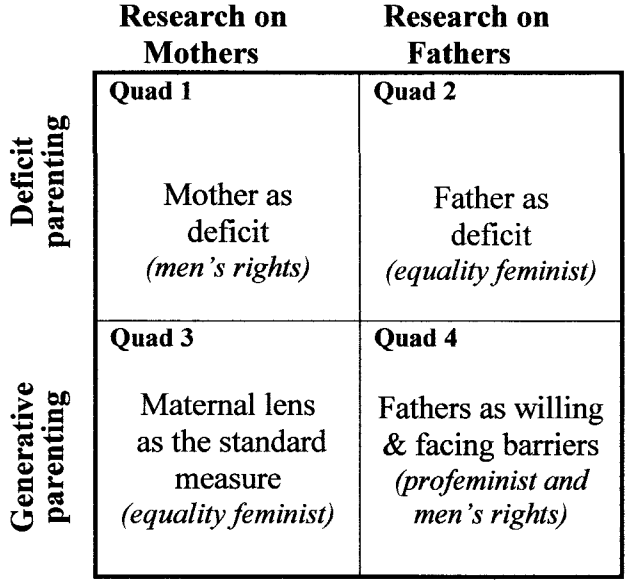
Activists within the profeminist fathering communities have worked for funding for father involvement programs in Canada (funding for programs such as anger management for "deficit" fathers has long been in place). For many years FI-ON experienced problems with getting funding for research and development of material and programs on "involved fathering" (Quad 4). In a climate where mothering was considered the standard for nurturing, programs for fathers were viewed as either unnecessary or potentially anti-women. This tendency is visible in the following quote by Dienhart and Daly in their article in *Generative Fathering:*

> Feminist writers have made reference to the 'cult of maternalism' (Duffy, 1988) or the fantasy of the perfect mother' (Chodorow & Contratto, 1982), which emphasize the ideological exaltation of mothers as indispensible, natural, and necessary. There are two corollaries of this perspective. First, mothers are the target of blame when trouble arises in the family. Second, fathers are seen as dispensable, unnatural, and unnecessary. Underlying these perceptions is the cultural expectation that mothers should be fully committed and devoted to their children whereas fathers are incapable or even dangerous if given too much responsibility for carrying out these tasks, for which they are ill equipped. Overall, the domination of mothers in the domestic sphere is well embedded in our ideology of families (1997, p. 150).

The work done by profeminist men's movement activists is beginning to bear fruit as the number of supportive programs for involved fathers has grown over the past five years at a exponential rate.

If we go back to our diagram (Figure 3), we now can fill in quadrants 1 and 4. Quadrant 1 represents the potential for mothers to be deficit in their parenting and has been addressed through the expression of the identity interests of the men's rights movement. Quadrant 4 represents the potential for fathers to be willing to engage in active parenting while facing barriers. The concerns within this quadrant have been addressed by both the men's rights and the profeminist fathering communities.

Figure 3:

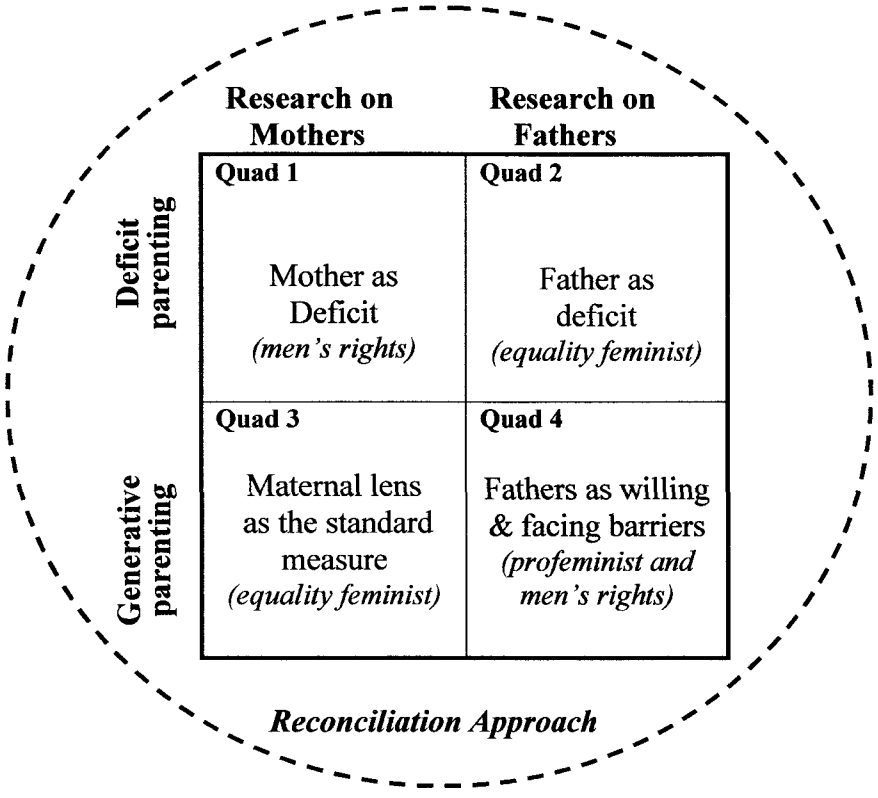


The use of identity-based conflict theory to analyze the situation (as presented in figure 3) makes visible a conflict that was not visible previously. The identity-based interests of the equality feminist communities have led to particular beliefs and from those beliefs, particular research foci. Feminist theorists were able to tell a story that could seem complete in itself. That story was one of the oppression of women, and the unwillingness of men to give up patriarchal power. Now we can add to this story other points of view that represent the interests and beliefs of other parties to the conflict. It is only through engagement with all the interests and beliefs of all the stakeholders that reconciliation can be achieved.

FIRA and FI-ON represent the profeminist fathering communities, who have tried to avoid the conflict through an exclusive focus on quadrant 4. They have also focused on one aspect of active parenting by fathers: involvement in the care and nurturing of children. They describe the father involvement movement as having a "focus on human development – how families, children, mothers and fathers themselves are positively affected by increased responsible father involvement" (Hoffman, p. 3). They do not focus on the political ramifications, are careful in their positioning of fathering in respect to mothering, and have not included the "breadwinner" role in their discussions of father involvement.

Once one goes beyond the identity-based beliefs with which the parties to the conflict are concerned, to bring to light the concerns of the other parties to the conflict, a more complete picture emerges. Hence, it can be said that a reconciliation approach would address all four quadrants of the framework (Figure 4).

Figure 4:



In the next section, I apply the four reconciliation themes identified in chapter 2 to give us further insight into where the prioritized interests and beliefs of the equality feminist communities are supported and where they are challenged by reconciliation theory.

Applying the Reconciliation Themes

In chapter 2, four reconciliation themes were identified as emerging from the work of four prominent reconciliation scholars. These themes provide us with four principle orientations for a reconciliation approach to an identity-based conflict. The themes relate to our relationship to ourselves (willingness to change and grow), our relationship to the Other (acknowledgement of interdependency), our relationship to the future (transformation of goals) and our relationship to the past (creation of shared stories). Below, these themes are employed to scrutinize the epistemological conflict between the equality feminist communities and the men's fathering communities. The focus of this analysis is an exploration of the challenges for the development of a feminist reconciliation-focused model for researching fathering. What becomes visible in this analysis is the gap between the principles of a reconciliation approach and the identity-based interests and beliefs articulated by the equality feminist communities. A second gap that becomes visible is that between the equality feminist interests and beliefs, and feminist epistemology.

Willingness to Change and Grow

The first reconciliation theme is the willingness to change and grow. Our analytical framework (Figure 4) demonstrates how identity-based interests and beliefs reinforce competing views within the feminist and profeminist fathering communities that do not support growth and change. Within the current situation, each side needs to defend its story

in order to defend its interests and beliefs. The equality feminist communities have framed the issues to support their interest in displacing the centrality of the father and to assert the value of mothering (Quads 2 and 3). Because feminist thinking has a certain hegemonic power in relation to the discussion of gender issues and specifically parenting, the profeminist fathering communities have been very careful in their framing of the issues, working to assert only the capacity of men to undertake generative parenting and the barriers that they face in doing so (Quad 4). That the very concept of "involved fathering" uses a maternal lens is only beginning to be challenged. Identity theory points out how the creation of these stories standardizes and narrows the "allowable" beliefs and the prioritized interests among each group, and in turn leads to the marginalization of potential group members, as well as the creation of an identified Other(s). Reconciliation on the other hand requires an openness to ongoing opportunities for meaning creation, and a willingness for "inquiring beyond the worlds we know" (LeBaron, p. 291). It is when we begin to work across the boundaries of what we think we know to be true that we create new "uncertainties". Letting go of knowing in favour of being uncertain allows a space for new knowledge to grow – knowledge that can respond to several or all of the prioritized interests and beliefs of the various groups involved in the conflict.

As outlined in chapter 3, the equality feminist communities have grown beyond their early need for a common story of 'the oppression of women by men.' This has happened through a process of challenge within feminism by women who have been marginalized by dominant feminist paradigms. In this process, we have acknowledged aspects of power that are involved in the generation of knowledge. Equality feminism is both the product of a specific space and time, and one of a number of forces that have significantly changed that space and time. In the current social context, there is the opportunity for equality feminists to examine gender issues through a reconciliation lens. What is required for reconciliation is a willingness to expand beyond the past articulation of interests and beliefs that addressed only the oppression of women. A feminist reconciliation-focused model for researching fathering would require that we address all four quadrants of the matrix – including our own deficits and the generativity of the Other (Figure 4, Quads 1 and 4). Addressing all four quadrants requires engaging with the Other(s) in orders to tell (and hear) the stories of all the stakeholders to the conflict.

Acknowledgement of Interdependency

Figure 4 also reveals issues relating to the second reconciliation theme, the acknowledgement of interdependency. The equality feminist communities have focused on quadrants 2 and 3, while the profeminist fathering communities have focused on quadrant 4. The focus within feminist research on the mother as the ideal or standard measure for nurturing and the father as deficit actually reinforces the status quo of the conflict rather than leading to new understandings of interdependency as is needed for reconciliation.

A starting point for feminist knowledge production has been the belief that the benefits that men experience in a patriarchal system must be challenged in order for equality to be achieved. It has been assumed that fathers are unwilling to give up the privileges that they have in a patriarchal system in order to be "equal parents." In reconciliation terms, this would be described as a win-lose articulation of the conflict (Galtung, 2004). In contrast to this articulation, Rothman suggests:

> ... the parties must learn to appreciate the gains of reaching an agreement; they must begin to look at their conflict in common terms, articulating shared concerns and aspirations; all sides must appreciate the advantage of reaching an agreement that the others find fair and equitable; and finally, the parties must feel comfortable with the climate for negotiations that will result in mutual gains (Rothman, 1997, p. 15).

Taylor notes, "Ideally feminist inquiry has a policy component that benefits a particular group of women and aims to reduce gender inequality" (p. 372). Within the feminist research approach visible in this quote, a lack of gender equality is *assumed* to mean inequality toward women. With this as a starting point there is very little opportunity to explore any potential inequality toward men. Here is an example of the "background assumptions [of an epistemological community]... that influence research directions" (Tatman, p. 144) referred to by Longino. Work that does explore inequality toward men (through an articulation of Quadrants 1 and 4, or a critique of Quadrants 2 and 3) is suspect, and potentially anti-feminist (as is articulated in Messner critique of the men's rights movement), rather than as illuminating another aspect of the conflict that *must* be explored for reconciliation to occur.

As described in chapter three, Caroline New has identified four features of men's oppression that she sees as "aspects of men's structural positioning" (p. 741) within a patriarchal society and as "genuinely oppressive to *men*" (p. 741, emphasis in original). She suggests that resistance to seeing men as oppressed emerges from the zero-sum notion of oppression noted by Galtung above. Because the oppressions that men experience has been invisible when looking through a feminist lens, equality feminist knowledge production has not focused on ways that women's oppression and men's oppression may be interconnected, and therefore the ways that women's liberation may be related to men's liberation. Moving to a belief in the oppression of both women and men within a patriarchal system, as advocated by New, allows women and men to see the interdependency of their situation.

Transformation of Goals

We can also look at Figure 3 in terms of the need for the transformation of goals. Equality feminist goals have focused on asserting the value of the mother (Quadrant 3) and displacing the centrality of the father (Quadrant 2). These goals do not respond to all the issues of the conflict that are revealed in Figure 3. In order for members of an identity group to claim an unbiased approach to knowledge production (as advocated by the feminist epistemologists reviewed in chapter three) they would have to incorporate all four quadrants of the matrix, rather than focus on the ones that support the identity-based interests of their group only. The work of the reconciliation theorists presented in this thesis affirm that "all conflict is relational" (LeBaron, p. 114), and "that the disputants are in the conflict together, and they have to get out of it together" (Rothman, p. 55). An understanding of their interdependency leads the parties to the conflict to move from trying to defend their identity-based interests, to designing goals that are mutually beneficial. Equality feminist theorists have posited that men are unwilling or unable to give up patriarchal power in order

to engage in involved fathering. An alternative feminist view that is more aligned with a reconciliation approach can been seen in the work of Caroline New:

> ... while men are in general tremendously advantaged relative to women, there are respects in which the current gender order does not meet their human needs. The costs men pay are substantial and produce latent emancipatory interests in its transformation (2001, p. 737).
>
> It is in men's *conservative* interests to maintain a gender order that meets some of their human needs -- although sometimes in very costly ways. But it is in their *emancipatory* interests to create an order that meets their needs better, without accompanying limitation and injury, and also meets the needs of others, because of the human natural capacity for empathy and identification which is crucial to social life (2001, p. 744).

Gottfried provides further insight into the need for equality feminists to examine their goals in order to move toward reconciliation: "Feminism as method sees the representation of women's experience as the beginning and often the end of the production of knowledge claims" (Gottfried, as quoted in Taylor,1998, p. 358). This focus on documenting women's experience has been necessary and invaluable in a research environment where women's experiences have been underrepresented or even ignored. However, in the area of research on parenting this is not the case. Women's experience, and equality feminist articulation of this experience, is the most usual starting point for social science research on fathering. There are scholars from the equality feminist communities, such as New, who are acknowledging the interconnection of the plights of women and men. The work of feminist epistemologists reminds us that "every inquiry, assumption, and discovery... [must be] analyzed for its place in and implications for the prevailing sex/gender system" (Code, p. 31). Ultimately women, men and (although not dealt with in this thesis) transgender people, require goals that align our interests with each other if gender issues are to be addressed in constructively. Berila et al. provides one commentary on this shift.

> ... a complex analysis of why identity formations shift at particular historical moments moves us beyond the notion that who takes out the trash and who cooks are socially constructed gender roles, to much more foundational analyses of the very core of what we understand male/female to be. If the gender binary itself is socially constructed, then we can trouble the very foundations through which we understand all genders and develop a more well-rounded comprehension of the violence to which individuals are subjected if they do not neatly conform. ... thus there doesn't have to be an either/or: Women's Studies or Gender Studies, a focus on women or a focus on men; something can be gained from complex considerations of relationality (2005, p. 36).

Creation of Shared Stories

Figure 4 illustrates that the equality feminist communities and the profeminist fathering communities have significant differences in their articulation of the issues. In the ARIA framework of Jay Rothman presented in chapter 2, parties to the conflict first surface the differences that they have, then they begin to learn to reframe their articulation of the issues from "blame and victimhood to respective responsibility and volition" (1997, p. 40). They undertake to find common ground, and to begin to understand the experience of the Other. Rothman notes that the "shift from projecting one's own darker sides onto adversaries to

acknowledging such attributes in oneself... can lead to profound self-awareness and ownership" (p. 40). He also argues,

> Conflict arises from a mismatch of words and deeds, which is itself rooted in lack of clarity. It is not that people intentionally deceive themselves or lack integrity when engaged in conflict; rather, their own tacit assumptions usually remain just that- tacit, unarticulated, and unexamined. Deep conflict, if it is to be transformed and made creative, requires a profound clarity of thought and action; forging and integration of thought and action is one of the gifts of successful conflict engagement and may be profoundly transforming (1997, p. 18).

According to Caroline New, equality feminists have created a story of gender relations that relies on zero-sum thinking:

> This notion of interests as given by outcomes is central to the zero-sum conception of oppression. In this view, the advantaged always have interests in keeping their power and privilege, and the disadvantaged always have interests in gaining it. The gender order is thus seen as the ongoing creation of men (p. 735).

In this story, women are the victims and men the perpetrators of women's oppression. With this starting point, there is little room for the creation of shared stories. However, there is also feminist research that supports the creation of shared stories. Moradi's model of gender-related identity development suggests that women can reach a fourth stage of integrating a positive view of womanhood into their identity "without undue dependence of either sexist societal norms or the antithetical positions of the women's movement" (p. 227). And Tetreault proposes a similar sequence of development for women's studies that has as its final stage "'multifocal, relational scholarship' that provides a 'gender-balanced perspective... which serves to fuse women's and men's experiences into a holistic view of human experience'" (in Berila et al, p. 34). bell hooks argues that feminism must address the gender-based oppressions that boys and men face (Quads 1 and 4), further noting that "women are shockingly violent toward children. This fact should lead everyone to question any theory of gender differences that suggests that women are less violent than men" (p. 63-64). Presser argues that feminist researchers expose the marginalization of female violent offenders and should do the same with male offenders. And finally, hooks maintains,

> We need to highlight the role women play in perpetuating and sustaining patriarchal culture so that we will recognize patriarchy as a system women and men support equally, even if men receive more rewards from that system. Dismantling and changing patriarchal culture is work that men and women must do together. (2001, p. 24).

The work of the feminist epistemologists reviewed in this thesis also shed some light on the epistemological challenges and potential for equality feminists to participate in the creation of shared stories. The first is to use the understanding that feminist epistemologists have articulated: that knowledge and power are connected, and that, far from being objective, "research is legitimized by the community and speaks into the discursive space that is prepared for it" (Code, p. 31). Shifting from a belief in the truth of our oppression, to a belief in a created reality, allows us to be open to a reexamination of our judgments about the Other. Longino identifies four criteria necessary to such a reexamination, or as she puts it, "transformative... critical discourse" (p. 112). These criteria include: criticism of evidence, methods, and assumptions; tolerance of, and change in response to dissent; recognized standards for appeal; and equality of intellectual authority.

LeBaron notes that a symbolic dimension of conflict remains "outside our analytical reach – it invokes our identities and ways of making sense of the world when they collide with the identities and meaning of others" (2003, p. 114). Over time, the "ways of making sense of the world" of each of the parties to the conflict become more entrenched and correspondingly more difficult to resolve. Reconciliation requires "surmounting perceptions of the other as misguided, less capable, less able to access 'common sense' or even evil" (2003, p. 114). A reconciliation approach would entail addressing equality feminist understandings of fathers as unnecessary, absent, abusive, and deficit.

This thesis seeks to present new insights regarding feminist theory through the use of a reconciliation lens. For this reason, and to contain the scope of this Masters level thesis, the work of the profeminist fathering communities has not been examined to the same level of detail as that of the equality feminist communities. The next step (beyond this project) would involve the design of a reconciliation model. At that point it would be essential to bring a parallel degree of detail to an examination of the profeminist fathering communities, as well as the other stakeholders in the conflict.

This section presented an analytical framework for understanding the epistemological conflict being investigated in this thesis and identified neglected areas of knowledge production in terms of a reconciliation-focused approach. Building on this framework, I then explored the conflict in light of four themes characteristic of a reconciliation-focused approach to conflict (first presented in chapter 2). These themes were used to deepen our understanding of what shifts in thought might be necessary for alignment with a reconciliation approach to this conflict. It was also noted that the work of a number of feminist epistemologists and some feminist researchers do align with such an approach. The next section of the chapter explores the potential for the uptake of a reconciliation-focused feminist model for researching fathering among feminist researchers.

The Potential for the Uptake of a Reconciliation-Focused Feminist Model for Researching Fathers

bell hooks (2004) notes that there are both women and men who are "seeking salvation, seeking wholeness, daring to be radical and revolutionary" but she adds "for the most part the great majority of folk are still uncertain about taking the path that will end gender warfare and make love possible" (p. 184). This thesis is explicitly exploring that path. How likely is a movement among feminist researchers from a focus on "the representation of women's experience as the beginning and often the end of the production of knowledge claims" (Gottfried, as quoted in Taylor, 1998, p. 358), toward the use of a research model that seeks to end gender warfare?

Conflict theory would predict resistance to a reconciliation approach among the parties to an entrenched identity-based conflict. This is because reconciliation challenges the precepts of the conflict itself as well as the incentive structure underpinning gendered conflicts. The conflict emerged out of issues that the parties could not or would not face and resolve. It has also led the parties to the conflict to become entrenched in a definition of their interests and beliefs as opposed to each other. To move beyond this oppositional framing of the conflict

to a framing in which the story of the conflict is jointly defined, and in which the interdependency of the parties is acknowledged, is necessary for reconciliation. Those within the identity group who do reach toward reconciliation are often perceived to be betraying the cause and risk having their status as knowledge producers within the epistemological community "revoked". However in every conflict there are people on each side working for resolution. Whether these peace workers are perceived by their group as inside the discourse or outside the discourse reveals significant information about how likely the identity group as a whole is to be open to a model that seeks reconciliation.

At the beginning of the 21st century we can see a number of forces combining to create cracks in the late second wave epistemological paradigm that asserted the oppression of women by men as the foundational oppression. As outlined in chapter 3, debates within what once was called the 'feminist community' have resulted in an acknowledgement of many 'feminist communities' with a wide range of attitudes and approaches to gender issues and what constitutes the goals of feminism. 'Intersectionality' and 'multiple centers of power' have taken over as core concepts in academic research on gender issues.

Siltanen and Doucet note that currently "there is considerable consensus on the need to consider other aspects of oppression and disadvantage when researching the experience and structure of gender inequality..." (2008, p. 176). They bring forward the work of Creese and Stasiulis (1996) who "outlined the importance of a multi-dimensional approach to inequality with no presumption of the relative importance or particular configuration of any dimension" (2008, p. 177). Siltanen and Doucet comment,

> While some people have difficulty accepting that we may need to regard the importance of gender as a question for analysis rather than an assumption of it, we must recognize that such a situation reflects any number of historical and specific conditions – including the successes of feminist political campaigns and the profoundly negative realities of other forms of oppression and discrimination (p. 179).

It has also become common understanding within feminist academic writing that men can be oppressed in terms of race or religion, sexual orientation, or physical ability among other dimensions. This has opened a door for the exploration of the oppression of men in terms of gender relations. Several scholars who have pursued this idea were presented in chapter 3. One of these scholars, Caroline New, has identified four features of men's oppression "as aspects of men's structural positioning and as genuinely oppressive to *men*" (2001, p. 741, emphasis in original). There are also indications of a willingness to explore women as oppressors in terms of gender. In a 2005 article, Pressor argues that feminist researchers treat female and male research subjects differently. She maintains that researchers studying violent male offenders should (as they do for violent female offenders), "expose the marginalization of those violent male subjects who speak to us" (p. 2068). And bell hooks calls attention to a similar double standard in noting,

> the violence women enact with children, especially with boys... women are shockingly violent toward children. This fact should lead everyone to question any theory of gender differences that suggests that women are less violent than men" (hooks, 2004, p. 63-64)

These feminist scholars are diverging from the second wave model of women oppressed by men. They are generating complex articulations of how power is exercised in gender

relations. These voices would have been much more difficult to find "thirty-five years ago [among the] feminist theorists and researchers focused on family [who] might have gathered in one room excited to find others who saw the world in the same way" (Walker, p. 990). Their presence in feminist discourses indicates the possibility that feminist researchers are already primed to seriously consider the benefits of a reconciliation-focused feminist model for researching fathering. The range of acceptable ideas is widening within equality feminist communities. As Walker states, "It is no longer... we (i.e. unitary feminist voice) and them (i.e. hostile and uninformed others)... we have developed a variety of theories and practices and simultaneously created healthy disagreements among us" (p. 990). This widening creates a space for reconciliation to be put on the agenda. That reconciliation theory is more commonly used to address violent ethnic and religious conflict should not make it irrelevant to feminists. Indeed, that it can be applied in situations such as post-genocide or post-war peace building suggests that feminists should take seriously the possibility for "peace" in this entrenched conflict, rather than focusing on the difficulties of such an approach.

The overview above has noted a potential space within feminist discourses for a reconciliation- focused approach to researching fathering. However, this thesis make claims that extend beyond the existence of a potential space for a reconciliation approach, to asserting that such an approach is visible now within the discourses of feminists who are undertaking research on fathering. One example can be found in the work of Andrea Doucet, a feminist researcher whose book *Do Men Mother?* was presented in chapter 4.

Analysis of Doucet's Work from a Reconciliation Perspective

A review of *Do Men Mother?,* an academic work by Andrea Doucet, was presented in chapter 4. Doucet is a feminist scholar who received her PhD from Cambridge, and is a professor in the Department of Anthropology and Sociology at Carleton University. She is prominent within the field of fathering research in Canada, having played a key role in the FIRA[6] research project, co-leading one of the seven research clusters. She also gave the final keynote address at the fifth and last FIRA conference in 2008. While she diverges in various places and ways from the mainstream social science model for researching fathering, her work is clearly well received within these communities.

I have suggested that an analysis of Doucet's work can show that (i) reconciliation theory is relevant to the fathering discourse, and that (ii) Doucet's work points toward a reconciliation approach. Analyzing the work of one feminist scholar to understand the areas of alignment with, and divergence from, a reconciliation approach does not represent a test. However it does provide a plausibility probe. That Doucet is a prominent researcher within feminist fathering research in Canada, indicates that the outcome of this analysis is not idiosyncratic, but can provide an indication of trends in feminist research.

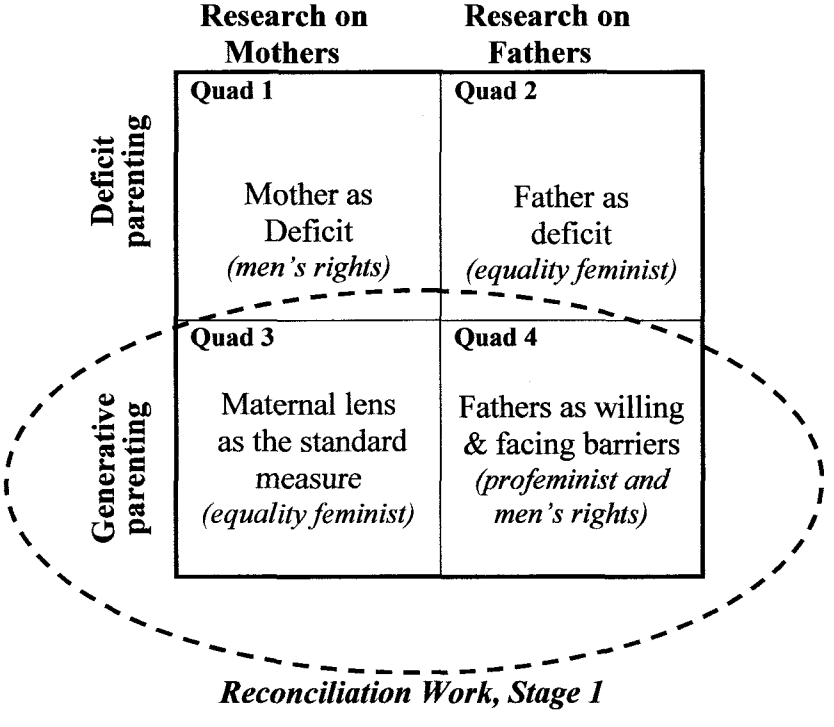
The review of Doucet's work found in chapter 4 was presented with a particular emphasis on areas of divergence from the mainstream of feminist research on fathering. Since the mainstream feminist approach to researching fathering promotes "equal" involvement in

[6] As described in chapter 4, FIRA was a five year long research project funded through a Community-University Research Alliance (CURA) grant from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada. The project included eight universities and 25 community organizations.

parenting as the gold standard (and identifies men as not stepping up to the plate in terms of this "equal" participation), these areas of divergence are likely sites to discover an approach to the issues that points toward reconciliation. First, I will go back to the analytical framework presented in chapter 4 to assess where Doucet's work falls in terms of the identified quadrants. Second, I will assess Doucet's work in terms of the reconciliation themes that are characteristic of a reconciliation approach.

Returning to the analytical framework presented in chapter 4 (Figure 5, below), we see two identity-based foci to feminist research on fathering. The first is the use of a maternal lens as the idealized standard to define caregiving work (Quad 3) as well as showing the father as deficit in fulfilling the expectation of equal involvement in parenting (Quad 2). The profeminist fathering communities have focused on fathers as willing to undertake generative work but facing barriers (Quad 4). Doucet's work reaches across the boundary between the interests of the equality feminist and profeminist fathering research communities to examine the ways that both mothers and fathers are generative as parents (Quads 3 and 4). *Do Men Mother?* examines the generative parenting of fathers. She explicitly addresses the political issues that emerge in undertaking this work, noting reactions from both men's rights activists and feminists. She does not focus in her research on the "deficit father" of quadrant 2 or the "deficit mother" of quadrant 1. In Figure 5, I identify this focus on quadrants 3 and 4 as a first stage of reconciliation work. Bringing quadrants 3 and 4 together transcends the boundaries of the identity-based conflict being examined in this thesis. However, this shift is not sufficient to exemplify a reconciliation

Figure 5:



approach to the conflict. As was demonstrated in chapter 4, a reconciliation-focused approach to researching fathering would address the concerns of all four of the identity-based beliefs presented on the matrix. This includes being willing to address the deficits of

"our" group. Doucet does not focus in this area, yet her work represents a great step forward, and points toward a reconciliation approach in researching fathering from a feminist perspective.

I would now like to examine Doucet's work as presented in *Do Men Mother?* in terms of her alignment with the four themes that were identified in chapter 4 as characteristic of a reconciliation approach to conflict. For each of the reconciliation themes, I have provided examples of alignment with a reconciliation approach and where such alignment can be seen to be lacking. That both alignment and non-alignment are present is congruent with the focus on Quadrants 3 and 4, which I have named Stage 1 reconciliation work (Figure 5).

Willingness to Change and Grow

The boundaries between equality thinking (gender is constructed) and equity thinking (essential differences between women and men that should be valued equally) has been identified in this thesis as a pivotal point of conflict informing researchers' positions on mothers' and fathers' parenting roles. As such it has become an identity marker for the identity groups involved in the conflict. This was clear at the FIRA conference, where the question and answer dance between feminist academic presenters and activist fathers in the audience repeatedly returned to whether fathers make an "essential" contribution that is different from that of mothers. Doucet devoted a number of pages in *Do Men Mother?* to an articulation of these positions, noting that she herself,

> look[s] to the possibility of envisioning a future where men and women share fully and symmetrically in the joys and burdens of caregiving. While holding on to this hope, I remain cognizant of deeply ingrained gender differentials and power imbalances in the social conditions and life choices of women and men... In taking a position that both works toward equality and recognizes gender difference in caregiving, I encourage active fathering while not diminishing a long and deep history of active mothering (p. 30-31).

The expression of hope for a "full and symmetrical sharing" alongside the acknowledgement of the experience of "gender difference in caregiving" (p. 31) (here stated to be based on social conditions and life choices, *not* essential biological differences), "chart[s]... a path between equality and difference" (p. 25). In doing so, Doucet has found a gracious interim framing of equality and difference that supports the conversation to move forward. She also separates her own hope for equality from the gender difference that she sees in her research, and allows her research to be affected by what she sees. An example of this is her comment that in her research with primary care fathers, she was "astounded by the *weight of embodiment* in fathers' narratives" (p. 239, emphasis in original). Doucet's work has focused on generative behaviour on the part of both mothers and fathers (Quads 3 and 4), and we see a great readiness to challenge dominant feminist beliefs and interests, and to address complexity and paradox within this realm – in other words a willingness to change and grow.

To my reading, Doucet's shows more reliance on conventional equality feminist beliefs and interests when looking at areas of deficiency of women or men as parents (Quads 1 and 2). Her brief reference to violence between women and men provides one example. In the conclusion of *Do Men Mother?* she suggests that "several interesting questions... emerge from this study" (p. 232). One of these asks "is there any relation between women's sense of

responsibility as expressed by a need to protect children and the extreme gender-differentiated experiences of women and men regarding issues of violence and sexual abuse?" (p. 232). The starting point of this question is the assumption that women are protecting children, and are themselves, along with children, the victims of violence and sexual abuse. There is much contention in the current research regarding this assumption which is not addressed by Doucet. In chapter three I noted a quote by bell hooks, in which she says, "...women are shockingly violent toward children. This fact should lead everyone to question any theory of gender differences that suggests that women are less violent than men" (2004, p. 64). And, in his book *Rethinking Domestic Violence* (2004), Donald Dutton, a professor at the University of British Columbia[7], comments on the social and legal history of spousal assault:

> It may be that public policy for adult IPV [intimate partner violence] is following a dialectical course. The thesis would have been the period of neglect of the topic up to the early seventies; the antithesis is surely the simplistic paradigm that exists today: that all perpetrators are male and all victims female. The evidence is overwhelmingly against this view; and the phenomenon of interest now is the slavish adherence to an ineffectual ideology to the point of suppressing its very goal: diminution of IPV. One hopes for a synthesis in which the complexities of subtypes of couple violence patterns, motives, sexual orientation, and personality disorders are assessed by professionals, replacing the "one size fits all" monolithic model currently in practice (p. x).

Doucet's unquestioning acceptance of equality feminist communities' beliefs regarding domestic violence (in the face of significant controversy regarding these beliefs) is consistent with the stage 1 of reconciliation work identified in Figure 5. I make this statement, not to comment on the accuracy (or possible lack of accuracy) of the equality feminist communities beliefs in this area, but to direct attention to the points made by feminist epistemologists regarding knowledge production. We can see the application of Longino's four criteria for transformative criticism (see page 33) in Doucet's critical approach to equality feminist knowledge production in quadrants 3 and 4. However, in the area of domestic violence (which falls into quadrants 1 and 2 – areas where mothers and fathers may be "deficit"), she does not challenge the beliefs "legitimized by the community" (Code, p. 31).

Acknowledgement of interdependency

A belief in 'gender as constructed,' as well as interests in supporting single mothers and in including lesbian mothers, has led to an emphasis within equality feminist research on women's ability to provide all that is needed for the parenting of children. This emphasis is also congruent with a focus on the maternal lens as the idealized standard measure for parenting (Quad 3). Doucet is able to focus on both quadrants 3 and 4, through an acknowledgement of the ways that mothers and fathers' embodiment as women and men generates different, and inter-subjective, experiences of parenting.[8] This alternative framing allows for gender difference even within an approach that "works toward equality" (p. 30-

[7] Dutton has been researching domestic violence for over thirty years. His earlier works include *The Domestic Assault of Women: Psychological and Criminal Justice Perspectives* (1988).

[8] Doucet notes: "...dominant approaches in this field of study assume that men and women are interchangeable disembodied subjects within and between households... my work emphasizes that fathers and mothers are embodied subjects who move through domestic and community spaces with inter-subjectivity, relational, moral, and normative dimensions framing these movements" (p. 239).

31). She also emphasizes the "relational, ambiguous, taken-for-granted, invisible, and negotiated quality of domestic responsibility" (p. 227), that makes it difficult to research "equal" divisions of domestic labour. And she advocates for expanded understandings of domestic labour to include areas such as home maintenance where men tend to make a larger contribution than women. Doucet's focus on generative fathers (Quad 4) in *Do Men Mother?* is not accomplished at the expense of the valuing the contribution of mothers (Quad 3) as was feared by some of her feminist colleagues. She is able to establish the contributions of both fathers and mothers and the interdependency of each in making theses contributions.

Transformation of Goals

Doucet's work provides a strong support for the transformation of some key equality feminist goals that provide the foundation for social science research on fathering. To begin with, she

> ... interrogates the terms on which equality is framed and then creatively envisions the potential that arises from incorporating both the traditionally feminine and masculine in our understanding of what is valuable and significant in social life (2006, p. 233).

Doucet notes a number of concerns with the goal of 50/50 parenting.[9] And as noted in chapter 4, she concludes that equality can "perhaps best be judged against how ones' participation in domestic life allows for... opportunities outside the home..." (2006, p. 233) She argues for an emphasis on gender symmetry rather than gender equality, and notes that sometimes differences are "not disadvantages or inequalities" (p. 233).[10] This comprises a significantly different framing than that generally taken within equality feminist communities where gender differences are assumed to present disadvantages for women. Here again she grounds her acceptance of difference in the social rather than the biological. In taking this approach, Doucet has found a way to point to new framings of the goals that can allow for further dialogue and debate on the generative work of mothers and fathers (Quads 3 and 4). As such, this framing can be considered to point toward reconciliation approaches.

An area where Doucet is less open to a shift in goals can been seen in her protection of women's caregiving interests. Doucet notes that she began her research with "an openness to the political and personal potential of men taking on a greater share of the responsibility for children" (2008, p. 81). Her openness became tempered when she encountered both the censure of feminist colleagues and the enthusiasm of some men's rights groups who were hoping to find evidence to support epistemological beliefs in "essential differences between women and men" (p. 82). This led to an explicit positioning of her work that limits the

[9] These include such things as the different emphases in the work undertaken by men and women (relating to the separate identities of motherhood and fatherhood), and the practical difficulties of measuring "equal" participation.

[10] She argues, "My belief is that gender difference, unlike dominant approaches in feminist sociology, can co-exist with equality, and, indeed what should be emphasized is gender *symmetry* rather than gender equality... sometimes these differences are not disadvantages or inequalities but simply differences per se, as rooted in the gendered upbringing of men and women" (p. 233).

inclusion of men to areas "where it does not work to undermine women's own caregiving interests" (p. 30).

A key area of interest for the profeminist fathering community as evidenced in questions raised at the FIRA conference is the idea of the "unique contribution of the father."[11] On this Doucet notes, "My view is that positive and nurturing parenting by mothers and/or fathers is the critical issue, rather than the necessary prescribed presence of any particular father per se" (2006, p. 249). The first part of this comment is essentially aligned with an equality feminist perspective of the "interchangability" of women and men, while the second part uses the maternal lens when she only mentions the "particular father" (not the "particular mother") as dispensable.

Creation of Shared Stories

Doucet's work supports the creation of shared stories between the equality feminist communities and the profeminist fathering communities in several ways. She reaches beyond the interests of the equality feminist community to document the generative parenting of women (Quad 3), to also include approaches that show fathers as generative parents (Quad 4). Most studies of fathers engaged in shared parenting have focused on discovering if men can "mother" and how much "mothering" they are doing. The outcome of the use of this maternal lens has been to "discover" men lacking compared to women. Doucet argues that men should not be researched using a maternal lens. She notes that asking whether or not men are mothering, ignores fathers' own naming of their activities as fathering, as well as ignoring the ways that fathers undertake parenting in ways that differ from mothers. She argues that "more effective questions to be grappled with are ones that explore how fathers enact their parental responsibilities and ultimately how they reinvent fathering" (p. 224-5).

Doucet also argues for a "widening [of the] current understanding of domestic work and responsibility" (2006, p. 227) to include areas where men tend to make strong contributions, such as non-routine maintenance work, and community work. And she herself declares that "one of the most radical points emerging from this study relates to the work's political implications and to the potential role of men in the social recognition and valuing of unpaid work" (p. 241).

There are also areas where Doucet's book does not align with the development of a shared stories between the equality feminist communities and the profeminist fathering communities. One of these is in the exclusion of provisioning as a parenting responsibility.[12] The profeminist fathering community in evidence at the FIRA conference in October 2008, brought forward "provisioning" as a family responsibility that ought to be considered part of "involved fathering." Neglect of this area is problematic for the creation of shared stories between the equality feminist communities and the profeminist fathering communities. The inclusion of provisioning (or not) is significant because the time in "parenting" spent by

[11] This was, at least partially, in response to funders who were asking for justification of education programs for fathers.

[12] *Do Men Mother?* excludes provisioning as a parenting responsibility, identifying only three areas of responsibility: emotional, community, and moral.

men and women is "equal" when provisioning is included, whereas women can be seen to be spending many more hours working when provisioning is not included.[13]

Conclusion

Chapter 5 explored the challenges presented by, and the potential for the uptake of, a feminist reconciliation-focused model for researching fathering. The first section presented an analytical framework for understanding the epistemological conflict being investigated in this thesis and identified neglected areas of knowledge production in terms of a reconciliation-focused approach. Building on this framework, I then explored the conflict in light of four themes characteristic of a reconciliation-focused approach to conflict (first presented in chapter 2). These themes were used to deepen our understanding of what shifts in thought might be necessary for alignment with a reconciliation approach to this conflict. It was also noted that the work of a number of feminist epistemologists and some feminist researchers do align with such an approach.

Next, the potential for the uptake of a feminist reconciliation-focused model for researching fathering among feminist researchers was explored. This thesis argues that there is potential for the uptake of a feminist reconciliation-focused model for researching fathering. This potential can been seen in the acceptance within the discourse of feminist researchers who are pushing the boundaries of equality feminist research in the direction of reconciliation. One of these researchers is Andrea Doucet. A review of Doucet's work shows both (i) that reconciliation theory is relevant to the fathering discourse, and (ii) that Doucet's work does point toward the development of a workable reconciliation-focused model for researching fathering.

[13] Doucet's keynote address at the FIRA conference (two years after the publication of *Do Men Mother)* presented the suggestion that provisioning be included as a fourth parenting responsibility.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

This thesis has not attempted to vindicate equality feminism or to vilify it. It has argued that equality feminism developed in a particular location and time. It was developed primarily by white, heterosexual, middle-class women. These women were the daughters of an earlier generation of women who, as Weiss notes (chapter 3), "having married with the expectation of parenting through togetherness were bitterly conscious of having parented alone" (1999, p. 384). Equality feminism was a significant force in the dramatic social changes of the last half of the 20th century. It is the success of feminism as a force for social change that allows the possibility for, and the responsibility for, change within the beliefs and interests of equality feminist approaches. As Bronfen and Kavka argue, "The problem is not the death or the end of feminism but, rather, coming to terms with... its political, strategic, and interpretive power..." (p. ix – x).

In North America, an equality feminist conception of "gender as constructed" has become the hegemonic referent within the social sciences to addressing gender roles in the family. Over time, the political aspects existent in any paradigm for describing reality have become apparent within feminist thinking. The beliefs and interests of feminism were developed in reaction to patriarchy. But they continue to operate in reaction to both profeminist and men's rights thinking. This thinking expresses the beliefs and interests of men as they confront "gender equality." Examining gender issues through a reconciliation lens suggests that the expression of beliefs and interests on the part of men's identity groups examined in this thesis is not part of a backlash designed to move society back toward patriarchy, but rather a necessary part of an ongoing conversation that needs to happen in this feminist-inspired movement toward social justice.

The limited view (and even oppressiveness) of the many strains of equality feminist thinking has become apparent and has been acknowledged in relations among women's communities. I have argued that the epistemological understandings relating to power and knowledge that have emerged from this discourse can now be applied to equality feminist communities' relationship to the profeminist fathering communities. This thesis specifically addressed differences between the paradigmatic beliefs of the equality feminist communities and the profeminist fathering communities. It was limited to these two identity groups to ensure an appropriate scope for the project, but also because there is no controversy between these two groups as to the understood goals of their work. Both groups work toward an equality framework in gender relations. However, even between groups that are working toward the common goal of gender equality (as opposed to the equity model for gender relations) there are differences in interests that must be addressed in order to achieve reconciliation.

Using a reconciliation lens makes such differences visible in a non-judgmental way and provides a framework for understanding and transcending them. I learned as part of my feminist activism that one must engage all the stakeholders in order to fully understand how social justice can be achieved. Reconciliation theory helps us to do this work. Reconciliation theory provides a lens for equality feminists to engage with the more nuanced and complex world that exists outside the paradigm. An increasing capacity to engage in "'multifocal, relational scholarship' that provides a 'gender-balanced

perspective'" (Berila et al., 2005, p. 34) is predicted by feminist theory (womanist and stages of change, presented in chapter 3). It is also necessary according to reconciliation theory. And it is in alignment with feminist epistemology. I believe that knowing equality feminist communities are involved in an identity-based conflict provides an opportunity and a responsibility to explore the applicability of reconciliation-focused models and tools to gender issues in Canada.

The use of a conflict theory lens to examine the epistemological conflict between the equality feminist communities and the profeminist fathering communities has revealed a number of insights that may prove useful to feminist researchers interested in resolving gender conflict. This thesis has identified and explored a number of these insights.

1. As conflict theory has been used primarily to analyze violent religious and ethnic conflict, the first task of this thesis was to establish the relevance of conflict theory and reconciliation theory to the reconciliation of gender issues in Canada. This task was accomplished in chapter 2, which provided a review of the conflict and reconciliation literature. Within this literature, gender is named as a key referent within deep-rooted identity based conflict. It is also established in this chapter that reconciliation is held by reconciliation scholars to be the only sustainable approach to ending identity-based conflict. Through this review, it can be seen that the themes prominent in reconciliation literature pertaining to ethnic and religious conflict can be applied constructively to gender issues in Canada.

2. Chapter 3 demonstrated that feminists comprise an identity group engaged in an identity-based conflict. It was also established that there are a number of feminist communities forming identity groups under the larger "umbrella" of feminism. Conflict theory predicts the development of prioritized interests that both mobilize a social justice movement, and marginalize some member groups. The mobilization of equality feminist communities (who see gender as constructed) and the marginalization of groups of women who have prioritized a different set of interests are visible in the review of the feminist literature. Conflicts among feminist communities have led to a rich discourse on reflexivity, accountability and representation among feminist epistemologists. This discourse is aligned with reconciliation theory. Chapter 3 argued that the insights emerging from these conflicts among groups of women can be applied to conflicts between the women's and men's movements.

3. An analysis of the stakeholders was undertaken in chapter 4 to document how the identity-based conflicts in play are based on the interests and beliefs of the groups involved. This chapter reveals conflict dynamics that entrench the stakeholders in positions that developed from their prioritized interests and resulting identity-based beliefs. Exploring the interests and beliefs of as complete a range of stakeholders as possible is necessary to a full analysis of the conflict. It is through engaging in a process of respectful exploration with the interests and beliefs of all the stakeholders that we can begin to "replace enemy images with complex and caring faces" (LeBaron, 2003, p. 294).

4. The use of conflict and reconciliation theory illuminates the challenges to the prioritized interests and beliefs of the equality feminist communities in order to achieve a sustainable resolution based on reconciliation theory. The analytical framework presented in chapter 5 showed the gaps that emerge in the "stories" told by the equality feminist communities (figure 2) – stories that seems complete in themselves when viewed through feminist lenses. Application of the four reconciliation themes to the interests and beliefs of the equality feminist communities highlight specific challenges to be addressed if reconciliation of the conflict is to be pursued.

5. Conflict and reconciliation theory also illuminates the potential for uptake of a reconciliation approach to gender conflict. This thesis asserts that the reconciliation of conflicts among feminist communities have set the stage for an expanded understanding of gender issues (within an intersectoral framework) that acknowledges the paradoxes and ambiguities of women's and men's experiences of power and identity, and thereby focuses on the reconciliation of these issues. There are feminist researchers who are generating complex articulations of how power is held in gender relations. The acceptance of these voices within feminist discourses shows a positive potential for a reconciliation approach.

6. It is a contention of this thesis that there *is* movement within equality feminist thought in the direction of reconciliation, and that the work of Andrea Doucet illustrates this movement. The review of Doucet's work in chapter 5 showed both (i) that reconciliation theory is relevant to the fathering discourse, and (ii) that Doucet's work does point toward reconciliation. As well as showing positive movement toward a reconciliation focus, chapter 5 also demonstrated where there is a lack of alignment with reconciliation theory within equality feminist thinking.

7. Reconciliation theory may provide a map for forward movement toward the reconciliation of gender issues. As feminists move toward reconciliation they do not have to "make it up" as they go along. There are precedents available in the form of models and tools from the work of reconciliation scholars. Knowing that equality feminist communities are involved in an identity-based conflict provides an opportunity and a responsibility for equality feminist communities to explore the applicability of these models and tools to gender issues in Canada.

As indicated by Michael Messner, early second wave feminism did not welcome the articulation of men's oppression. That naming men as an oppressed group can now be proposed as a concept in alignment with feminist goals is, according to the models for feminist development presented in chapter 3, evidence for the success of feminism, and of a readiness to move to another stage of gender work. Equality feminist identities have generally rested on a paradigm that sees men as the oppressor and women as the oppressed. New, in alignment with conflict theorists, reminds us that in the zero-sum conception of oppression "the advantaged always have interests in keeping their power and privilege, and the disadvantaged always have interests in gaining it. The gender order is thus seen as the ongoing creation of men" (2001, p. 735).

However, as noted in chapter 5, New argues that while men get some of their human needs met (e.g. for action or recognition) through the current gender order and thus have a conservative interest in maintaining this order, they also experience "limitation and injury" (p. 744) in the this system, which leads to "their *emancipatory* interests" (p. 744, emphasis in original) in the development of a system that better meets other needs such as those for connection and/or relationship.

Moving beyond the conflict explored in this thesis is becoming more possible in Western society as our understanding of gender issues becomes more nuanced; as women experience themselves as more powerful in relation to men; as structural barriers to women's participation in public life are removed; as the number of represented voices multiplies; and as society moves beyond the identity politics common in the latter part of the 20th century. The second-wave feminist paradigm was based on the need to end the oppression of – and to advance the status of – women. In the context in which it was undertaken, this project became conflictual between men and women. I believe that there has been a stagnation of forward momentum on women's issues since the mid-1990's. This stagnation has been the result, not of the failure of feminism, but of its success. Further progress toward "equality" will require a new vision, one that will be based less on identity movements of 'men' and 'women' each with an assumed common experience and common enemy and more on the commitment to a paradigm to which any person can subscribe – a paradigm that seeks to articulate and reconcile gender (and class and race) issues from a increasingly more nuanced, complex and intersectoral understanding of the experience of all members of our society. Judith Butler (1997), a preeminent author in the field of gender, notes that,

> The foundationalist reasoning of identity politics tends to assume that an identity must first be in place in order for political interests to be elaborated and, subsequently, political action to be taken. My argument is that there need not be a "doer behind the deed," but that the "doer" is variably constructed in and through the deed (p. 142).

In this light a paradigm that is devoted to the construction of reconciliation between the genders may have some chance of success.

While a common language based on shared metaphysical and epistemological assumptions is necessary for us to communicate and to create a shared world, Tatman notes that we are "all multilingual, we all live in several 'worlds', and not necessarily that same ones' at the same time; our capacity for misunderstanding each other is enormous" (2001, p. 251). How do we hold in our beings at the same time, a sense of shared understanding and belonging, *and* an understanding that that comforting shared reality is but a construction that will not fit 'our' group – let alone 'everyone' – forever? Tatman speaks of an epistemology of participatory discernment that rejects the possibility of final answers to any question, and which she says is "slow, painstaking, roll-up-the-shirtsleeves, get-your-hands-dirty work" (p. 258). I would like to close with a quote from Tatman which sums up the challenges and the opportunities facing equality feminist communities:

> Our knowledge of the world and of one another is relative to the time and place and cultural assumptions within which we live, and depends in large part on what we need to know in order to survive, to help each other to live as well as we can. And the 'we' is not solely limited to other humans. The 'we' includes trees and ants and squirrels and dogs and corn plants....Certainty,

impeccably dressed, well-groomed Certainty has slipped out an open door, and a disreputable character named Ambiguity, who is in dire need of a bath and a fresh set of clothes, has moved in with a few friends. Non-innocence, Complexity, Relativity, Interdependence, Change, they've begun re-modeling the place and things are in a bit of a mess. Where do we turn, what do we do? We do what we've always done. Slowly, hesitantly we start telling each other new stories (2001, p. 249)

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