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The Organisation of Women of Asian and African Descent: constructing a collective identity

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The Organisation of Women of Asian and African Descent: constructing a collective identity

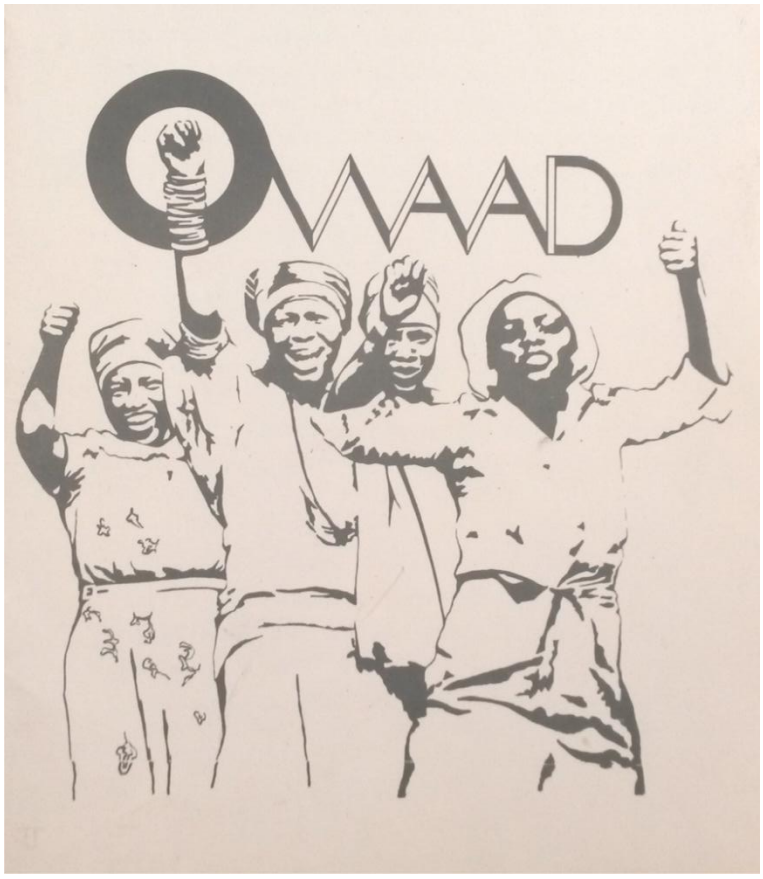

Figure 1. Black Cultural Archives, DADZIE/1/1/3, Stella Dadzie's OWAAD membership pamphlet

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Abbreviations

OWAAD: Organisation of Women of Asian and African Descent

BCA: Black Cultural Archives

WLM: Women's Liberation Movement

BWM: Black Women's Movement

BBWG: Brixton Black Women's Group

Introduction

'As Black women, we suffer a triple oppression- based on our race, our class and our sex. We therefore need our own organisations and groups which can fight on all three fronts.'[1]

In March 1970, 600 women gathered in Oxford for the first National Women's Liberation conference in Britain.[2] In the same month, around 100 black British citizens protested outside the U.S embassy in London in reaction to the trial of Bobby Seal, founder of the U.S Black Panther movement, holding signs asserting 'you can kill a revolutionary but not a revolution'.[3] During the second half of the twentieth century, both the Women's Liberation Movement (WLM) and the Black Liberation Movement in Britain contested the symbolic boundaries in which the nation was conceived. Asserting a new social identity of Black Britishness, the growth of black politics disrupted the homogenous white image of British identity and protested the second class status of black citizens. Simultaneously, the WLM challenged patriarchal structures and laws ensuring gender imbalance.[4] Yet from within these movements emerged a group who claimed they were isolated and unrepresented, asserting themselves as different; black British women. Arguing that social constructions of the 'woman' in the WLM were white, and constructions of the 'black' subject in Black Liberation were male, black women increasingly denied the ability of the movements to represent them and began organising themselves separately.

In March 1979, around 300 black women from all over Britain met in Brixton, London. They asserted that as black women they faced a 'triple oppression', concerning their race, gender

[1] London, Black Cultural Archives (BCA), DADZIE/1/1/2, 'OWAAD Draft Constitution', p.3
[2] British Library, 'Timeline of the Women's Liberation Movement', http://www.bl.uk/sisterhood/timeline
[2] British Library, 'Timeline of the Women's Liberation Movement', http://www.bl.uk/sisterhood/timeline [accessed 10/12/15]
[3] A.M. Angelou, 'The Black Panthers in London, 1967-1972: A Diasporic Struggle Navigates the Black Atlantic', *Radical History Review*, 2009 (2009)
[4] R. Samantrai, *Alternatives: Black Feminism in the Postimperial Nation* (California, 2002), p.4

and class, and required their own organisations to fight on all three fronts.[5] Attracting a variety of individuals, bringing together existing local black women's groups and encouraging the formation of more, the conference is often hailed as marking the start of the Black Women's Movement (BWM) in Britain.[6] The group behind the conference was the Organisation of Women of Asian and African Descent (OWAAD). With steps taken in 1978 to establish an organisation that would unite and propel individual political efforts into a collective movement, OWWAD would be recognised for many years as the national umbrella organisation of the BWM. Acting as a forum, OWAAD helped black women come together to plan, discuss and organise support for liberation struggles in their countries of origin and tackle issues concerning them in Britain.[7] It held another three conferences, produced a bi-monthly newsletter called FOWAAD and was successful in mobilising women behind practical protests.

Underpinning the women's political organisation was the assertion of a collective identity as 'black women'. The concept of 'identity', the qualities and beliefs that make a person or group different from others[8], has received attention from scholars covering a variety of disciplines. Rather than a static phenomenon, popular study has increasingly recognised identity as a dialectical process occurring over time, constantly forming and reforming against the discourse of the individual and their peers. Alberto Melucci's study of 'collective identity' in social movements promoted this view. Distinct from personal identity, collective identity refers to a set of individuals sense of belonging to a group.[9] Rather than something assigned to a social group, Melucci conceptualised identity as a process, asserting that ‘the empirical

[5] BCA, DADZIE/1/1/2, 'OWAAD Draft Constitution', p.3
[6] BCA, DADZIE/1/1/2 'OWAAD Draft Constitution', p.2
[7] C. Williams, 'We are a Natural Part of Many Different Struggles: Black Women Organising', in W. James, C. Harris (eds.), *Inside Babylon: The Caribbean Diaspora in Britain* (London, 1993), p.159
[8] Merriam Webster, 'Identity', http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/identity, [accessed 01/04/2013]
[9] C. F. Fominaya, 'Collective Identity in Social Movements: Central Concepts and Debates', *Sociology Compass*, 4 (2010)

unity of a social movement should be considered as a result rather than a starting point.'[10] Although the fluid nature of identity can complicate its use as a medium for analysis, Avitah Brah argues that at intervals in time identities do 'assume specific patterns...against particular sets of personal, social and historical circumstances'. The result, she argues, is often that 'multiplicity, contradiction and instability of subjectivity' becomes 'signified as having coherence, continuity, stability; as having a core.'[11] Using this understanding of identity as both a changing unstable process, but one that takes on meaning, this dissertation will analyse how women of differing backgrounds and views came to regard themselves as occupying a collective political identity in OWAAD. Rather than something assigned, the assertion of collective identity required constant renegotiation. I will seek to understand this process, and evaluate whether or not it was effective as a mobilising discourse for political action.

Despite their highly valuable insight into British experience, black women's groups remain relatively understudied. Whilst the women of OWAAD first united on the premise that their position overlapping discourses of race, class and gender rendered them invisible in society, academic work situated in the late twentieth century appears to take a similar position.[12] The phrase 'intersectional invisibility' has been used by social scientists examining the relative invisibility of those possessing multiple subordinate group identities in comparison to those possessing a single one.[13] Studies of women's political organisation during the 1960's-80's have primarily focussed on the white middle class WLM. Where race has been evaluated, it has mainly attempted to determine why black women were alienated by mainstream

[10] A. Melucci, 'The Process of Collective Identity', in H. Johnston, B. Klandermans, *Social Movements and Culture* (Minneapolis, 1995), p.43
[11] A. Brah, *cartographis of diaspora: contesting identities* (Abingdon, 1996), p.123-4
[12] H. S. Mirza, *Black British Feminism: A reader* (London,1997), p. 4
[13] V. Purdie-Vaughns, R. P. Eibach, 'Intersectional Invisibility: The Distinctive Advantages and Disadvantages of Multiple Subordinate-Group Identities', *Sex Roles: A Journal of Research*, 59 (2008)

feminism and whether the WLM was racist.[14] Similarly, histories surrounding race have predominantly looked at the male experience, the migrant for example commonly portrayed as a West Indian male worker.[15] Where migrant women have been constructed, they have mainly been studied in domestic roles as wives and mothers, despite their large significance as workers and political agents.[16] Simultaneously, this position can be recognised in the lack of archive material and the under representation of black women in academia. Julia Sudbury's extensive work 'Other Kinds of Dreams' attempts to recover black women's activism in Britain, but she notes restrictions. She highlights that the lack of archive space attributed to black women has meant that smaller groups who folded in the 1970s/80s saw their material lost or scattered among former members.[17] Furthermore, although the 1980's onwards marked black women demanding their own space and voice and increasingly accessing higher education, they still remain under-represented in academia.[18]

Despite these limitations, attempts are being made to reclaim and document the stories of black women's organisation and analyse the significant impact it had on re-imagining the British nation. Yula Burin and Ego Ahaiwe Sowinski have called for the establishment of an independent black British feminist herstory and archive association.[19] This increasing recognition has led to organisations such as OWAAD receiving attention. Alongside Julia Sudbury, OWAAD has been examined by scholars including Ranu Samantrai, Avitah Brah, Heidi Safia Mirza and Nydia A. Swaby.[20] There still remains, however, a lack of study

[14] A. Dawson, Mongrel Nation: Diasporic Culture and the Making of Postcolonial Britain (Michigan, 2007), p.96, for example N. Thomlinson, 'The Colour of Feminism: White Feminists and Race in the Women's Liberation Movement', *History*, 12 (2012)
[15] K. H. Perry, 'Black Britain and the Politics of Race in the 20th Century', *History Compass*, 12 (2014), p.651
[16] J. Sudbury, *Other kinds of dreams : black women's organisations and the politics of transformation* (Warwick, 1997), p.4
[17] Sudbury, *Other kinds of Dreams*, p.14
[18] Sudbury, *Other kinds of Dreams,* p.20-21
[19] Y. Burin, E. A. Sowinski, sister to sister: developing a black British feminist archival consciousness, *Feminist Review*, 108 (2014), p.118
[20] R. Samantrai, *Alternatives: Black Feminism in the Postimperial Nation* (California, 2002), A. Brah, *cartographis of diaspora: contesting identities* (Abingdon, 1996), H.S. Mirza, (ed.), *Black British Feminism: A*

examining OWAAD within its own right. Analysing the formation of collective identity in OWAAD, I hope to contribute to the growing scholarship a more extensive look at the surrounding historical influences that informed its discourse and organisation, and the journey the women went on negotiating what it meant to be a black woman in late twentieth century Britain. It also enables me to look further at concepts of identity, Black Feminism, and how race class and gender are constructed in British society.

Luckily OWAAD has been well preserved at the Black Cultural Archive in Brixton. Forming the main basis of my dissertation will be the collection of organisational papers given to the archive by a founding member, Stella Dadzie,[21] as well as the oral history collection 'The Heart of the Race', containing testimonies of women involved in the BWM and OWAAD.[22] Both of these resources are highly rich, yet remain relatively underused. I will use both sources to analyse the construction of collective identity, looking at the type of language used and how discourses of race, gender and class were employed. Placing the group in the context of the BWM, resources such as Spare Rib magazine were also useful. To supplement the primary source material I have used writings and memoirs of former members, detailing both the strengths and difficulties encountered organising around identity, that are not as identifiable in organisational papers. My use of the word 'black'[23] will make reference to a space in which people of African, African-Caribbean and South Asian descent identified themselves in. I will distinguish between specific ethnic groups where required. My analysis will be divided into three strands;

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reader (London, 1997), N. A. Swaby, '"disparate in voice, sympathetic in direction"; gendered political blackness and the politics of solidarity', *Feminist Review*, 108 (2014)

[21] BCA, DADZIE/1:The Papers of the Organisation of Women of Asian and African Descent (OWAAD)

[22] BCA, ORAL/1: Oral Histories of the Black Women's Movement: The Heart of the Race

[23] I have chosen not to capitalise the word black, but I will in reference to groups/movements or when it has been capitalised in a quote.

Challenging: Chapter one examines how many black women's first political involvements had been fighting against racism, sexism and class struggle separately, and analyses how this shaped the identity definitions later employed in OWAAD. However, it will argue that the first step in forming a collective identity was rejecting the ability of all three movements to represent them and demanding a separate organisational space.

Building: Chapter two demonstrates how locating themselves in this separate space, the women of OWAAD utilised the opportunity for discussion and self definition to further build a collective identity. Drawing upon discourses of 'triple oppression' to explain their 'otherness', they attempted to build upon similarities and shared oppression whilst trying to accommodate heterogeneity of experience and opinions.

Fragmenting: The final chapter considers the difficulties with organising around identity, that contributed to OWAAD's split in 1982. Whilst originally evoking discourses of gender, race and class to challenge and respond to black women's positions, preoccupation with identity was later criticised by many within the group for creating restrictive boundaries, unable to represent the diversity of the women.

I will argue, however, that despite the fact constructing a collective identity was not straightforward and was later exposed to contradictions, the process was hugely significant and the legacy of OWAAD continues today. OWAAD's assertion of a collective identity challenged and redefined British discourses, enabled women to claim agency to name themselves and establish links with each other, supported practical mobilisation, and raised crucial questions.

Chapter 1: *Challenging*: Contesting racial and gendered British discourses and claiming ownership of 'Otherness'

'Our race, our sex and our low economic status have placed us at the bottom of the heap in Britain.'[24]

Writing in 1997, Heidi Mirza asserted that to be a black woman in Britain is to inhabit a 'third space'. 'Overlapping the margins of the race, gender and class discourse and occupying the empty spaces in between' she wrote, the black woman exists 'in a vacuum of erasure and contradiction.' This is because, she stresses, ongoing social constructions ensure that in a racial discourse 'the subject is male', in a gendered discourse, 'the subject is white', and in a class discourse, 'race has no place.'[25] Writing 20 years before, the women who came together to form OWAAD expressed similar sentiments in their draft constitution;

> *Yes,* we are part of the working class in Britain- but the Trade Union Movement has yet to understand the nature and the practice of racism, or to lend its full support to the struggle for women's rights.
>
> *Yes,* we are part of the Women's movement- but our white and mainly middle class sisters... have certainly failed to understand how the added dimension of racism affects the demands and aspirations of Black women
>
> *Yes,* we are part of the struggle for Black Liberation- but Black organisations have always been male dominated and they have always regarded the Woman Question as either "secondary" or totally irrelevant.[26]

I will trace the involvement of black women in political movements fighting against racism, sexism and class struggle separately, which influenced their developing political

[24] BCA, DADZIE/1/1/2, 'OWAAD Draft Constitution', p.1
[25] Mirza, *Black British Feminism,* p. 4
[26] BCA, DADZIE/1/1/2, 'OWAAD Draft Constitution', p.3

consciousnesses and were sources from which OWAAD borrowed rhetoric. However, I will argue the first significant step in forming collective identity was rejecting the ability of the movements to represent them. United through shared experiences of isolation, the sense of 'otherness' imposed through dominant structures in society was reclaimed as a source of empowerment. OWAAD's demands for a space of their own was a meaningful act of identification.

Experiences of racism and involvement in racial politics were important aspects in the political consciousness's of many of those organising under OWAAD. In 1948, passenger liner Empire Windrush arrived in London carrying 492 Jamaicans, responding to the call of the 1948 Nationality act for citizens of the commonwealth to claim British citizenship and work for the 'motherland'. Migration to Britain occurred mostly from the West Indies, India and Pakistan.[27] Although certainly not the first non-white population, migrant workers and their families became increasingly visible, contributing to the emergence of modern British race relations.[28] In 1979, Margaret Thatcher was elected Prime minister. In a TV interview the year before her appointment, she had commented;

> ...people are really rather afraid that this country might be rather swamped by people with a different culture...the British character has done...so much throughout the world, that if there is any fear that it might be swamped people are going to react and be rather hostile...[29]

Cultural theorist Stuart Hall argued that a significant factor in Thatcher's victory was her ability to mobilise a growing white anxiety over national membership in a difficult economic

[27] Z. Layton-Henry, *The Politics of Race in Britain* (London,1984), p.xiii
[28] Sudbury, *Other kinds of dream,* p.4
[29] Margaret Thatcher Foundation, 'TV Interview for Granada World in Action ("rather swamped")', 27/01/1978, http://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/103485 [accessed 11/02/16]

landscape.[30] Analysing 'Thatcherism', Hall reflected upon 'how profoundly it is rooted in a certain exclusive and essentialist conception of Englishness.'[31] The 1981 British Nationality Act altered British citizenship to those born in Britain, or the children and grandchildren of British born citizens.[32] To be British was no longer a question of allegiance, history or character, but one of blood ties.[33] Accounts of discriminatory and racist attitudes towards immigrant communities by both their white neighbours and the state led to an increasing sense of 'Black British' identity. As the next generation refused to accept a second class status, 'blackness' was increasingly appropriated as a political category, linking struggles in Britain with the wider fight against colonialism and white supremacy. Black Power emerged as a movement in the late 1960's, attempting to reclaim 'black' as a naming of pride[34] and radical groups such as the British Black Panthers and Black Liberation Front were born.[35]

OWAAD was formed in 1978 when women in the UK African Students Union initiated a meeting at Warwick University. Recognising growing numbers of black women organising locally, they discussed the formation of an organisation that would take a more national position.[36] Those present were nearly all involved in black organisations and community groups.[37] The Heart of the Race, an influential text published in 1985, records the rich voices and histories of black women in Britain. Migrating in the Windrush period both as part of families or migrant workers themselves, racial discrimination shaped women's lives and led many to play a substantial role in politics.[38] Women were especially noted as having a high profile in community organisations. Olive Morris, a founding member of OWAAD, was

[30] Samantrai, *Alternatives*, p59
[31] S. Hall, 'Ethnicity: Identity and Difference', *Radical America*, 4 (1989), p.17
[32] British Nationality Act 1981, http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1981/61, [accessed 01/11/16]
[33] R. Natarajan, 'Ties of blood: how Thatcher altered "British", (2013), https://www.opendemocracy.net/ourkingdom/radhika-natarajan/ties-of-blood-how-thatcher-altered-british [accessed 13/03/16]
[34] J. Proctor, (ed.) *Writing black Britain, 1948-1998 : an interdisciplinary anthology* (Manchester, 2000), p.96
[35] H. Goulbourne, (ed.) *Black politics in Britain* (Avebury, 1990), p107-109
[36] BCA, DADZIE 1/1/1: 'Newsletter; Midlands ASU INFO', p.1
[37] BCA, DADZIE 1/1/2: 'OWAAD Draft Constitution', p.1
[38] B. Bryan, S. Dadzie, S. Scafe, *Heart of the Race: Black Women's lives in Britain* (London, 1985)

prominent in squatting campaigns in Lambeth around housing.[39] The Heart of the Race oral history collection further records the developing consciousnesses of black women. OWAAD member Linda Bellos recalls that growing up, she was encouraged to be proud of her joint African and English heritage, yet at the age of 5 she remembers asking what the word 'nigger' meant and witnessing her white mother be spat on for having black children.[40] Linda's earliest political encounters, however, were with Marxism, and other women in OWAAD came from backgrounds of class politics. Forming one of the organising categories of 'triple oppression', class was another significant factor mobilising women alongside race, yet the two were undeniably linked. Undercurrents of racism in British society lead to discrimination in the job market, ensuring skilled black workers were often relegated to the worst jobs.[41] Class became an important element in the political construction of 'black', a number of groups defining themselves as workers organisations such as the Indian Workers association.[42]

However, through exploring positions of race and class, many women came to understand that their experiences of oppression were further shaped by their gender. Linda Bellos remembers her initial reluctance to fully engage in Black Liberation politics, as the rhetoric was 'very male'[43]. Stella Dadzie, one of the founding members of OWAAD recalls that whilst she was involved in black politics, she felt 'very lonely and isolated as a woman'.[44] Experiences of sexism and a lack of appreciation are expressed in accounts of women later involved in OWAAD. The Heart of the Race asserted that 'we could not realise our full organisational potential in a situation where we were constantly regarded as sexual prey'.[45] OWAAD's draft constitution complained of the failure of their groups 'to take up issues

[39] Williams, 'We are a Natural Part of Many Different Struggles', p.153
[40] BCA, ORAL/1/4, Linda Bellos, interviewed by Nadja Middleton, 19/2/09, *Oral Histories of the Black Women's Movement: The Heart of the Race*
[41] Bryan, Dadzie, Scafe, *Heart of the Race*, p.130
[42] Brah, *cartographies of diaspora*, p.97
[43] BCA, ORAL/1/4, Linda Bellos
[44] BCA, ORAL/1/12, Stella V J Dadzie, interviewed by Ego Ahiawe, 10/03/09, *Oral Histories of the Black Women's Movement: The Heart of the Race*
[45] Bryan, Dadzie, Scafe, *The Heart of the Race,* p.144

which specifically affected black women' and their tendency to treat them as 'minute takers, typists and coffee makers.'[46] Whilst black politics had grown in influence towards the end of the twentieth century, the WLM had concurrently emerged as a powerful force. Although some women involved in OWAAD had accessed its politics, for the majority of black women subjected to sexism it failed to provide a home. Instead the movement faced criticism for its indifference to black women and race blind theories.[47] When black women began organising autonomously from the late 1970's they attacked the white rhetoric they believed the movement had enforced. Valerie Amos and Pratibha Parmar argued that, 'white, mainstream feminist theory...does not speak to the experiences of Black women.'[48] Failure to address the differences between 'white' and 'black' women meant it remained a white middle class space. The word 'feminism' for example, was rejected by many black women because of their belief it represented a white ideology which was anti-men, going against the close relationship they had with men in racial struggles.[49] Hazel Carby argued that the movement failed to recognise the effect race had on women's lives, and made no attempt to examine its own racism. 'White women in the British WLM', she asserted 'are extraordinarily reluctant to see themselves in the situation of being oppressors, as they feel that this will be at the expense of concentrating upon being oppressed.'[50] The draft constitution of OWAAD expressed similar sentiments, asserting that they could not 'divorce our position as women from our historical and present-day experiences of racism."[51] Additionally, in a poem at an OWAAD workshop, one woman argued that when black women were invited, it was simply to ease the consciousness's of white women rather than an attempt to understand their oppression; 'Would you mind sharing

[46] BCA, DADZIE/1/1/2 'OWAAD Draft Constitution', p.1
[47] Thomlinson, *The Colour of Feminism*, p.453
[48] V. Amos. P. Parmar, 'Challenging Imperial Feminism', *Feminist Review,* 17 (1984), p.4
[49] Byan, Dadzie, Scafe, *Heart of the Race*, p.150
[50] H. Carby, 'White Woman listen! Black Feminism and the Boundaries of Sisterhood', (1982), cited from Mirza, *Black British Feminism*, p.49
[51]BCA, DADZIE/1/1/2, 'OWAAD Draft Constitution', p.3

with us what it's like to be a Black woman in twenty minutes or less? That's all we've got time for.'[52]

Engaging in these separate political movements, many of the women who later organised under OWAAD came to understand how they were named as secondary or 'other' in British society due to the fact that they were black, women and working class. However, even further, restrictive racial and gendered discourses ensured they were 'othered' by those attempting to tackle the separate aspects of their oppression. The concept of 'otherness', the quality or state of being other or different[53], has been popular in academic writing analysing how majority and minority identities are constructed. Feminist Simone de Beauvoir argued that 'no group ever sets itself up as the One without at once setting up the Other.' Rooted in power structures, the 'otherness' of a minority group is usually regarded in reference to the way it is defined as unlike the dominant majority. In the case of gendered identities for example, de Beauvoir asserted that the domination of the man ensures that he is the 'Absolute' whilst the female is 'Other', and this ensures women's oppression as 'man defines woman not in herself but as relative to him....She is nothing other than what man decides.'[54] On the other hand, in the case of OWAAD, their position of 'otherness' can be analysed as a source of their collective self-definition. Joni Lovenduski and Vicky Randall make reference to the 'solidarity of others'. When a subordinate group makes a claim for recognition, they argue, it is likely to arise from its position of 'otherness', and furthermore, occupying this position, for a time differences and conflicts of interest may be overlooked.[55] Recognising their joint marginalisation in British society, OWAAD saw black women brought together, breaking down isolation. One woman recalled that previously the 'continual lack of interest in the

[52] BCA, DADZIE/1/1/21: 'Papers relating to a discussion at an OWAAD workshop', p.1
[53] Merriam Webster Dictionary, 'Otherness', http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/otherness [accessed 08/02/2016]
[54] S. de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex* (Paris, 1949), p.5-6
[55] J. Lovenduski, V. Randall, *Contemporary Feminist Politics* (Oxford, 1993), p.86

situation of black women created a vicious circle, so that many of us who wanted to speak out were reluctant to do so.'[56] In contrast, Dadzie remembers at the first OWAAD conference that it was a 'real high to see so many black women under one roof.'[57] As the next chapter will show, conversations generated through OWAAD attempted to forge a collective unity between women of heterogeneous experiences and identities. Significant in allowing these conversations to begin was a shared sense of 'otherness'.

Challenging the restrictive boundaries of race, gender and class discourses, as well as exclusionary notions of British membership promoted by politicians such as Margaret Thatcher, OWAAD helped black women assert their presence and forge a separate space in which to name themselves. Not only did experiences of 'otherness' bring the women together, but it was further a naming they claimed ownership of as a position of strength. Samantrai argues that 'by contesting the identities assigned to them by right- and left- wing nationalisms, black women changed their naming from a source of vulnerability to a source of strength.'[58] Speaking about Black feminism more generally, Mirza argues that as black women, they are able to 'ask questions that might not have been asked before', and 'reveal other ways of knowing that challenge the normative.' She asserts;

> 'Black feminism... is a meaningful act of identification. In this 'place called home'...we as racialised, gendered subjects can collectively mark our presence on the world where black women have for so long been denied the privilege to speak; to have a valid identity of our own, a space to 'name' ourselves.

[56] 'Black Women Together, *Spare Rib,* 87 (October 1979), p.42
[57] BCA, ORAL/1/12 Stella Dadzie
[58] Samantrai, *Alternatives*, p.106

Challenging our conscious negation from discourse...we as black British women invoke our agency; we speak of our difference, our uniqueness, our 'otherness'.[59]

[59] Mirza, *Black British Feminism*, p.4-5

Chapter 2: *Building*: Constructing a discourse of unity

'Why then, when so much unites us, should we make distinctions which can...only provide fuel for the divide and rule tactics which have always been employed by those who seek to oppress us.'[60]

Locating themselves in a separate space, the women of OWAAD utilised the opportunity for discussion and self definition to further build a collective identity. Analysing the position of their 'otherness', discourses of race, gender and class that had once rendered them invisible were used to argue that their position overlapping all three had determined a common history and experience of oppression. The organisational records of OWAAD demonstrate ongoing attempts to recognise and accommodate heterogeneity of experience and opinion whilst stressing similarities and shared oppression to unite. The success OWAAD had mobilising women behind political issues suggests asserting a collective identity was important.

'Identity', as previously discussed, can be understood as a phenomenon that is changing and dialectal. However, identities can be seen to take on meaning, shaped by the discourse of the individual and those around them. As Brah notes, this process of definition often ensures that 'multiplicity, contradiction and instability of subjectivity is signified as having coherence, continuity, stability; as having a core.' The relationship between personal and collective identity is further a complex one. Brah argues that whilst personal identities often mirror the identity of a group, collective identities are irreducible to the sum of individuals experiences because of the complexity of lived social relations. Rather, collective identity is a 'process of signification', whereby 'commonalities of experience around a specific axis of differentiation' such as class, race, are 'invested with particular meanings.' Therefore, she concludes 'collective identity partially erases, but also carried traces of other identities.'[61] This analysis

[60] BCA, DADZIE/1/1/14, 'Introductory Talk: Black Women in Britain', p.1
[61] Brah, *cartographies of diaspora*, p.123-124

is useful in breaking down the collective identity of OWAAD, in which we see an ongoing discourse attempting to accommodate differences amongst the women whilst stressing and investing meaning in their similarities.

The first National Conference was a significant moment in the history of the BWM in Britain. Dadzie recalls that whilst she had come to OWAAD from a background in anti-imperialist/colonialist politics, the conference attracted a variety of women. There were some coming from the Black Panther movement, who had a more 'black nationalist kind of hat on', whilst those from the WLM had a 'sort of feminist or radical feminist politics emerging'. Uniting these women was a desire to 'begin to talk about what we had in common', and the separate space created by OWAAD was crucial in this. [62] Dadzie reflects fondly on the ability to organise across various lines of difference, recalling that she personally felt 'there was a real sense of sisterhood and solidarity.'[63]

One of the central organising metaphors of OWAAD, demonstrating ongoing attempts to forge a discourse of unity, was 'blackness'. An introductory talk given at the conference asserted that 'black' could be understood to have 'a variety of definitions' beyond just skin colour. Not only did it have both racial and cultural implications, but due to the development of Black power in the 1960's, political implications.[64] The organisation had originally began as the 'Organisation of Africa and African Descent'. However, Dadzie recalls that after a few meetings Asian women began to show up and it became apparent that 'there was great resonance and a lot of connectivity between the kind of issues that we were thinking about'.[65] The group was renamed the 'Organisation of Asian and African Descent', and the boundaries of black belonging was redefined in reference to two major ethnic groups in Britain;

[62] British Library, C1420/20, 'Stella Dadzie discusses OWAAD, 2-3 June 2011, *Sisterhood and After: The Women's Liberation Oral History Project*
[63] BCA, ORAL/1/12, Stella Dadzie
[64] BCA, DADZIE/1/1/14 'Introductory Talk', p.1
[65] BCA, ORAL/1/12, Stella Dadzie

> those people who came originally from the Indian subcontinent, many via East Africa or the Caribbean;
>
> those people who have their origins on Africa, and those who as a result of slavery, now have their immediate origins in a number of Caribbean countries.[66]

Whilst acknowledging that there were obvious ethnic and cultural differences, the introductory talk asserted that 'we do not distinguish between them unless it is necessary.' Afro-Asian unity became a central focus, and grew around two points of commonality; history and experience in Britain. Joint historical experience centred predominantly around discussions of colonialism. 'African' decedents, the speech details, were 'shipped, in chains...and subjected to the brutalities of slavery', and 'Indian', descendents were 'slaughtered in their tens of thousands during the wards of resistance to the invasion of their continent by the British colonialists'. Those who committed these crimes, it was argued 'did not distinguish', but treated both groups as 'sub-humans'.[67] Anti-imperialist rhetoric underpinned many of OWAAD's political expressions; their final constitution detailing two aims to be support for 'anti-imperialist struggles' and 'national liberation movements fighting against colonial and neo-colonial domination.'[68] Furthermore, currently residing in Britain, the speech argued that both groups were subjected to racism and economic exploitation as 'second class citizens'. An example given was immigration acts passed by the Government that became a political focus in OWAAD. The Commonwealth Immigrants Acts of 1962 and 1968, and the Immigration Act of 1971 increasing restricted immigration into Britain.[69] Rather than distinguishing between Asian and African-Caribbean people, the talk argued that focus was predominantly racial, designed to 'keep ALL of us out, to keep Britain

[66] BCA, DADZIE/1/1/14, 'Introductory Talk', p.1
[67] BCA, DADZIE/1/1/14 , 'Introductory Talk', p.1
[68] BCA, DADZIE 1/1/4, 'Constitution of the Organisation of Women of African and African Descent', p.1
[69] K. Bhavnani, 'Racist Acts', *Spare Rib*, 117 (April 1982)

predominantly white.'[70] Many scholars studying Britain's changing immigration policy during the second half of the twentieth have noted the influence of growing racial anxiety. Paul Gilroy argued that race became a discourse employed to deny national authentic membership to groups of citizens, and that the word 'immigrant' came synonymous with the word 'black' in the 1970's.[71] Therefore, the talk concludes;

> Why then, when so much unites us, should we make distinctions which can... only provide fuel for the divide and rule tactics which have always been employed by those who seek to oppress us?[72]

It must be noted, however, that defining the boundaries of 'black' belonging was often met with difficulty. Notes from an Afro-Asian Workshop demonstrate the type of questions raised. One individual, for example, recalls a Cypriot woman being turned away from a conference, and asks how this was accounted given that she shared similar problems through being a migrant. Another question raised was whether white mothers could attend if they had black daughters, which again did not have a simple answer.[73] Therefore employing 'black' as a mobilising identity category required constant discussion and re-negotiation.

More significant to our study, is how OWAAD's employment of race was expanded and expressed in gendered terms. Whilst the use of 'black' was undeniably informed by black politics, OWAAD added further definition by using it to talk uniquely about their experiences as women. Linda Bellos argues, 'no woman is just a woman... we can't just have this category called race that sits on its own or a category on gender, we overlap.'[74] Rather than splitting the black struggle, OWAAD's commitment to Afro- Asian unity helped popularise the idea of

[70] BCA, DADZIE/1/1/14, 'Introductory Talk', p.1
[71] P. Gilroy, 'There Ain't no Black in the Union Jack': The Cultural Politics of Race and Nation (Chicago, 1987), p.46
[72] BCA, DADZIE/1/1/14, 'Introductory Talk', p.1
[73] BCA, DADZIE/1/1/26, 'National Black Women's Conference, Notes from Afro-Asian Workshop, March 30th', p.4
[74] BCA, ORAL/1/4, Linda Bellos

political blackness.[75] Gail Lewis expressed pride in OWAAD's contribution to the transformation of what it means to be black in this country. Reflecting upon the importance of reclaiming black as a source of empowerment, she stresses that for her there was an important gendered aspect;

> for us we were naming black to resignify it, say we are proud of this, which was a huge thing for us, and a huge thing for women...It was about the ways in which our bodies had been marked as inferior, because we were constantly...trying to change our bodies to apparently live up to some white ideal.[76]

Not only was sexism encountered discussed at length in OWAAD, but examples of gendered experiences of race and racism were analysed, promoting the necessity of a united political consciousness as black women. Further analysis of immigration acts reveal the relationship of race and gender. Samantrai notes that in constructions of the nation, the interplay of two has been overlooked. In the case of immigration and nationality laws, the distinction between men and women and the effect of this has been underexplored.[77] Studying organisations like OWAAD, however, reveal to us how race and gender deeply entwined in British experience. One issue OWAAD mobilised around was 'virginity testing' of South Asian women. In 1979 a report by The Guardian revealed that a number of Indian and Pakistani women coming to Britain on fiancee visas had been subjected to gynaecological examinations to check their "marital status".[78] Parmar argues that it revealed sexist and racist assumptions based on the stereotype of the 'submissive, meek and tradition-bound Asian woman.'[79] Not only did immigration acts oppress South Asian women, but The Heart of the Race further expressed

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[75] Samantrai, *Alternatives*, p.7
[76] BCA, ORAL/1/21, Dr Gail Andrea Lewis, interviewed by Marie Bernard, 15/5/09, *Oral Histories of the Black Women's Movement: The Heart of the Race*
[77] Samantrai, *Alternatives*, p.63
[78] R. Wallsgrove, A. Phillips, J. Nicholls, 'Immigration tests in Britain', *Spare Rib*, 81 (April 1979), p.10
[79] P. Parmar, 'Gender, Race and Class: Asian Women in Resistance', in Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (ed.), *The Empire Strikes Back: Race and Racism in 70s Britain* (London, 1986), p.245

wider experiences of distress. The sole responsibility rule, for example, in which women had to prove that they were the only relative in a position to look after their children to bring them over to the UK, was a source of grief.[80] Ideas of motherhood were often drawn upon to demonstrate the gendered experience of race. The cultural family structures of many Asian and Afro-Caribbean communities, it was argued in OWAAD, ensured that, 'after working all day, we are the ones who have to go home and face yet more slave labour in the form of cooking, cleaning, washing and looking after husbands and children.' Furthermore, as mothers, the pain of seeing youth 'picked up and harassed by the police on trumped up charges' and dealing with a school system doing 'little to accommodate our needs, and those of our children' was stressed.[81]

Stories of successful campaigning through OWAAD suggest that although asserting a collective identity required continued negotiation, it did provide a dialogue that allowed women to politically mobilise. One of the few historical overviews of OWAAD, written by the Brixton Black Women's Group (BBWG), recalls that after the first conference, women went away 'greatly inspired...to form Black Women's groups in their own communities...around the country.'[82] The second conference attracted around 600 women, double the number of the first[83], demonstrating that OWAAD was speaking to the experiences of a number of women and acted as a driving force for the BWM. Former member Claudette Williams asserts that the recognition it provided to the interplay of race, gender and class was crucial 'to the development and advancement of strategies of resistance.'[84] OWAAD was able to organise successful practical protest, such as leading a sit in at Heathrow Airport in response to the 'virginity testing' of South Asian women.

[80] Byan, Dadzie, Scafe, *Heart of the Race*, p.157
[81] BCA, DADZIE/1/1/14, 'Introductory Talk', p.6
[82] Brixton Black Women's Group (BBWG), 'Black women organising', *Feminist Review*, 17 (1984), p.84
[83] "Black women fighting back', *Spare Rib*, 95 (June 1980), p.49
[84] Williams, 'We are a Natural Part of Many Different Struggles', p.160

Furthermore, it acted as a crucial support network for other campaigns, such as women on strike, women facing deportation and those organising around issues including education, rape and domestic violence, and contraception.[8586] Not only did the collective discourse of OWAAD allow women to define strategies of resistance, but the practical structure of the organisation further attempted to forge a feeling of unity. Promoting a position as an 'umbrella' organisation allowed individuals and groups to feel as though they could identify politically as a collective under OWAAD whilst still maintaining their differences and independence. At the end of the second conference, committees were set up to foster greater participation, and attempts were made to create a structure that was decentralised and representative.[87] The BBWG recall that resources such as the FOWAAD newsletter were crucial in keeping women informed of campaigns and gaining support. Melluci's study of collective identity notes the importance of participation and practice, writing that 'individuals acting collectively "construct" their action by means of "organized" investments.'[88] Reflecting positively on the experience of OWAAD, Bryan, Dadzie and Scafe asserted that,

> 'It became a forum for us to discuss and articulate our own demands. And it represented a period of intense growth and learning for all black women in this country, the repercussions of which can still be felt today.'[89]

[85] BBWG, 'Black women organising', p.84-85
[86]British Library, C1420/08**,** 'Mia Morris discusses OWAAD's campaigns', 20 July- 2 August 2010, *Sisterhood and After: The Women's Liberation Oral History Project*
[87] BBWG, 'Black women organising', p.84
[88] Melluci, 'The Process of Collective Identity', p.39
[89] Byan, Dadzie, Scafe, *Heart of the Race,* p.177

Chapter 3: *Fragmenting*: Difficulties with organising around identity

'it was that very diversity that was both our strength and our Achilles heel'[90].

After four years of organising, in 1982 OWAAD folded. Whilst originally evoking discourses of gender and race to challenge and respond to black women's positions, preoccupation with identity was later criticised by many within the BWM for creating restrictive boundaries, unable to accommodate the vast diversity of the women. Two issues of tension were incorporating a range of ethnic identities under the political notion of 'black' and disagreements over the place of sexuality.

Samantrai sums up both the strengths of employing identity in group organisation but also the difficulties;

> On the one hand, re-articulations of identificatory possibilities propel change by putting discourses of domination to unintended uses. On the other, because the difference they represent is proclaimed in the nature of a new identity, in turn they resist the further re-articulation that would undermine their own foundations.[91]

Whilst OWAAD's attempts to promote the political identity of the black woman challenged restrictive discourses and ideas of British membership, their own pre-occupation with defining boundaries of identity led to tensions. Endeavouring to justify the necessity of a separate space by drawing upon ideas of 'otherness', the tendency to categorise and homogenise the experiences of black women may have stemmed from a fear that acknowledging diversity would undermine their claim of authority. Lovenduski and Randall argue that whilst the 'solidarity of Others' can mean that at first conflicts of interests are

[90] BCA, ORAL/1/12 Stella Dadzie
[91] Samantrai, *Alternatives*, p.125

overlooked, articulation of identity can eventually lead to issues. This is because, when the assertion of a specific identity by a group is made, it encourages the assertion of identity by subgroups who do not fit the boundaries exactly, causing fragmentation and often meaning 'the assertion of identity may become an end in itself.'[92] As OWAAD progressed, the huge array of differences between the women became more apparent. Dadzie recalls that this diversity was both OWAAD's strength and its Achilles heel.[93]

Firstly, the women encountered difficulties using 'black' as a unifying naming. Whilst the organisational records attempted to unite African-Caribbean and Asian women, after OWAAD's decline some of the contradictions underlying the process were exposed. The BBWG's historical account offers a comprehensive overview. Firstly, it recalls that when OWAAD held the name Organisation of Women of Africa and African Descent and was made up of both women from African/Caribbean countries and Britain, issues arose defining the organisations main focus. African/Caribbean born women tended to push liberation struggles back home, whilst British born women wished to integrate them equally with problems in Britain. The word 'black' also had different meanings to different people.[94] Lewis remembers that when OWAAD had originally tried to name itself, a name like 'National Black Women' was not something everyone could identify with. For many of the African born women, 'black', she describes, was viewed as 'a white peoples name for a whole mass of people who had mixed ethnic heritages' and instead they identified as Kenyan, Nigerian, etc. Those who the term did have meaning for were members resisting white domination, such as the British women.[95] When disagreements over the outlook led to a shift towards a more British focus, another complication surrounding 'black' membership arose. When Asian

[92] Lovenduski, Randall, *Contemporary Feminist Politics,* p.88
[93] BCA, ORAL/1/12 Stella Dadzie
[94] BBWG, 'Black women organising', p.86
[95] BCA, ORAL/1/21, Gail Lewis

women began attending meetings and efforts were made to forge an Afro-Asian unity, attempts to represent the array of ethnic and cultural differences under one political assertion of 'black' proved difficult. The BBWG argue that behind the reluctance to address diversity lay a fear that 'recognizing such differences between us would lead to a breakdown or denial of the objective unity which contemporary British racism and historical colonialism imposed on us'. This unwillingness in turn led to imbalances in representation, as the numerical majority of women with Caribbean heritage meant they had greater influence defining 'black'.[96]

After the break-up of OWAAD, questions surrounding employments of black arose. Jan Mckenley describes how she had come to a black consciousness in her bedroom listening to music and reading, and struggled with what she referred to as the 'black book of rules'. Describing it as almost like a check list, she admits that in her earlier years 'having to conform to a narrow definition of...what it is to be a black person, always caused me internal strife.' Encountering who she was narrowly defined by white society, she argued 'I wasn't going to then have another layer of it imposed by black people who had all sorts of inherent contradictions.'[97] Whilst reclaiming 'black' began as a source of empowerment, Judith Lockhart also recalls that it often deviated into counterproductive questions of definition, as they'd get 'stuck on this broken record of who is black and who isn't black'.[98] In 1989, Stuart Hall described two identifiable phases of black British identity, that can similarly be traced in the journey of OWAAD. The first, he argued, was when 'black' was used to refer to common experiences of racism and marginalisation, providing a unifying framework for groups and communities with differing histories and ethnic identities in a new politics of resistance.

[96] BBWG, 'Black women organising', p.86
[97] BCA, ORAL/1/24, Jan Mckenley, interviewed by Yepoka Yeebo, 07/05/09, *Oral Histories of the Black Women's Movement: The Heart of the Race*
[97] Samantrai, *Alternatives*, p.63
[98] BCA, ORAL/1/22, Judith Lockhart, interviewed by Shelia Ruiz, 02/03/09, *Oral Histories of the Black Women's Movement: The Heart of the Race*

Contrastingly, as the 1980's progressed, he recognised the dawn of a new phase, characterised as 'the end of the innocent notion of the essentialist black subject.' Increasingly focus was shifted towards recognition of the extraordinary diversity of 'subject positions, social experiences and cultural identities'.[99]

Another point of tension, further demonstrating the difficulties constructing a collective identity representing the heterogeneous experiences of its members, was sexuality. Not only had use of black been criticised by some as restrictive and reductive, but more broadly the concept of 'triple oppression' underscoring OWAAD's organising was questioned. The draft constitution asserted that 'as black women, we suffer a triple oppression- based on our race, class and our sex'. No reference was made to other sites of oppression, including sexuality. Disagreements over the place of sexuality came to a head in the third conference organised by OWAAD, straining discourses of collectivism. Reluctance to officially recognise sexuality in OWAAD and the tendency to reduce sexual orientation to heterosexuality, Williams argues, demonstrated that they had become 'the unwitting victims of our own and our communities "homophobia"'.[100] Gender discourses that stressed the role of motherhood, for example, left some women uncomfortable. Linda Bellos argues that black women are 'socialised to think that our role as women is to be wives and mothers... so being a lesbian is not compatible with being a mother, or vice versa.'[101]

Many women dismissed the issue of sexuality as a private/personal subject that was irrelevant to political organising. The third conference took place in 1981 during a period of heightened tension in black communities, as 'race riots' occurred in various locations across Britain. Valerie Mason-John remembers that some women were angry at the proposal 'trivial' issues like lesbianism should be discussed, when Britain was in chaos. Sexuality and other 'women's

[99] S. Hall, "New ethnicities", *ICA documents 7: Black Film, British cinema* (London, 1989), p.27-28
[100] Williams, 'We are a Natural Part of Many Different Struggles', p.161
[101] BCA, ORAL/1/4, Linda Bellos

oppressions', they believed, should be secondary to the wider needs of the black community.[102] The Heart of the Race recalls that some black men implied women were only getting together to discuss sexual preferences and not 'anything relevant to the Black community.'[103] Cultural tensions also underlined this silencing. Mason-John recalls feeling contempt and hostility concerning lesbian sexuality at an OWAAD conference, and argues that it was adamantly stated lesbianism was a European trait and white woman's disease.[104]

Whilst the assertion of 'triple oppression' was useful in defining focussed aims and strategies, it led to many women feeling conflicted by how they should prioritise their political efforts. Magdalene Ang-Lygate argues that 'everyday experiences and realities of diaporic women of colour are not easily dissected and separated.' The privileging of certain categories like 'race', often forces some women to 'pretend that they do not engage in life on multiple and sometimes conflicting levels.' [105] Arguments over sexuality, Mason-John recalled, established a rift which OWAAD never recovered from, collapsing a year later.[106]

Following this, the 1980's saw the political strategy of the BWM shift from collective identification to attempting to address the vast differences and identificatory possibilities between women. Such a shift was experienced similarly in the WLM under the banner of 'the personal is political', and black politics as outlined by Stuart Hall, describing the change as from 'a struggle over the relations of representation to a politics of representation itself.'[107] The identity politics that came to the forefront, however, also faced criticism. Mirza asserted that the new identity politics 'offered no radical way forward' in challenging the wider structures of oppression. 'In a time when what should be done was replaced by who we are',

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[102] V. Mason-John, *Talking Black: Lesbians of African and Asian Descent Speak Out* (London, 1995), p.32-33
[103] Byan, Dadzie, Scafe, *Heart of the race* , p.150
[104] Mason-John, *Talking Black*, p.60-61
[105] M. Ang- lygate,' On theorizing diaspora, in Mirza', *Black British Feminism*, p.173
[106] Mason-John, *Talking Black*, p.33
[107] Hall, "New ethnicities", p.28

she argued, 'the freedom to have was replaced by the freedom to be.'[108] Parmar also criticised the emergent politics focussing on 'the personal and experiential modes of being' for leading to a closure which was 'retrogressive and sometimes spine chilling.' She questioned many of the practices underpinning it, such as employing a language of 'authentic subjective experience' and emphasis on 'accumulating a collection of oppressed identities', giving rise to 'a hierarchy of oppression.'[109] Whilst identity had originally been used in attempt to unite women and create common goals, it became fragmentary, competitive and unclear. Parmar mourned the early days of OWAAD, writing;

> Then I spoke and wrote from a position of marginality and resistance, but always strengthened by the collective consciousness of ourselves as black women... Today, at the beginning of a new decade I still inhabit that position of marginality and resistance but in the absence of that collective force which momentarily empowered many of us and gave us the "power of speech".[110]

108 H. S. Mirza, Race, Gender and Educational Desire: Why Black Women Succeed and Fail (Abingdon, 2009) p.65-66
109 P. Parmar, 'Other Kinds of Dreams', *Feminist Review*, 31 (1989), in Mirza, *Black British Feminism,* p.68-69
110 P. Parmar, 'Black Feminism, The Politics of Articulation' (1990), in Proctor, *Writing Black Britain 1948-1998,* p. 295

Conclusion: A lasting legacy

Whilst the assertion of a collective identity in OWAAD was a process that required constant re-negotiation and was later exposed to contradictions, this does not diminish its significance. Parmar argues that 'to assert an individual and collective identity as black women has been a necessary historical process which was both empowering and strengthening,'[111] and to organise self consciously as black women remains hugely important. Uniting black women, OWAAD played a hugely important part in shaping the BWM into a force that was loud and bold, and helped establish black feminism as a vital area of understanding in discourses of race and gender. Empowerment has often been understood as a process whereby the boundary between the personal and the communal is transcended.[112] African American Black Feminist, Patricia Hill Collins asserts that 'while individual empowerment is the key, only collective action can effectively generate lasting social transformation of political and economic institutions'.[113] Asserting a collective identity as black women, OWAAD brought women out of isolation, allowed them to analyse their position of oppression and define political strategies to challenge it.

Issues that arose surrounding naming and the organisations subsequent decline were not to end its contribution. Carol Leeming and Donna Patricia Jackman, who travelled from Leicester to London for the conferences, remember that engaging in conversations surrounding topics such as sexuality was something they had never done before, and meeting black lesbians and hearing about their difficulties was of huge importance. The forums and spaces provided through OWAAD allowed issues to come to a head and be discussed, Leeming remembering that 'people challenging each other about the ideas and attitudes that

[111] P. Parmar, 'Other Kinds of Dreams', p.68
[112] Sudbury, *Other Kinds of Dreams*, p.100
[113] P. H. Collins, Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment (Boston, 1990), p.237

they had... that was unique to OWAAD.'[114] Drawing members from all over the country, OWAAD established crucial links between women and equipped them with useful organisational skills.[115] Jan Mckenley argues that although collectives like OWAAD are now limited, the mood of empowerment and campaigning generated was taken into key areas of work like education, health and law, creating a lasting impact. [116] The decline of OWAAD provided further opportunities for learning. Williams recalls that 'the questions of gender relations and sexual orientation have been placed legitimately on the political agenda.[117] Further study of the OWAAD should begin to look more extensively into the historical conditions that allowed the organisation to assert a collective identity at time that it did, and the repercussions it had in black female consciousness in Britain. Today, many black women are reclaiming the importance of asserting a collective identity to question oppressive structures and politically mobilise. In her examination of modern Black British feminism, Mirza notes that, 'though there are many differences among black British feminists... I notice young people today still speak of "black feminism", not "black feminisms."'[118]

[114] BCA, ORAL/1/18/1-2, Track 2, Carol leeming and Donna Patricia Jackman, interviewed by Annette Sylvester 13/03/09, *Oral Histories of the Black Women's Movement: The Heart of the Race*
[115] Williams, 'We are a Natural Part of Many Different Struggles', p.161
[116] BCA, Oral 1/24, Jan Mckenley
[117] Williams, 'We are a Natural Part of Many Different Struggles', p.161
[118] H. S. Mirza,' "Harvesting our collective intelligence": Black British feminism in post-race times', *Womens Studies International Forum*, 51 (2015), p.3

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