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Abstract

In recent years some commentators have looked at successive waves of UK urban policy from the perspective of gender, although these commentaries have been somewhat marginal within wider discussions of urban policy and politics. This article seeks to make the case for a renewed emphasis on gender, which moves beyond tracing the role of men and women in relation to urban policy programmes, in two particular ways. Firstly it is argued that a more sophisticated analysis of the gendered nature of urban governance is needed, in other words how forms of gendered labour, subjectivity and power work through and within policy projects; and secondly that there should be a wider consideration of what feminist visions of cities and politics, both past and present, might contribute to the project of a critical, and hopeful, analysis of urban policy and politics.

1. **Introduction**

This paper springs from research in so-called 'disadvantaged' neighbourhoods in the UK, analysing neighbourhood and community projects and programmes, a field combining both government-supported and locally-initiated action, as will become clear. My research in such spaces has highlighted their gendered nature, both in terms of who uses them and the modes of interaction and politics on which they depend (see Jupp 2012a). Yet gaining a conceptual 'handle' on the gender politics of such spaces is complex. As I go on to argue, there are a series of ambivalences surrounding gendered and feminist analysis in these contexts. Recent academic analysis has perhaps been hampered by the political and theoretical dangers of 'essentialising' female experience and practices in cities, and this, combined with the potency of other analytical paradigms in urban studies, has often led to a silence around gender, a silence which echoes omissions within policy discourses themselves (Grimshaw, 2011). However such a silence about gender potentially masks an increasing reliance on women's practices and energies within neighbourhood and community projects. There could therefore be said to be a kind of 'double movement'[i] within neighbourhood policy, in which gender is both present and absent, as well as within some academic analysis which has tried to both valorise women's experiences and practices of community work, often in poor, working class neighbourhoods, without tying down 'women' as a category (see Gosling 2008) and over-looking other axes of difference.   Both these sets of ambivalences can be seen to relate to wider uncertainty about the project of feminism and women's studies within a particular political and historical context (Brown 2005a, 2005b), as well as other political and analytical dynamics.

This rest of this article seeks to explore but also in some senses move beyond such ambivalence, by arguing for a more sophisticated analysis of urban policy and gender which draws on wider theorisations of gender, the state, politics and cities. In order to do this I begin with a review of recent literature relevant to urban policy and gender. I then move on to reflect on an empirical example of one community project, called 'The Cornerspace' as an introduction to thinking through how new forms of gender analysis might be brought to bear on this sphere of activity. This is firstly via a wider consideration of gender, politics and the state, which can help with a 'gender analytics' (Simon-Kumar 2011) of contemporary government programmes. By this I mean an analysis which is alert to the wider structuring effects of gendered power, subjectivities and labour, rather than empirically tracing men and women's involvement in policy programmes. Secondly, I draw on wider feminist theorisations of cities and urban contexts to show how such work offers a range of theoretical and imaginative resources which are in danger of being overlooked within these silences and ambivalences. In particular I explore feminist approaches to space, time and scale within cities, and secondly around the nature of 'the public' and the private. These two sets of themes are explored in the third and fourth sections of this paper.

2.   Approaching gender in UK urban policy programmes

2.1 Locating gender?

A major pre-occupation of urban policy in the UK over the past 25 years has been with notions of 'community', and of reinvigorating forms of civic and political engagement at a local level, especially in relation to deprived urban areas, often de facto areas of social housing (Lupton, 2003). As documented (Cochrane 2007, Lowndes and Sullivan 2008), neighbourhood and community programmes in the UK have taken different forms under the Labour government (1997 – 2010) and subsequent current Coalition administration. These have ranged from 'neighbourhood management' to Neighbourhood Renewal, New Deal for Communities and new experiments in neighbourhood democracy, and as Lowndes and Sullivan (2008) argue, these programmes have had a range of different rationalities at their centres, from local 'empowerment' to more efficient delivery of central government priorities. It is also worth noting that 'urban policy' as a terrain is a shifting set of initiatives, which have different relationships to other kinds of social policy. For example Sure Start Children's Centres, discussed below, are linked to education, social work and 'early years' agendas as much as community regeneration or engagement, although the focus of my own research has been on these latter aspects (Jupp 2012b, 2013). The rationalities and contours of UK urban policy are currently shifting again in a new era of 'localism' (Featherstone et al 2012), with cuts to many core services, alongside some new streams of funding for neighbourhood projects via

the voluntary sector or Lottery, with new practices such as 'community organising' under discussion (OPM 2010). Indeed it is likely that this will have new implications for a gendered analysis of policy (WBG, 2012), as I go on to discuss.

In terms of a gender analysis of particular UK urban policy programmes, the few examples that exist underline 'a significant failure to acknowledge the gendered nature of community work or incorporate a gendered analysis into regeneration policy' (Grimshaw 2011; 337), both in terms of policy discourses or academic commentary. In relation to a programme such as New Deal for Communities, involvement has been shown often to divide along lines of gender (as well as class and ethnicity). For example women are more likely to be present on the partnership boards which have characterised local regeneration programmes as 'community representatives'(ie as non professional local people) rather than being from the professional public, private and voluntary sectors (Grimshaw 2011, Beebeejaun and Grimshaw 2011), and women have been shown to see their involvement as strongly linked to (often very traditional) gender roles (Grimshaw 2011, 333). As Grimshaw points out, such reliance on gendered labour within neighbourhood programmes potentially places huge burdens on women often already over-burdened with caring labour.

It is also often the case that women are the most disadvantaged members of the already disadvantaged communities in which such programmes are based. Indeed Brown (2006) discusses the increasingly gendered nature of poverty itself in the US related to a rise of female-headed households. Similarly Gosling (2008) also points out the gendered nature of poverty in the UK. She argues that UK neighbourhood regeneration programmes have overall had negative impacts on community dynamics in disadvantaged neighbourhoods, and that these negative impacts are felt most closely by women who often rely most heavily on local social networks and support (611). Furthermore, because of women's caring roles within families, seen as crucial components of 'communities' in policy discourses, both Gosling (2008) and Brownill (2004) argue that women are implicitly seen as both the saviours of disadvantaged communities, in terms of feminised modalities of care and community building, but also source of problems when they do not fulfil these roles responsibly, embodied in the figure of the single teenage mother in particular. In this sense the whole context of poor neighbourhoods into which policy interventions happen can be seen as implicitly gendered.

However such analysis perhaps overlooks another important dimension of the programmes; the gendered nature of the professional or paid labour also involved (Robson and Spence, 2011). As well as delivering community-based programmes, Larner et al (2007) have written about the importance of women as 'transactors' and 'brokers' between sectors or stakeholders within new models of

partnership or networked governance.   This raises the question of whether women from activist backgrounds working within these neighbourhood programmes have subverted or contested the rationalities of these programmes (Newman 2012), an issue I return to below.

Despite such issues of gender figuring in the discursive imagination and also implementation of neighbourhood policy programmes, as already noted there has been little explicit analysis of gender in either commentaries or policy discourses themselves (Gosling 2008). Therefore the position of women and of gendered labour within these programmes is at once present but also unnamed or absent (Franklin and Thomson 2005). This is in contrast to development programmes in the Global South which have often positioned women and gender relations as explicit and central subjects (although these categories are of course contested too, see Jarvis, 2009, p88). This mismatch lay behind Oxfam's ReGender programme (for discussion see Brownill 2004, also Oxfam, 2008), part of its UK Anti Poverty programme, which ran between 2003 and 2008, and sought to highlight gender issues for stakeholders and policy makers in relation to urban regeneration programmes. As Brownill (2004) argues the project highlighted the difficulties of discussing and making gender issues visible with actors such as local government officials, in a policy field lacking discursive and analytical understandings of gender. As Brownill also points out, issues of ethnicity have at least remained on a policy agenda via (albeit problematic) concepts such as 'community cohesion', whereas gender seems to be becoming less and less visible[ii].

However as discussed at the opening, as gender becomes less visible in policy discourses it arguably becomes more significant in understanding the dynamics of poverty and community in disadvantaged neighbourhoods, in the kind of 'double-movement' already noted. In a new policy era in the UK, which is seeing the state withdraw from neighbourhood programmes to a large extent, families and communities, and the gendered networks of care and interaction they potentially offer are more than ever seen as responsible for delivering goods which might previously have been offered by the state, within paradigms such as 'the Big Society', 'localism' and 'community organising' (OPM 2010). As Featherstone et al (2012) point out, what they term 'austerity localism' seems to extend responsibility but not provision, in ways which are likely to fall increasingly on women's shoulders (WBG 2012).

Given all this, Grimshaw (2011) argues that 'women's everyday lives should be placed at the heart of debates about regeneration' (327). However this raises the fundamental question of how far 'women's everyday lives' can seen as a coherent category, the questions around 'essentialising' female experience in cities raised at the opening of this article.   Even within particular neighbourhoods, the differentiated nature of women's 'everyday lives' (see Vaiou and Lylogianni

2006) cannot be overlooked, with ethnicity, class and other axes of 'difference' clearly significant too. Indeed while it may seem possible to view the whole field of UK urban policy and governance as divided along 'gender' lines (see Brownill 2004), through considering the 'feminised' world of community and neighbourhood projects vs the masculine world of building projects and city centre 'urban renaissance', this does not tell the whole story. As Brownill (ibid) and others also point out, women as consumers and as professional workers have also been the beneficiaries if not the driving force behind new forms of city centre gentrification and redevelopment. Indeed policy paradigms around the compact and sustainable city could be seen to potentially benefit middle-class women in particular, and it therefore may be that class in particular is now a more significant line of analysis than gender in these contexts (Bondi and Christie 2000).

However, whilst 'gender' may be a contested and fragmented field of analysis it undoubtedly remains a felt reality within everyday lives, as Jarvis writes, 'a crucial everyday political realm' (2009: 92). In the rest of this article I want to argue that a re-invigorated gender analysis of urban policy is needed, and I propose two ways that this might be approached. Firstly I argue that such analysis must engage with a broader set of issues around gender, politics and the state, particularly through developing an understanding of the fragmented nature of 'gendered governance'. Secondly I argue that wider feminist analysis around gender, cities and politics can open up fruitful new ways to consider the terrain of urban policy and politics, via themes firstly around 'space and time' and secondly around public and private spheres. Through pursuing these two strategies, I suggest that analysis of gender and urban policy can move away from a potentially problematic focus on tracing men and women's roles in policy programmes, towards making a wider contribution to debates about policy and politics in urban contexts. However in order to foreground some of these issues that I will develop in the rest of the article I am going to now briefly discuss an empirical example of a particular setting in which gender played an important role (for further discussion of the context below see Jupp 2012b, Jupp 2013).

2.2 Encounters in a Family Centre

I'm in the 'Cornerspace[iii]' in Oxford, a messy, cluttered, cosy space in an old set of garages in the corner of a housing estate, talking to women about the centre and the place it has in their lives. While we talk small children run around mixing up porridge oats, jumping in puddles, painting and taking part in the 'messy play' the centre promotes. I ask one woman, with three small children, what she's gained from coming here, and she tells me, 'this place has given me my sanity… if I hadn't come here I would have had a nervous breakdown'. As documented elsewhere (see Jupp 2012b, 2013), the Cornerspace has been established for over 20 years, initially run by a group of local

women in a Portakabin, and calls itself a 'family centre', providing 'drop-in play' and other activities and support for young children and their carers/parents. The staff speak about the ethos of the centre in particular way: as a collective place of care, especially for women. A worker tells me, 'there's a collective approach to childcare here, if you need to put your feet up and read a magazine for ten minutes that's fine'. The centre attracts a diversity of families in relation to class and ethnicity if not gender, although class has been seen as a significant dynamic in determining access to other Children's Centres (see Jupp 2012b). Significantly, the caring ethos of the centre is explicitly articulated by staff as in opposition to the national UK government programme of Children's Centres via which the centre has gained funding, which is broadly characterised by staff as being about control, regulation, and the governance of individual parenting relationships (see Lister 2006). Indeed the centre has resisted being rebranded as a 'Children's Centre' because of the child-focused agenda the term represents, understood to potentially undermine a broader family (especially women) support project (see Featherstone, 2013, for discussion of the move away from 'family' support in services).

So what kinds of gendered subjectivities shape the space and how might they point to strategies to analyse gender and policy programmes? The centre certainly has a rather alternative 'feel' and could be seen as rooted in quite particular forms of women's collective action, in an area of the city with a history of community activism and organising, including environmental activism. The history of the centre, as very much outside government support or policy programmes was frequently invoked both staff and users to explain its caring ethos, and its difference to other Children's Centres. The atmosphere and approach of the centre perhaps helped it to attract its diversity of users, for example, the centre did not operate any kind of formal 'signing in' or registration system and I was told that this meant that certain users felt 'comfortable' there in a way that they would not in other more formal settings.   Also users were allowed to smoke outside which again would not have been allowed in other Children's Centres. Nonetheless this particular atmosphere might also exclude others. Perhaps most significantly, the space is not supposed to be aimed at women only, yet I encountered only one man on my research visits, who was there as part of contact arrangements with his daughter and ex-partner, and this raises questions about the reach of such women-centred spaces.

Yet despite its own definitions of being an alternative space, the Cornerspace cannot escape the forms of regulation which determine its funding structures and the governance programmes of which it forms part. I also hear about somewhat awkward encounters with professionals attempting to give out parenting support and enrol users into forms of training around 'parenting'. One user

recounted how her feelings about the space changing radically on being approached about accessing 'parenting' support. She commented, 'I felt like I was being put in a category, it was horrible, I felt so judged, I ran outside and was in tears…' It therefore seems inevitable that the nature of its funding and targets shapes practices and interactions among parents and workers, with the aim of shaping the emergent identities of young children as well as parents themselves (Lister 2005, 2006). Indeed as financial pressures on such centres increase, it seems likely that there will be even greater focus on specific forms of intervention with the most disadvantaged families (Allen 2011) rather than broader forms of support.

The centre could therefore be seen as a place that draws on both the rationalities and histories of a woman-centred project of collective childcare and support, *and* the rationalities of 'early intervention', the explicit shaping of children's (and perhaps parents') subjectivities through such programmes (Allen, 2011). This coming-together is fragmented and somewhat uncomfortable. Indeed as Rose (1989) points out in relation to an earlier wave of funding for playgroups, such spaces always combined governmental and broadly feminist concerns.

These dynamics therefore raise issues of how far women-centred spaces or projects might fit within or clash with urban and social policy regimes, and how to evaluate such spaces from the perspective of gender. What happens to groups or individual women with activist commitments when they become part of governance projects? In order to make sense of some of these issues, in the next section of this article I seek to explore the notion that certain forms of urban and social policy regimes not only impact *on* the lives of women in particular ways, but that programmes work *with* particular forms of gendered labour, subjectivity and power, in what might be termed 'gendered governance', and this inevitably leads to such uneasy or fragmented spaces. I develop an argument for a greater awareness of the gender dimensions of such policy, and for a more sophisticated approach to developing an analytical perspective on such dimensions, which takes in a broader range of issues around gender and the state and the fragmented rationalities this may frame.

Yet to return to the Cornerspace, despite the 'messiness' of its rationalities, spending time there also made me see it as a hopeful, and maybe even transformative space, in which small-scale, material and embodied interactions might produce new forms of interactions and collective action (see also Horton and Kraftl 2009a, 2009b). The Cornerspace is supporting a range of women in their everyday lives and struggles, drawing on particular forms of gendered labour and care, although it may be a leap from that to seeing it as a place of 'feminism' or wider 'political' action. However as a space woven into the rhythms of the everyday lives of many of its users, it seems to exemplify notions of

'infrastructures of care' (see Bowlby et al 2010, Gilroy and Booth 1999) that feminist commentators have proposed as a way of thinking about the resources that all city dwellers need in their everyday lives. In subsequent sections of this article I develop themes of 'space and time' and 'publics and politics' in order to highlight the ongoing contributions that feminist perspectives might make to debates on urban policy and politics. I suggest that the more normative intent of feminist politics and visions of cities has much to teach urban commentators and policy-makers.

By reflecting on some questions raised by fieldwork in a particular setting I have therefore sought to begin to suggest some of the issues at play in approaching urban and social policy programmes from the perspective of gender. In the rest of this article I further explore theoretical and analytical resources that might be applied to this and other similar kinds of spaces of governance.

3.   Gendered governance?

 'A feminist theory of the state will be less a linear argument than the mapping of an intricate grid of overlapping and conflicting strategies, technologies, and discourses of power' (Brown 2006: 93).

3.1 State, gender, politics

In this section I discuss the notion of gendered governance within contemporary urban and social policy regimes, which I want to argue could usefully be applied to an analysis of neighbourhood and regeneration programmes. As already noted, the background to this paper is the increasing complexity of considering the 'analytics' (Simon-Kumar 2011) of gender in relation to contemporary conditions of policy and governance in the UK and other contemporary Western democracies. Partly this may be due to an increasingly fragmented understanding of gender as an analytical category, whereby, as already suggested, a focus on class or ethnicity may be seen to throw more light on gender relations than male/female dichotomies (Simon-Kumar 2011). Nonetheless, Brown (2006) calls for a distinction between gender as it may be ascribed to individuals and as forms of power; 'while gender identities may be fluid, diverse and ultimately impossible to generalise, particular modes of gender power may be named and traced with some precision at a relatively general level (188).

However, considering the gendered power of a state is not necessarily straightforward either. Whilst it may at certain times and spaces still seem appropriate to view the state as 'masculinist' (Brown 2006), many commentators have argued that 'feminised' forms of the state are now

emerging (Simon-Kumar 2011, Sharma 2006). This can be seen as partly due to the achievements of second-wave feminism both collectively and as particular individuals perhaps moved from campaigning in the women's movement to policy and civil service positions (Newman, 2012), within 'social investment states' (Lister 2006)[iv]. Yet such government and policy regimes, as extensively analysed, combine socially 'progessive' policies with neo-liberal rationalities of the market and an individualised politics of aspiration, consumption and labour-market participation (Hall 2003, Newman and Clarke 2009). Feminist scholars have been divided about how uncomfortable the fit might be between a 'progressive' gender politics and forms of neo-liberal governance. For example, as Fraser (2009) has pointed out, both feminism and neoliberalism have been critical of the home as a site of gendered labour, and she argues that there is an 'elective affinity' between the projects of feminism and neoliberalism. Pykett (2012) talks of the 'new maternal state' in its approaches to governing the behaviour of citizens across social policy domains, suggesting that feminised modalities have become dominant motifs of governing.

Other commentators have pointed out the fragmented nature of state power in itself, with the state as 'an ensemble of discourses, rules, and practices, co-habitating in limited, tension-ridden, often contradictory relations with each other'(Brown 2006: 191). Sharma (2006) writing about women's development projects in India, analyses the uneasy relationships between the government-funded and supported projects around gender and what was seen by some officials as the 'proper state work of facilitating productive economic growth'(73). Equally, 'feminism' as a project can of course be seen as encompassing a range of perspectives (Newman, 2012). It is these kinds of tensions, between different rationalities of governance, that frame my opening example of the family centre. Whilst Lister (2006) has argued that the Children's Centre programme aimed to produce neo-liberal 'citizen-workers in becoming', my analysis of that particular site shows how such imperatives may co-exist , in a fragmented and contradictory way, with different kinds of ethics and practices, including more radical women-centred projects. This suggests that in developing a new 'gender analytics' of contemporary governance, there is a need for alertness to discontinuities, uneasy alliances and fragmented rationalities.

However in discerning 'feminised' modes of governance, however they might be defined, more broad-reaching questions are raised about whether particular modes of politics and of citizenship can be understood as gendered, which is clearly contentious. Staeheli (2004), researched the gendered nature of local politics and forms of civic engagement, looking at and comparing male and female involvement and experiences[v]. She reports on a large scale survey in four US cities involving 1514 respondents, looking at men and women's involvement in forms of local politics. She did not

find a significant difference for motivations for getting involved and modes of politics across men and women, although elsewhere (Staeheli, 2003) she does argue that community activity may present particular opportunities for women, as 'a space between public and private' (80). Staeheli also raises the issue of the 'conservative' nature of much community organising (2004: 351, see also Joseph 2002), perhaps suggesting a neat fit with neo-liberal policy regimes. Yet she also affirms the importance of community as a space to enter politics and enact social change (2003), which I will return to below.

Notions of feminised politics and citizenship have also been explored within a mostly US literature on women's involvement in neighbourhood and community organising, albeit within paradigms of community –led rather than government funded activity (eg Naples 1998). For example, Stall and Stoeker (1998) talk of woman-centred organising as 'horizontal' and 'relational', in ways that challenge boundaries between public and private spheres, rather than involving more direct challenges to power under 'Alinsky' models. They also link such activism to 'an ethic of care' (Gilligan 1982) as opposed to an ethic of justice. Other authors (eg Fincher and Panelli 2001) argue that women activists are able to strategically move between spheres and practices conventionally understood as public or private to their advantage. Such characterisations of women's organising are relevant to considering how far these practices can be successfully inserted into urban and social policy regimes, for example if they are seen as less overtly confrontational than other modes of politics. However they also hint at the diverse and often hidden ways that collective identifications and actions might take place, an issue which will be returned to in Section 4 of this paper.

3.2 Gender and policy categories

As already noted, aside from academic analysis, policy discourses have very much overlooked or silenced gender within characterisations of citizenship, and this may have important consequences for how ideas such as 'community empowerment' or 'community organising' are understood. Lowndes (2004) examines the concept of 'social capital' in relation to gender, which has been used by both policy-makers and academics to articulate the value of small-scale and informal neighbourhood or civic engagement within wider trajectories or accounts of politics. In relation to the wider political trajectories of such activities, an interesting finding was that some men and women had different kinds of gains or forms of empowerment from their involvement in neighbourly activities, echoing the difference perhaps between Alinsky-style and women centred organising noted above. Lowndes talks of the difference between 'getting by' and women's concerns around well-being and confidence for self and family and 'getting on' in terms of a move towards involvement in more formal kinds of politics and wider sites of power (see also Gilroy 1996).

This suggests that concepts such as 'social capital' may over-generalise, or indeed actively seek to mask differences in relation to gender and indeed potential empowerment implicated in different kinds of activities (see also Adkins, 2005, Molyneux, 2002). Similarly, the concept of 'activism' has been seen to include or exclude different forms of activity along gendered lines (see Martin et al, 2007, Jupp, 2012a).

Therefore in considering the notion of gendered governance, as well as seeking to trace the complexities and uneasiness of gendered politics in relation to the state, analysis also has to be alert to silences and omissions, and to unpick policy categories, such as 'community organising' or more recently 'the Big Society' (Cameron, 2010) in terms of the gendered practices and labour that may lie behind them. Indeed, to return to the particular field of urban policy and politics, it is certainly possible to define what can be seen as feminised modes of governance and intervention co-existing with other rationalities. Despite many important differences in the design and funding of the UK neighbourhood programmes and projects already discussed, certain kinds of neighbourhood interactions and 'neighbourliness', as well as caring and familial practices of different kinds have tended to play key roles, all of which could be seen to draw in and produce particular forms of gendered practices and resources. For example programmes and projects around childcare, play, young people, as well as greenspace, food growing, consumption and community celebration have been particularly prominent[vi]. Indeed in a new policy era of austerity (see Clarke and Newman 2012) when larger state funded infrastructure and regeneration projects are off the political and economic agenda, the UK government has explicitly articulated its increasing reliance on different forms of local capacity or 'localism' (Lowndes and Pratchett, 2012) in reaching overall policy goals, in a move likely to create a range of new alliances between forms of activism and organising and governance regimes. This potentially has particular implications for women-centred organising. Simon-Kumar (2011) argues that in contemporary states citizenship in itself became feminised, and that, 'the new order that links the family (and indeed the community) with the state is predicated on feminine modalities of the communal, caring, and interdependency' (451).

Instead of moving away from gender analysis altogether, I would therefore argue that what is needed are more subtle and supple forms of analysis which can work with this sense of both the gendering and un-gendering of urban policy, and that are alert to the different rationalities enfolded in and unfolding within particular spaces and contexts. Analysis needs to consider the ways in which women-centred projects or practices may sit alongside, or indeed be obscured by other kinds of rationalities, for example gendered labour, subjectivities and power may be wrapped up in ideas such as 'community empowerment'. Therefore the dynamics of gendered governance may be

fragmented and discontinuous, such as in a space like the Cornerspace, where different atmospheres and identifications may co-exist within the same space or shift over the course of a day.

 In this way, rather than necessarily seeking to find one particular form of 'gender analytics' in relation to urban policy, gender analysis and feminist theory and approaches could be seen as a broader set of resources. These resources might be seen as imaginative, theoretical, methodological and political as well as analytical, and could inform thinking about the future as well as present of cities and their governance. In an essay entitled 'Feminism Unbound: Revolution, Mourning, Politics', (2005a) Wendy Brown writes about the possibilities for a feminist analysis at a moment where categories of sex and gender have been de-stabilised and made fluid, and in a 'post-modern' era where there is 'the loss of belief in the possibility and viability of a radical overthrow of existing social relations'. As well as taking on the complexity of gender analysis, she also argues for holding on to utopian and radical visions associated with feminism, as prompts to think about the present differently rather than necessarily blueprints for the future, 'an exuberant critical utopian impulse... that... remains incitational of thought and possibility rather than turning fundamentalist' (114). Such an approach also seems to avoid prevalent paradigms in feminist analysis that tell the story of feminist theory via the move from modernist or 'essentialist' versions of feminism to the post-modern, fluid and intersectional (Hemmings 2005). Rather such an approach might move between different paradigms of thought and analysis, recognising the incompleteness of all.   The next part of this paper begins to explore some of these traditions of feminist analysis of cities which I argue are still relevant in contemporary analysis.

4.   Feminism and the futures of urban politics

 'What if we could let our objects fly?' (Brown 2005a: 115)

Indeed it is noteworthy that whilst Marxist paradigms of urban analysis arguably remain prominent in broadly conceived urban studies (see eg Harvey 2012) feminist analysis has become much more marginalised (see Jarvis 2009 for an exception). In the rest of this article, whilst building on issues already raised, I take a slightly different analytical perspective on urban policy and politics, by drawing attention to some of the imaginative and theoretical resources which feminist accounts of cities might offer to an analysis of urban governance. This is less in order to stitch together an overall 'analytics' of gender, as discussed in the opening section, than to invoke some more normative visions of possible futures. These resources are not programmatic but rather could be

used in a range of ways, whilst remaining alert to the necessary complexity of a gender analysis as noted above.

Indeed although, as Brown argues (2005a) feminism, as well as critical Left projects more broadly, may have abandoned hope of wholesale revolutionary change (although this might be contested given recent responses to economic crisis), cities are places that change all the time, where spaces are opened up as well as shut down and are constantly being remade both material and symbolically. Feminist analysis of cities has thought about the futures and presents of cities in ways that are relevant to how urban policy and governance might be understood, challenged and done differently. This would include addressing gender inequality but also other forms of inequality and promoting broader visions of social justice. In the rest of this section, I will draw attention to two themes within such analysis: firstly around space and time and how feminist thought has challenged dominant conceptions of these, and secondly around publics and the nature of civic and political interaction.

4.1 The spaces and times of cities

In my earlier research (Jupp 2008, 2012) into community activism in deprived neighbourhoods, I looked at groups of residents taking over what they called 'community houses', ordinary houses lying empty being used by groups of residents for get-togethers and caring activities with different age groups, from babies and toddlers to the elderly. As I have argued elsewhere (Jupp 2008) these spaces framed hopeful and care-ful interactions which held the potential to break down barriers between domestic and public spaces and practices. Indeed, although I would agree with feminist analysts who have questioned whether a public/private divide still has much purchase as an overall analytical framework for politics (Staeheli 1996), I would argue that this divide is still experienced on a daily basis as an embodied and often fraught boundary, perhaps particularly for women (Varley 2008). For the women in that research project, moving away from sometimes confining and even abusive domestic roles into more 'public' forms of interaction and collective action was a significant step, in which particular kinds of spaces played a key role; in neighbourhoods without many commercial kinds of 'public spaces' for interaction (eg cafes) such community spaces were crucial. This links to the points about community spaces as being particularly important sites for women to enter politics made by Staeheli (2003) above.

Indeed feminist thought has persistently challenged some of the binary divisions of space that cities are premised on in both material and symbolic ways: between public and private, and productive

and reproductive spheres. During the 1980s, Dolores Hayden (1980) asked 'what would a non-sexist city look like?' and made suggestions about the sharing of the tasks of 'social reproduction', of domestic labour, domestic space and childcare. She and others involved in feminist architecture and planning (Matrix 1984) proposed spaces that aimed to support the emotional and material demands of unwaged care work of cities as well as that in the waged economy. Although these propositions may initially seem dated both in their depiction of gendered roles and faith in transformative potential of the built environment, I would suggest they still have the potential to incite new ways of thinking about neighbourhood spaces, where burdens of domestic care are still very much gendered, often involving caring across a number of generations.

Inspired by these feminist visions of urban living, Gilroy and Booth (1999) argue for a new project of the 'infrastructures of everyday life' which cities might provide (see also Jarvis 2005) and suggest that planning (the discipline in which they are based) should expand its understanding of 'infrastructure' beyond the material and often economically driven forms normally considered, to informal spaces, networks of care and sociability. They suggest the need for forms of collective resources which link more closely to everyday imperatives and practices such as 'getting by' (echoing a phrase from Lowndes' analysis of gendered models of social capital) and 'having a say'. Their project was part of an EU funded set of research projects examining 'gender mainstreaming'. Indeed it could be argued that these kinds of ideas do to an extent lie behind spaces such as Sure Start Children's Centres, funded under the previous UK Labour government, and discussed at the opening of this paper. However in a new climate of austerity it seems unlikely that the Children's Centre programme will continue to provide spaces as an everyday resource for all families, but rather will frame interventions in the most 'problematic' ones (see CYPN 2010). Furthermore, as I have argued elsewhere (Jupp 2012) the Children's Centre programme perhaps failed to think about and engage with the wider infrastructures of care, what Bowlby et al (2010) call 'caringscapes' of relations, families and material infrastructures, that parents and carers of children navigate. For example I found in my own research that groups of parents often used Children's Centres if they were already friends, but would be unlikely to come by themselves, partly because of the rather uneasy atmosphere of potential surveillance from staff.

Indeed the concept of 'caringscapes' may be particularly useful in thinking through the material but also emotional and affective 'landscapes' of times and spaces of care that many city dwellers, particularly women, navigate in different ways. These caringscapes can be both constraining and enabling, and different routes or terrains may be more or less available to different groups. As Bowlby et al (2010: 149-163) argue, thinking about landscapes of care and how they are embedded

in everyday lives in this way has practical implications for providing services, resources and institutional support. Their framework also places personal and domestic interactions into wider contexts, scales and times of action and this has been a feature of other forms of feminist analysis, which have disrupted or even rescaled the spatial entities through which cities are often mapped. For example, Rachel Pain's (2012) recent work on domestic violence argues that in its felt emotional reality, domestic violence can be seen as a form of 'everyday terrorism', yet as she points out, this form of terrorism carries little political weight compared to the geo-political forms which are the subject of constant public and media debate at a national and urban scale. Indeed considering the 'home' in terms of 'modalities of the domestic' (Das et al 2008) which frame social, political and economic lives, rather than just material space, might also serve as a productive line of analysis in considering urban and social governance.

The kind of re-scaling implied by concepts such as 'modalities of the domestic', 'caringscapes' and 'everyday terrorism', which link multiple sites of experience from the body to that of national government, also potentially place new temporalities at the centre of urban life. Drawing in places on other traditions of time-studies and time-geography (see Bowlby et al 2010, Bryson 2007,2008), it has been argued that various strands of feminist theory offer new ways to conceptualise time and politics, opening up categories of linear time and suggesting the range of different kinds of time that might be at play in the world (Bastian 2011). Bryson and Deery (2010) propose the notion of gendered time cultures which can place activities of care and long term relationship building (for example in the work of midwifery) in opposition to dominant forms of clock time and paradigms of efficiency. Indeed whilst it has often been pointed out that urban policy and governance operates through problematic spatial categories (eg 'the neighbourhood', see Lowndes and Sullivan 2008), it can also be argued that those programmes operate through problematic temporal ones, in paradigms such as 'the project', with attendant targets and milestones (see Gilchrist 2012). In fact, as I argue elsewhere (Jupp, 2012a) the capacities required to transform deprived areas of cities often develop and become effective over a much longer term, requiring huge amounts of tenacity and perseverance, which a culture of 'quick wins', and results often negates, Cockburn (1998) discussing women's organising in Northern Ireland talks of it as a process of 'unavoidable, unending struggle' (216). Similarly, the way in which the past is often thought about within urban regeneration projects, as nostalgia or 'looking backwards' overlooks the embodied relationships with the past as well as senses of identity and collective pride and/or trauma experienced in post-industrial settings in particular (Bennett 2009**).** Instead the past might be thought of as a resource for thinking about possible futures[vii].

In drawing out these points I am not suggesting that such issues only apply to women in cities, but rather that it is feminist and gender-based analysis which has raised these perspectives, and that these are resources that those concerned with urban policy and governance might draw on more systematically in thinking about the past, present and future of cities. Indeed although they may seem utopian, Jarvis (2009) argues that some of the key challenges of contemporary cities, around climate change, ageing populations and widening inequality between rich and poor in particular might be tackled through considering the different kinds of infrastructures that feminist analysis has drawn attention to:

> We suggest that feminist understanding of diverse economies and multiple intersecting infrastructures (material, institutional, moral, emotional) provide a constructive route by which to bring these key issues into the foreground, where the private costs of these are typically born through highly gendered divisions of labour and sacrifice (131).

4.2 City publics and political interactions

As already suggested, such ways of thinking about cities also suggest new ways of thinking about what is public and what is private: in other words what might form part of arenas of politics. Feminist economic geographers J.K Gibson-Graham (2003, 2006) discuss localised, everyday forms of interaction and conviviality as forms of politics which tend to be overlooked, both within versions of official political processes and accounts of urban activism (Jupp 2012a). Gibson-Graham (2003) talk of 'cultivating capacities' through processes such as cooking and eating together, which they see as part of a project of a 'politics of the subject' again echoing earlier points about women's routes to power and empowerment. Again they offer a hopeful and care-ful vision of a future urban politics of diverse 'community economies'.

Their account also points to small-scale and embodied interactions as constitutive of forms of political interaction. Iris Marion Young (2000) draws attention to the importance of potentially small-scale or seemingly banal forms of interaction, such as greetings, handshakes and 'small talk' which might take place on the edges of 'formal' political occasions. She also talks (1990) about the importance of embodied and affective forms of interaction as constitutive of politics. Taking a cue from such approaches, this is a point followed up by Barnes et al (2004) in their analysis of public participation initiatives, which have played a key role within urban and neighbourhood governance in UK policy. Both in this article and elsewhere (Barnes 2008) they draw attention to the emotional dynamics of public participation processes in ways which shed light on both possibilities and problematics. For example they consider how different forms of identification, such as who counts

as 'local people' (which might include officials) impact on how citizens and officials understand the forms of participation they are engaged with. Similarly an attention to embodiment and materiality (Jupp 2008) can shift the attention of analysis, away from discursive policy categories such as 'participation' or 'community' (which as already noted often make invisible the very processes they seek to designate) towards the unfolding of embodied experiences, identifications and subjectivities within particular spaces, which may invoke feelings of solidarity, care and empathy in unexpected places.

Indeed attention to the textures of everyday embodied experience, emotions and affect, have been developed by feminist geographers (Smith et al 2009) over a number of decades, but haven't necessarily been brought together with the concerns of urban governance and governmentality. Such frameworks now intersect with other kinds of social science interest in affect and materiality in politics (Colls 2012). These kinds of analytics can draw attention to the fragmented, contingent and incomplete nature of governance projects, as social policy analysis (eg Hunter 2012) has begun to explore. More specifically it can help to develop different accounts of experiences of civic engagement, and political interaction that have been at the centre of many policy programmes.

Furthermore a close attention to particular kinds of inter-subjective dynamics has been proposed not just as a form of feminist analysis but feminist praxis. For example ideas about 'feminist community work' (Robson and Spence 2011) and 'feminist social work' (Dominelli 2002) have attempted to suggest forms of professional practice which may subvert prescribed approaches to interactions between professionals and ordinary people. Although it would wrong to see these as only about inter-subjective encounters between women, and also to imagine that these imperatives necessarily over-ride other forms of professional rationality, such ideas again draw attention to the different forms of urban politics than can and could exist within urban governance and policy processes, and that may have been obscured by more sweeping critical accounts.

5. **Conclusions**

This article has sprung from a number of pieces of research I have undertaken on neighbourhood governance and community engagement in poor neighbourhoods in the UK, where gender was not an explicit focus of the research at its outset but was obviously empirically significant, as suggested by the example of 'the Cornerspace' discussed in Section Two of the paper. Yet in trying to articulate such significance I have come up against silences both in policy discourses and understandings, and in academic analysis. Other paradigms dominate urban studies and the ambivalences and complexities of contemporary gender analysis can seem paralysing, in particular

around the differentiated nature of gendered identities. However as the UK government turns to community-based and local capacities to fill the gaps left by public sector cuts, gendered labour may be becoming increasingly important yet also potentially increasingly invisible, what I have described as a 'double movement' around gender.

This paper, then, has tried to suggest some routes out of the silences and invisibilities around gender analysis in this terrain. Throughout I have sought to signal the wealth of feminist analysis and writing which relates to wider issues of gender identities, the state, politics and cities. Rather than beginning with an empirical focus on tracing the roles of men and women in policy programmes, such wider literaturere offers the potential for more far-reaching and radical analysis. Firstly the paper drew attention to the conflicted positions of gender and feminism in relation to the contemporary state in the UK and other similar governments, using in particular on the writings of Brown (2005a, 2005b, 2006) and Simon-Kumar (2011). I argue for a more sophisticated analysis of forms of 'gendered governance' that co-exist with other rationalities of government, in different sets of relationships, often in fragmented, discontinuous and uneasy ways. In the sphere of neighbourhood and community projects, women-centred projects around collective care and empowerment may be intertwined with neo-liberal rationalities, even within the same spaces and times. However, despite this complexity, I have also argued for the need to engage with wider traditions of feminist analysis of cities, which can suggest new ways of thinking about spaces and times within cities, for example how 'care' might be better supported with everyday lives (Bowlby et al, 2010) or how gendered notions of time (Bryson 2007) promote particular forms of infrastructure. Consideration of the porous boundaries between public and private lives (Staeheli, 1996) and of the hidden ways in which 'political' action may be initiated through embodied and everyday interactions (Gibson-Graham, 2003) suggest new potentials for change in cities which may be easy to overlook. Such perspectives can potentially bring new ideas, and new kinds of hope, new vocabularies and concepts to thinking about the futures of urban policy and governance to make them more just for all city-dwellers.

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[i] Stuart Hall uses the term 'double movement' in his essay 'Notes on Deconstructing the Popular' (1981) in which he discusses the ways both 'containment and resistance' are woven into popular culture. I am using it here in a different way, to draw attention to both the erasure and presence of gender within governance projects, although both usages draw attention to the paradoxes of contemporary politics in different forms.

[ii] A UK organisation which formed part of the ReGender project and has since 1987 worked on issues of gender and the built environment, the Women's Design Service, has recently shut down due to lack of resources (see www.wds.org.uk).

[iii] 'The Cornerspace' is a pseudonym, see author (2012) for more details on the research context.

[iv] It is now questionable whether 'the social investment state' as a paradigm is applicable to the current UK government, in which 'the social' has perhaps become increasingly separated from the concerns of government.

[v] Given the Brown quote above about the difference between male and female identity and roles and gendered power, it is worth noting that such a style of analysis does not necessarily capture the gendered power dynamics of forms of organising or engagement, irrespective of whether they are actually undertaken by men or women.

[vi] See recent examples at http://www.localtrust.org.uk/

[vii] For an example, drawing on feminist theories of time, see AHRC project http://www.mrseelsgarden.org/