Durham E-Theses

Citizenship and feminism: the importance of political process

Emmett, S.

How to cite:

Emmett, S. (1997) *Citizenship and feminism: the importance of political process*, Durham theses, Durham University. Available at Durham E-Theses Online: http://etheses.dur.ac.uk/4775/

Use policy

Citizenship and Feminism:

The importance of political process.

S. Emmett, B.A. (Hons.)

Thesis submitted for the degree of M.Phil in Politics,

University of Durham.

June 1997.

Abstract

The notion of Citizenship has become a focal point during the 1990s with both politicians and theorists appealing to its virtues as a methodology solving the problems of disenfranchised communities. In many ways feminist theory and practice have already anticipated such debates with theoretical notions of a feminised, caring community, and forms of non-hierarchical, localised, participative political practice. However unlike mainstream deliberation which seems to focus on the citizens themselves, feminists have developed an effective analysis and criticism of the political processes of representative democracy and also the embedded concept of citizenship.

This thesis follows such a tradition using both theoretical concerns and practical motivation. The theoretical strand presents an endorsement of liberal feminism, particularly political citizenship, and the practical route uses a case study of local women councillors based in South Tyneside. In examining why women in the area have so little impact upon representation, the thesis hopes to further our understanding of the difficulties in practical terms and to enhance a better theoretical definition of citizenship which is woman friendly.

Acknowledgements

My first words of thanks must be to my supervisor, Dr Julia Stapleton, for her enthusiasm, unfailing support and encouragement, especially with regard to the final chapters. Also all of those significant others who provided advice and documentation, especially John Temple at South Shields Constituency Labour Party, and all those who completed the postal questionnaire and participated in the interviews for the case study research.

I am also grateful for the granting of a one semester sabbatical from the School of Social and International Studies at the University of Sunderland, without which completion would have been a long way off.

My final words of thanks are to the patience and endurance of both my family and friends.

Contents

Appendices

Introduction

=========

If we can eliminate the false polarities and appreciate the limits and true potential of women's power, we will be able to join with men - follow or lead - in the new human politics that must emerge beyond reaction[1].

It would be difficult not to agree that the legacy of liberal feminism has produced inherent problems for contemporary women, that is, although a large measure of civil liberty has been won, there remains a visible contradiction between formal equality and social reality. Such a legacy is in urgent need of reconstruction, and with such intentions this thesis aims: first, to enhance our understanding of *feminist political theory* and practice and how, and to what extent this can contribute to the problem of *citizenship* for women who live in a socially and economically marginalised locality and, second to identify constraints upon and possible opposition to the *political process* upon which their representation at local government level depend.

The motivation for endeavouring with this project was based upon a firm belief in the importance of the political arena and the process and structures of representation. This standpoint comes from a lifetime of practical concerns and a relatively late development in theoretical analysis. Furthermore it brought about a consistent view that theoretical analysis despite its clarity of understanding and reflective nature can offer only a partial approach and that alternative strategies must include some complementarity with practical localised experience. Such knowledge must also be flexible and sustainable if it is to develop any collective appeal. Finally, reminded of Ulrich Beck's contrast between 'epochal changes' and 'the constancy in behaviour and conditions of men and women',[2] academic discussion must also take account that 'out there' the theory certainly does not match the practice.

1

Thus in order to bridge political behaviour and political theory and also provide an acceptable working relationship between the two, the research examined the arena of local politics within South Tyneside, paying particular attention to the obstacles women councillors experienced in their role as 'political actors' and as representatives of women constituents.

Certainly the background to this appeared a bleak one. Over the past twenty years or so, the massive restructuring of economic activity has been accompanied by similar transformation within both the political and social arenas. Thus along with critical changes within the social structure of Britain, such as a distinct variation in the patterns of family formation and the dissolution of differing gender roles, the economic crisis of the 1970s and the dynamic political form of the new Right, provides the dimensions of a changing world view. An example of this interrelationship was the way in which the shift in the composition of the labour market contributed to a marked decline of those institutions, that is the Labour Party and the trade unions, which had been created to represent the interests of working people and, in electoral terms , was expressed by the low point of 1983 when the Labour party achieved just 28 per cent of the vote.[3]

The debates surrounding such explanations for a decline in the politics of class has produced much relevant work over the years,[4] the most significant of which is the view that a whole new plethora of political concerns have emerged; as Wendy Wheeler considers, 'Modern democratic political practice no longer answers to the lived experience of contemporary life in British society'.[5] It appears that the priority of 'national interest' has been undermined by both local interests as well as global ones, hence such 'concerns' with the 'crisis' of ecological issues, and, above all, gender relations has led to a thorough re-examination of the established views of the interrelationship between state and civil society, individual action, social structures and the significance of spatial dimensions.[6] Thus an individual's political expression maybe shaped by an interaction of class and gender position, economic and social relationships as well as a consideration for specific spatial development. Therefore in

2

order to understand the scope of political activity it is necessary not only, to determine the complexities of gender, class, locality and ideological interaction but also actively engage with those real tasks faced by both institutions and actors.

However, it is perhaps the notion that modern politics can no longer provide the dimension for radical transformation which provides the most fundamental change. The clearly identified forces of progress and their reactionary counterparts no longer promise to change the world and the vacuum created in their absence is filled with hesitant governmental strategies and general disinterest in the party political arena.[7]

Clearly the old identifications are no longer tenable, but similarly the ideal of a rainbow coalition where all categories of interests can come together, is also problematic. An arena of identity politics is often reduced to an overstated hierarchy of oppression, rather than any concept of empowerment. For example, at the present time feminism has a problematic identity. There is no clear message from a 'women's movement', yet, at the same time it invokes an imagine of community. In reality, this 'everywhere but nowhere' image is often simply an unsubstantiated cultural identity. Despite the dynamism which first motivated feminist political goals, it is now often possible to remain in a feminist cultural vacuum, within an existence entirely detached from the real world of collective politics.

If one of the greatest political challenges today is concerned with reconstituting a sense of the collective, a recognition of community and mutual obligation, this cannot be achieved via empty, vague rhetoric within ideas totally detached from the life of society. In order to formulate any politics for tomorrow there is a need for engaging with both, the unexciting world of aggregated politics, with its need for both foundations and alliances, as well as the rich tapestry offered by theory. It may be that any such 'political alliances' may be both temporary and strategic, rather than denoting any real unchangeable identity, but as this thesis argues, any search for a meaningful concept of citizenship cannot simply be concerned with a narrow, unchanging individualistic identity.

Thus the thesis addresses a number of questions and provides a comprehensive account of current knowledge with regard to feminist political theory and political citizenship. Since the 1970s much of feminist theory has regarded the involvement of women within the public arena of political activity as an ineffective practice and liberal feminism in particular was seen as outdated. Its 'male defined' goals, such as policy initiatives to promote equality of opportunity, were likewise labelled white, heterosexual, middle class and malestream. Furthermore much of the research which has been concerned with the relationship between women and politics has concluded that much in line with mainstream political activity, the political arena is not so much representative of the needs and interests of individual people as of the needs and interests of political parties and their ideologies.

Yet, despite the feminist challenge of questioning and trying to counterbalance the relationship between the public and private, public policy still remains a powerful influence upon women's everyday lives. Similarly, whilst acknowledging the impact of national decision making, local initiatives and opportunities are also an important factor in women's lives given the evidence which suggests that the most substantial female political presence is involved with those issues which are of local and community concern.[8]

Unfortunately as far as local democracy is concerned the outcome of any local policy making is becoming more and more under the control of central government initiatives. Furthermore as far as women's 'interests' or representation are concerned, most research confirmed that local government similarly mirrors the partisan nature of national party politics[9] and in particular the way in which individual women's allegiance is divided between specific women's based interests and those of the male dominated parties.[10]

Given such an indictment the possibility of a redefined citizenship from a liberal feminist standpoint seem bleak. However it is the intention of the following empirical evidence to examine the extent to which current initiatives, such as the various commissions on 'Citizenship' and 'Local Democracy'[11] or the formation of affirmative

4

action by local government women's committees,[12] have challenged top-down party policy making and the continuing alienation that this brings, not only to the individual autonomy of women, but also the liberal principles of pluralism, participation and responsiveness.

In order to address such concerns the thesis is structured in three sections; the first section plots the extent to which current feminist analysis has helped our understanding of who the subject within political theory really is and the problems of an identity which is based upon distancing ourselves from others rather than one which is relational; the second section maintains this concept of personal autonomy and looks at the standard definitions surrounding the concept of citizenship. Once again seeking to uncover the male bias and the consequential problems this has created for women. The final third section continues the issue of citizenship as a 'theory of social welfare development'[13] in order to maintain the link between women's lack of political representation, their role of dependency and a citizenship which is defined as 'service delivery' rather than one concerned with 'equality and difference'. It also addresses the specific question: does the lack of women's influence and involvement in local political parties characterise a challenge to representative democracy? Using three theoretical chapters it covers the current changes which have taken place both at national and local level, and a detailed empirically based case study of women council members and party activists within South Tyneside, a locality which represents an area of social and economic change. The chapters are briefly summarised thus;

Chapter One reviews a number of feminist literatures, which challenge the legacy of political thought.

Chapter Two follows closely with a similar review of those feminist literatures which have been influenced by post- modern writers.

Chapter Three determines the tension between mainstream knowledge and feminist epistemology.

Chapter Four identifies the historical construction of the equality/ difference debate within feminist thought.

5

Chapter Five returns to the problem of the liberal public/private dichotomy and its influence upon our conception of citizenship.

Chapter Six examines the classic T.H. Marshall conception of citizenship and the problems that this has created for women.

Chapter Seven continues with an identification of the weaknesses which have evolved from such an embedded definition of citizenship and in particular the rights versus duties debate.

Chapter Eight reflects upon the current community/society discussion within citizenship theory and addressing much of the current rhetoric.

Chapter Nine examines the political process and in particular the role of political parties in representation.

Chapter Ten considers women's success as political representatives at a national level. It also describes some of the initiatives which have currently been developed by 'new Labour'.

Chapter Eleven determines the extent to which the recent central government driven changes in local government have presented opportunities for citizens, either in the role of decision makers or as service recipients.

Chapter Twelve sets the context of the case study and examines the role of local women councillors in general and examines some of their 'successes'. It then looks specifically at the importance of local political culture and the legacy of womens' political activism in South Tyneside.

Chapter Thirteen presents the Case study of women councillors in South Tyneside and includes interviews with members, and activists over a period of three years. The main objective was to consolidate the thesis question and review the level of democratic process and the representation of women in the locality.

Chapter Fourteen marks the conclusion of the thesis, and attempts to draw together the detailed empirical findings from the Case study, provided in Chapter Thirteen with the theoretical conclusions of the preceding chapters. Also any implications will be considered.

Finally this thesis intends to endorse Friedan's call for women to 'extend their struggle for self realization in their personal lives by moving into the public arena', and likewise her belief that the second stage of feminism should be in unison with men, in order that we can all participate in the responsibility of 'enriching human possibilities' and confronting problems of national and social survival beyond the special interests of women'.[14]

Endnotes:

[1]   Betty Friedan, (1982), *The Second Stage*, London, Michael Joseph, p348.

[2]   Ulrich Beck, (1992), *Risk Society: Towards a New Modernity*, London, Sage, p104.

[3]   B. Sarlvik and I. Crewe, (1983), *Decade of Dealignment: The Conservative Victory of 1979 and Electoral Trends in the 1970s*, Cambridge, Cambridge University, pp333-336.

[4]   P. Dunleavy, (1979), 'The Urban Basis of Political Alignment: Social Class, Domestic Property Ownership, and State Intervention in Consumption Processes', *British Journal of Political Science*, 9, pp 409-443; M. Harrop, (1980), 'The Urban Basis of Political Alignment: A Comment', *British Journal of Political Science*, 10, pp388-398.

[5]   Wendy Wheeler, 'Nostalgia isn't nasty: The Postmodernising of Parliamentary Democracy', Mark Perryman, ed. (1994, *Altered States, Postmodernism, Politics, Culture*, London, Lawrence and Wishart, p94.

[6]   Examples include A. Giddens, (1990), *The Consequences of Modernity*, Cambridge, Polity; D. Massey, (1994), *Space, Place and Gender*, Oxford, Polity.

[7]   A. Lipow and P. Seyd, 'The politics of Anti-Partyism, *Parliamentary Affairs*, Vol 40, No2 April 1996, pp273-284; Paul Webb, 'Apartisanship and anti-party sentiment in the United Kingdom: Correlates and constraints', *European Journal of Political research*, 29 April 1996, pp365-382.

[8]   Vicky Randall, (1987), *Women and Politics, An Alternative Perspective*, Basingstoke, Macmillan Education, p58.

[9]   George Boyne, 'Assessing Party Effects on Local Policies: a Quarter Century of Progress or Eternal Recurrence'?, *Political Studies* (1996), XLIV, pp232-252.

[10]   Joni Lovenduski and Pippa Norris, (1993) *Gender and Party Politics*, London, Sage.

[11]   Commission for Local democracy, (1995) *Taking charge: the rebirth of local democracy*, London: Municipal Journal; Labour Party, (1995) *Renewing democracy, rebuilding communities*, London: Labour Party; Local Government Commission for England,(1995) *Renewing local government in the English Shires*, London HMSO; Speaker's Commission on Citizenship (1990) *Encouraging citizenship: a report of the Speaker's Commission on Citizenship*, London, HMSO.

[12]   Julia Edwards, (1995), *Local Government Women's Committees*, Aldershot, Avebury.

[13]   Gillian Pascall, 'Citizenship: A Feminist Analysis', G.Driver and P.Kerans, (1993), *New Approaches to Welfare Theory*, Aldershot, Edward Elgar, p215.

[14]   Betty Friedan, (1982), *The Second Stage*, London, Michael Joseph, p18

Section One
The Challenge to Theory.

There can be little doubt that the legacy of the Enlightenment has dominated modern scholarship, not only its attempt to reveal general, comprehensive principles in order to understand both natural and social life, but in its vision of 'true' scholarship. As Linda Nicholson in *Feminism/Postmodernism*,(1990), maintains: this replicated 'a God's eye view' and, although there have been other traditions present, such as historicism and romanticism: 'Nevertheless, an ideal of scholarship as transcending the perspective of any one human being or group has persisted as at least one highly powerful ideal'.[1] Such was the inspiration of liberalism and its expressed universal notion, that all individuals are born free and equal, which in turn brought men to challenge the old hierarchical order.

Such liberal philosophy also became instrumental to women's questioning of their seemingly 'natural' subordination. However as this section summarises whilst the liberal foundations of feminist theory are inherent to feminism, so are the patriarchal foundations of liberal theory inherent to liberalism. Thus women's exclusion is premised because they are women and not 'individuals'; as Carole Pateman states; 'fraternity meant exactly what it said, brotherhood'.[2]

The absent challenge to the patriarchal system within liberalism and its characteristic male dominance, power and hierarchy, has been the constant theme of contemporary feminist work and although the writings within this perspective are both myriad as well as distinct, a recurrent issue amongst many current feminist activists and writers is that of the effect of female biology on woman's self-perception, status and function in both the private and public arenas. However, it could be argued that this strengthened essentialist, separatist argument, which highlights both the biological status quo as well as the process of gendering in women's subordination, has not only fuelled but intensified the antifeminist backlash or at least supported the conservative stance, which states that biology is woman's unchanging destiny.[3]

Thus this first section of the thesis is concerned with the plethora of theoretical comment within feminist political theory and to question the direction of feminism as an emancipatory discourse.

Endnotes:

1   Linda Nicholson, ed., (1990), *Feminism/Postmodernism*, London, Routledge, p2.
2   Carole Pateman, (1989) *The Disorder of Women*, Cambridge, Polity, p38.
3   Sherry B. Ortner, (1974), *Woman, Culture and Society*, Stanford Press.

Chapter One

Beyond Liberalism:

The canon of political thought.

For most of its history, Western political theory has ignored women. We seldom appear in its analyses of who has or should have power; when it has deigned to notice us it has usually defended our exclusion from public affairs and our confinement to the home; only rarely have we been seen as political animals worthy of serious consideration.[1]

All feminism is liberal at its root in that the universal feminist claim that woman is an independent being (from man) is premised on the eighteenth century conception of the independent and autonomous self.[2]

Liberal political thought appears to hold out a universal promise based upon a conception of human nature which emphasises our uniqueness as human beings in our capacity to be rational. Such a universal doctrine, which claims the natural freedom and equality of all individuals, at face value presents a shared common origin with feminism. However, it is all too easy to suppose that feminism is no more than a generalisation of such liberal assumptions and arguments for women and as this section will explore, the apparent universal categories, such as the 'individual' or the 'political' are in fact sexually particular and constructed on the basis of male attributes, activities and capacities. Thus, for feminism, one of the most important and complex legacies of the past is the construction of a manifestly universal 'individual' within the crucially divided private and public arenas. Hence feminism has been taken as concerned with nothing more than women attaining equality, via the same status as individuals, workers or citizens as men. The 'universal' goal was that of a human being exhibiting male characteristics and engaged in masculine activities. As Carole

Pateman comments; 'Existing patriarchal theory has no place for women as women; at best, women can be incorporated as pale reflections of men'.[3] The abstract character of liberal individualism has in the past attracted much criticism, and continues to do so, yet it is within feminist theory that a possibility of a new approach is offered. Drawing on the work of French feminism, psychoanalytic theory, and recent French philosophy, the idea of a unified individual or self is scrutinised. From such a perspective individuals can be feminine or masculine and embodied and sexually differentiated, rather than a unitary abstraction. Also, for women to be recognised as autonomous beings those activities regarded as the public and the political, along with the private and the social, must be completely reconceptualised. There can be no better place to start than a critical reading of political thought.

Although gender relations are not, and have never been static,[4] for centuries women's subordination was perceived as 'natural' and in accordance with the hierarchical tradition of patriarchal order.[5] However the first systematic justifications of women's rights were inspired by those liberal and democratic theorists, whose radical individualism challenged the status quo. Thus the ideas of political theorists, such as Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679), John Locke (1632-1704), Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1788) and Thomas Paine (1737-1809), in expressing the fundamental, universal notion that all individuals are born free, at least endorsed the potential for women 'to strive for optimum status'.[6] For example, the confrontation, which occurred in England during the mid 17th century, which resulted in Civil War and social transformation, caused women to ask why the new egalitarianism had not been extended to them. Writing about marriage in 1700, Mary Astell wrote, 'If all men are born free, how is it that all women are born slaves?'[7] Not only was the absolute authority of the monarchy being undermined, but the traditional male claim to authority also.[8] Unfortunately as Carole Pateman observes; 'Liberal theory presupposes the opposition between nature and convention but the opposition can be neither admitted nor its implications pursued.'[9]

Further consideration of the liberal founding fathers, Locke and Rousseau confirms the limited nature of liberalism. Locke's challenge to the paternal rights of Filmer[10] was based upon the Christian argument which emphasised God's construction of the world in accordance with the laws of reason; if this was universally understood, then all individuals would be equally bound by the law of nature. Furthermore, Locke believed that in order to secure civil freedom and legal equality as a political subject, an individual simply exchanges 'natural' right along with the other natural rights of life, liberty and property.[11] However, the resulting separation of social life into two autonomous spheres of public and private, meant that women's situation became synonymous with 'conjugal society', that is, within a voluntary 'compact between man and wife'. Locke did not view the right of men over women as 'political' but rather as divine or spiritual, being subject to consent,[12] and although he conceded a great deal of sexual equality, in the last resort he gave precedence to husbands, justifying this by a 'Foundation in Nature', because the husband is naturally 'the abler and the stronger'.[13] This in fact meant that patriarchal power became detached from paternal power, and thus strengthened as a result.

Moreover, even though Rousseau identifies liberal social contract theory with the production of a corrupt unequal civil society, he similarly believes that women must be 'subjected either to a man or to the judgements of men and they are never permitted to put themselves above these judgements'. Men's dominion over women is argued as following from the respective natures of the sexes, which Rousseau describes in his ideal 'natural' education for a man in *Emile*, written in 1762. The education of his female counterpart Sophie, differed greatly, developing into a dual role of both stimulating and restraining male desire[14]. So, in the perfect equality of Rousseau's ideal Republic, 'liberty, equality and fraternity' was applicable only to men and following Locke, male sovereignty was affirmed because within 'the family, it is clear for several reasons which lie in its very nature, that the father ought to command'.[15]

Despite women's continued involvement within various dissident movements in both England and France during the 17th and 18th centuries, the majority of reformers did not question the anomaly of women's situation. The involvement of French women within the Paris Commune during 1871, and the Revolutionary movement brought little change, despite the significance of women's actions leading up to the hunger march to Versailles. Both before and after the storming of the Bastille, the salons of Paris became the debating ground for political radicals of various factions.[16] Following the example set by Olympe de Gouges' re-examination of the ideals of the French Revolution in 'Declaration des Droits de la Femme et de la Citoyenne' written in 1789, two years later, as a witness and sympathizer of the events in France, Mary Wollstonecraft's *Vindication of the Rights of Woman* employed the key Enlightenment theme of human rights in order to illuminate women's position and needs. The extension of such ideas to women and the widening out of criticisms of hereditary rights, duties and exclusions, to include those which derive from sexual difference, brought Wollstonecraft to argue that Rousseau's 'female character' was not natural and that once women were educated, like men, to be 'rational' citizens, the philosophy of the Revolution must also apply to them. Directing her criticism towards idle, middle class women, she described the latter as, 'Confined,...in cages like the feathered race, they have nothing to do but plume themselves and stalk with mock majesty from perch to perch'.[17]

Wollstonecraft believed that education would transform the 'trivial' and 'cunning' aspects of woman's nature, and replace it with 'rationality', thus providing the key to a 'virtuous' life. However, there was no conflict of interest within Wollstonecraft's thought, because her disregard for the extension of the franchise was overridden by her belief that a woman's first responsibility as a rational person was to maintain her duty as a mother.[18] Although admittedly a natural rights argument, calling for equal human rights, the most radical and central aspect of the *Vindication*, is the idea that femininity is an artificial construct imposed by patriarchal culture.

More than half a century later, John Stuart Mill and Harriet Taylor argued many of these points in their own work on the 'woman question' and although Mill was undoubtedly the first man to make a systematic defence of women's rights, it is possible that his work is indebted to Wollstonecraft's views on women's need for economic independence and education in order to remedy the false creation of 'femininity' and to promote a view of 'marriage as friendship'. Concern for the status of women and the relationship between the sexes had, in fact, continued within the circle of Unitarian and Utilitarian Intellectuals since Wollstonecraft's influential membership and it was as members of such a social circle that Taylor and Mill first met. Educated to be the perfectly 'rational man', by his dominant father, James Mill and the legal reforming utilitarian, Jeremy Bentham, John Mill's synthesis attempted to provide a progressive, yet necessary balance between the conflictual themes of utilitarian, demanding for society the greatest happiness of the greatest number with libertarianism, claiming that freedom to develop autonomy is a necessity for every human being.

The fact that Mill used the single issue of the 'woman question', on which to focus much of his political and moral arguments is not altogether surprising. As Gertrude Himmelfarb states in her study of J.S. Mill, 'whilst Harriet Taylor may have represented for him the emancipated woman, his mother was the archetype of the enslaved woman'.[19] In one of his very few references to his mother, he describes the relationship as unhappy and refers to his childhood as one in which he, 'grew up in the absence of love and in the presence of fear'.[20] Also his unconventional, twenty eight year, relationship with Harriet Taylor created intrusive and persistent personal problems. Although eventually marrying when they were both in their forties, Mill and Taylor were subjected to fierce criticism because, until his death, Harriet remained married to her wholesale druggist husband, John Taylor.

Their joint work maintaining that freedom and equality of opportunity for women was simply the extension of liberal ideology to that half of mankind who so far had been deprived, obtained its most systematic treatment in the form of two essays

'The Enfranchisement of Women', which originally appeared in the *Westminster Review* in 1851 and was reprinted in *Dissertations and Discussions* and attributed to Harriet. The second, 'The Subjection of Women', was written in 1860-61 and published as a pamphlet in 1869. Both Mill and Taylor believed that if women were to acquire equality of opportunity, they required full citizenship, that is equal suffrage, because as individuals, they could no longer be adequately represented via a husband's vote. However, although Taylor in fact wanted full economic, social as well as political citizenship, Mill was very aware that given the cultural problems, such a task was arduous.[21] Also as the emphasis moved from equality to liberty, then the purpose of political, civil and social equality became one of establishing those conditions under which individuals could freely develop their individuality.[22] Mill's use of the 'woman question' as a pertinent expression of the growing tensions produced by the reality of a woman's life, the egalitarian ideology of liberal citizenship and the patriarchal vision of womanhood within Victorian society[23] was, in fact, integral to his far wider vision of a society that characterized progress, creativity, and dynamism and above all crucial to 'individual happiness'.[24]

Hence, the effect upon political thinking of the two central liberal concepts of equal rights and the innate rationality of the individual proved profound. It is also relevant that women, and especially married women were a permanent problem for liberal theory, that is;

> Liberal theorists still have to confront, and answer, a very embarrassing question, namely, why it is that a free and equal female individual should always assume to place herself under the authority of a free and equal male individual.[25]

Although Locke challenged a father's authority over adult sons the natural authority between husband and wife was presumed to endure. This status was further reinforced by Rousseau, who despite his emphasis on a General Will and appeal to originally free and equal individuals, excluded women, on the grounds that their sexual

nature would destroy civic virtue. However, as Mary O' Brien points out, the paradoxical formula from Rousseau, which makes domesticated female sexuality the cement for social order, was not without influence with the early liberal feminists.[26] For example, both Mill and Wollstonecraft maintained that the sense of duty and justice developed within the 'private' sphere of the home and was incompatible with public, civil justice.[27]

Like Wollstonecraft's 'logical' analysis of a woman's role in the private sphere as a foundation for the public arena, Mill also placed great store on the centrality and correct ethos of family life, which would school children in the moral sentiments required for a liberal polity. As Richard Krouse points out, Mill realised that democratic association would need to pervade all levels of life, and the family provided him with such 'a political sociology of everyday life'.[28] However, Rousseau's image of women as 'creatures of the family and love, a particularized passion', were set opposed irrevocably to political virtue and public duty. Fearful of women's enslavement to 'passion', Wollstonecraft's answer was rational education in order to achieve self determination and virtue, however women's family role was to provide the basis of this emancipation. Not suprisingly there was little recognition of the way in which the sexual division of labour would come to support private and public patriarchy, and thus the contemporary view that in reality the implications of this liberal understanding of citizenship was that, if women were to become full citizens, then they would have to become like men.

The greatest strength of Mill's argument lies in his acknowledgement that the artificial construction of sexual differences must be overcome. However, in fact, he returns to the natural role of motherhood, maintaining that a woman's autonomy would be protected within the realm of a freely negotiated egalitarian marriage. Not surprisingly, Mill disregarded the more radical standpoint of Harriet Taylor, who believed that women's autonomy would not come about unless they achieved economic independence.[29] It is also relevant that unlike Wollstonecraft, Mill failed to recognise that women, unlike men, cannot disassociate themselves from sexuality.

Despite his awareness of the dichotomy between reason and feeling within abstract rationalism, many feminists, especially those who challenge outright all 'male stream' political thought and philosophy,[30] would contend that Mill's philosophical style and logical genre was far removed from the emotional reality of most men's and women's lives. Such theorists would also contend that Mill's work fell short of Wollstonecraft's often passionate pleas and her later rejection of the philosophical genre in preference for the format of the novel.[31] However, this line of argument could also be used in Mill's defence, as only such a logical defence of women's rights would have been recognised, given the fact that the literature of political theory is under the command of the philosophical and phallocentric.[32] In fact, even his measured and rational language did not save him from a vicious attack by his contemporaries.[33]

Hence those recent feminist criticisms of traditional theory that have coincided with a crisis in mainstream 'male' political thought and philosophy, have provided an important contribution to challenging women's oppression through the questioning of its 'legitimising ideas'. This also inevitably means that such interpretations of the tradition enter a hermeneutic circle and all relevant historical texts are approached in a similar critical perspective. Post-modernism has also brought into question the 'malestream' canon of political thought. However, whilst some 'postmodernist' influence has been welcomed by some feminists, who see it as a route to demystifying and reconstructing theory in a way that helps us to understand the necessary partial perspectives and power relationships, others remain cautious arguing that its inherent conservatism delegitimates any challenge to mainstream 'male' thought and thus could never provide a basis for a feminine politics.

Such debates will become central to the other chapters within this section, along with a consideration that liberal feminism has been significantly underrated and, as a political movement, characterized purely as a limited struggle for the vote representing a narrow range of middle and upper class women. Furthermore this section will explore whether liberal feminism can continue to be regarded as representative of the interests of all women and maintains a wide range of political

positions.   Or perhaps as Valerie Bryson contends, 'There is no one form of feminist politics appropriate for all women, in all circumstances and in all societies'[34]. Nevertheless, it is the intention of this thesis to echo the belief that;

> Good theory can, however, allow us to distinguish between genuine disagreements and failures of communication or differences of emphasis, and to identify possible forms of appropriate political action and the ways in which these may interconnect'.[35]

Endnotes:

[1]   Valerie Bryson, (1992), *Feminist Political Theory*, Paragon House, New York , p1.

[2]   Zillah Eisenstein,(1981), *The Radical Future of Radical Feminism*, Longman, New York, p4.

[3]   Carol Pateman, 'The theoretical subversiveness of feminism' in C.Pateman and E Gross,eds, *Feminist Challenges*, (1986), Allen & Unwin, London p8.

[4]   For example, a plethora of historical evidence suggests that many women were economically self sufficient in the seventeenth century; see Christopher Middleton, (1979); Harriet Bradley, (1989).

[5]   Assumptions regarding women's natural inferiority had been inherited via the scriptures, from the classical and medieval period, see Diana Coole, (1988); also patriarchy has taken differing forms over time, see Gerda Lerner, (1986); Sylvia Walby, (1990).

[6]   Diana Coole, (1988), *Women in Political Theory*, Hemel Hemstead, Harvester Wheatsheaf, p101.

[7]   Mary Astell (1666-1731) quoted by A.Oakley and J. Mitchell eds, (1976), *The Rights and Wrongs of Women*, Penguin, Harmondsworth , p379.

[8]   Alison Jagger, (1983), *Feminist Politics and Human Nature*, Harvester, Brighton p20.

[9]   Carole Pateman, (1989), *The Disorder of Women*, Cambridge, Polity, , p27.

[10]   P. Laslett, ed, (1949),*Patriarchia and Other Political Works of Sir Robert Filmer*, 1680, Oxford: Oxford University Press .

[11]   P.Laslett,ed, (1960), John Locke, *Two Treatise of Government*, Cambridge University Press, ~171, p381. 'Political Power is that Power which everyman having in the State of Nature, has given into the hands of the Civil Society and therin to the Governours whom society hath set over itself'.

[12]   Ibid., II ~81 p202 - Divorce.

[13]   Ibid., II ~82 p321 - The Power of the Husband.

[14]   Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Emile or on Education*, (1762) Penguin Classic, (1991), London, BkV pp 357- 480.

[15]   Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *A Discourse on Political Economy*,(1750-55) Everyman,(1983), London, p118.

[16]   Eva Figes, (1978*)*, *Patriarchal Attitudes*, Virago, London, p102.

[17]   Mary Wollstonecraft, *The Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, (1792), Penguin, (1985), London , p146.

[18]   Ibid., p156.

[19]   Gertrude Himmelfarb, (1974),*On Liberty and Liberalism: The case of John Stuart Mill*, Knopf, New York p187.

[20]   Stillinger, 'The Early Draft', pp183/4, F.E. Mineka & D.N.Lindley, eds., (1963-1989), *Collected Works of J.S.Mill*, Toronto and London,

21   Stefan Collini, ed., (1989), *J.S.Mill : On Liberty and other writings,* 'The Subjection of Women', (1869), Cambridge University Press, p120.

22   G.Himmelfarb, (1974), *On Liberty and Liberalism: The Case of John Stuart Mill*, Knopf, New York p171.

23   P. Branca, (1975), *Silent Sisterhood, Middle Class Women in the Victorian Home*, Croom Helm, London, Ch3.

24   Stefan Collini, ed., (1989), *J.S.Mill :On Liberty and other writings,* 'The Subjection of Women', (1869), Cambridge University Press, Ch.4, p213.

25   Brennan & Pateman, 'Mere Auxillaries to the Commonwealth; Women and the Origins of Liberalism', *Political Studies* 27, 1979, p195.

26   M.O'Brien, (1981*), Politics of Reproduction*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, p95.

27   Diana Coole, 'Re-reading Political Theory from a Woman's Perspective', *Political Studies,* Vol ,No1, March 1986, p141.

28   Richard Krouse, 'Patriarchal Liberalism and Beyond', J.B.Elshtain, ed, (1982), *The Family in Polticial Thought,* Harvester Press, p170.

29   Taylor & Mill, 'Enfranchisement of Women', 1851, in A.Rossi, (1970) *Essays on Sex Equality,* University of Chicago Press , p105.

30   An example is Mary Daly, (1979) G*yn/Ecology: The Meta-Ethics of Radical Feminism,* London: The Women's Press, p412, who discusses the poverty of male thinking ...'crippled and tied to linear tracks'.

31   Jane Moore, 'Promises, Promises: the Fictional Philosophy in Mary Wollstonecraft's Vindication of the Rights of Woman', C. Belsey & J. Moore,eds, (1989), *The Feminist Reader*, Macmillan, London, pp155-174.

32   Helene Cixous, 'Sorties: Out and Out: Attacks/Ways Out/Forays:'C. Belsay & J. Moore, (1989), *The Feminist Reader*, , Macmillan, London, pp101-116.

33   Amongst others J.F. Stephen ridiculed Mill in *Liberty, Equality and Fraternity* 1873.

34   Valerie Bryson,(1992*), Feminist Political Theory*, Paragon House, New York , p7.

35   Ibid.

Chapter Two

Who Knows?

Postmodern Challenges.

At the core of feminist ideas is the crucial insight that there is no one truth, no one authority, no one objective method which leads to the production of pure knowledge. This insight is as applicable to feminist knowledge as it is to patriarchal knowledge, but there is a significant difference between the two; feminist knowledge is based on the premise that the experience of only half the human population needs to be taken into account and that the resulting version can be imposed on the other hand. This is why patriarchal knowledge and the method of producing it are a fundamental part of women's oppression, and why patriarchal knowledge must be challenged - and overruled. [1]

Feminist theory has taken a variety of forms during its long history, and although there are, in many respects, continuities within those arguments posed by the pioneers of feminist thought and present day feminists, contemporary work has been distinguished by a developing challenge to the most fundamental aspects of existing social and political theory. The intention of this chapter, therefore, is to examine some of the theoretical positions which have influenced contemporary feminist analysis, particularly within the scope of social and political theory and practice. However, it is important to recognise that as feminist research is grounded in two worlds, that is the world of the specific discipline and the world of feminist scholarship, such a perspective must contain the dual vision of both distrust and belief. Thus, whilst the feminist reading of the classical texts of political theory has established a necessary interpretation concerning the great founding fathers and their thoughts about women, indicating the potentially subversive and radical nature of contemporary feminist

political theory, the visionary emancipatory project of a 'progressive being' remains amazingly intact.[2]

There can be no doubt that, as the influential work of Virginia Woolf reminds us, any study, which attempts to construct women as an agent of the narrative, cannot be undertaken without raising important questions such as; 'Can a focus on women add a supplement to history without also rewriting history?' And thus beyond that, What would the feminist rewriting of history entail?[3]

Furthermore, the exploration of such questions has undoubtedly resulted in the creation of a new field of knowledge, which is itself marked not only by the tensions and contradictions regarding the difficulty of rewriting women into history, but is also concerned with the deeply gendered nature of history itself. When contemporary feminists first began to discover the extent of the misogynist rhetoric in many of the texts, one immediate response was to declare that the whole incomplete heritage should be rejected. Certainly the sexually particular character of the manifestly portrayed universal individual is the most important, complex and problematic legacy of the past for feminism, especially given the potency of the 'universal promise' delivered by both liberalism and socialism. Also unlike these humanist discourses, with their implication of a conscious, knowing, unified, rational subject, feminism, in common with 'postmodernist' sentiments, 'theorizes subjectivity as a site of disunity and conflict, central to the process of political change and to preserving the status quo'.[4] Nevertheless, whilst acknowledging the problems within the liberal humanist discourse, all modes of discourse are in some form or another, both reflective and an integral part of the past and thus it is impossible to completely dismiss either the classics or contemporary methodology.

Primarily the implicit notion within much of the early feminist work was the idea that 'feminism' would become obsolete once the goal of equality was reached. This is a charge which could be made at Wollstonecraft's search for egalitarianism in *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792), and de Beauvoir's existentialist explanation in *The Second Sex* (1949), because they both employed a method of

analysis, which took 'woman' as its object. Although such a reliance upon traditional patriarchal techniques, concepts and frameworks, in order to develop an analysis of women's inequality contained many unanticipated problems, it also epitomises the influential relationship between feminism and mainstream philosophy. Later, during the sixties, when feminists began to once again question the images, representations, and ideas concerning women and the feminine, their initial attention was directed towards patriarchal discourses, that is, either those who were openly hostile to that which was 'feminine' or had in fact got nothing to say about women. Thus, it was the content only, which was oppressive to women. At this point they were keen to include women as objects worthy of investigation and include those spheres of direct relevance to women's lives; for example, the private sphere of interpersonal relations. Hence, feminist discourse at this time included names such as Marx, Marcuse, Laing, Satre, Masters and Johnson. By adding an analysis of women's specific, social, political and economic experiences, this approach sought to transform political theory from a 'male dominated enterprise into a human enterprise'.[5] However, many feminists, particularly radical feminists such as Mary Daly, believe that patriarchal philosophy has proved incapable of enveloping women into their discourse and that in fact the whole activity of theorising is identified with maleness. A further development along these lines states that if such philosophy has grown out of a need to repress or exclude femininity, then such perspectives are a 'dangerous and ensnaring trap'.[6]

Such a view ignores the point that the articulation of political and social theoretical terms and themes is an on going, non static human activity. For example, if the definition of gender is examined, that is, as an understanding of gender which involves 'knowledge about sexual difference',[7] knowledge is further expressed as that understanding which is formed by cultures and societies concerning human relationships, in this instance, of those between men and women.[8] If such knowledge is constructed via complex relationships of domination and subordination, it is not simply concerned with ideas but also the institutions and structures of both everyday and ritualized practices. The inability of isolating knowledge from variable social

22

organizations suggests that, in fact, knowledge is a way of ordering the world. Such a theoretical agenda, contesting the meanings and values formed by social organizations and their political implications have formed current poststructuralist perspectives. These include the work of Saussure's structural linguistics, Althusser's Marxist ideology, Freud and Lacan's psychoanalysis, Derrida's theory of 'differance' and Foucault's theory of discourse and power.

During the last decade, the world of scholarship has increasingly become dominated by poststructural and postmodern critiques, which call into question the grand theories of the past; or in other words, the use of universals has been overtaken by concepts of difference and particularity. The term postmodernism cannot be summarized in one idea or phrase, but is rather an amalgam of a number of scholarly ideas. In an attempt to simplify the main themes, a good starting point is the work of Jean-Francois Lyotard, who in questioning the presumptions of the modern age, that is, the belief in reason and scientific enquiry as the provision of an objective, reliable and universal foundation for knowledge, as well as its transcendental and universal qualities, in fact challenged the very notion that any concept can be universally evaluated or correctly established. Explaining the concept of 'metanarratives' as privileged discourses that deny and silence all other competing discourses, Lyotard argues that the hegemony of Enlightenment thought is associated with certain political baggage, because it is embedded within the specific historical time and place of its creation. Thus, according to Lyotard:

> In contemporary society and culture ... the question of the legitimation of knowledge is formulated in different terms. The grand narrative has lost its credibility, regardless of what mode of unification it uses, regardless of whether it is a speculative narrative or a narrative of emancipation'.[9]

Similarly, Michel Foucault also emphasises the inadequacy of metanarratives and particularly the need to examine the characteristics of power and its relation to

knowledge. He sees ' reason' as related to chaos and 'truth' erroneously fixed during the long process of history. Accordingly, the false power of hegemonic knowledge can simply be challenged by alternative sites of meanings and explanations. These discourses are the historical, social and institutional sites where meanings and power are determined. He sees the ability of controlling this knowledge and meaning, through cultural and social relations as the key to understanding the relationships of power, which he regards as being diffused throughout society, rather than located in the state.[10]

In the search to understand the construction of social meanings, scholars have come to recognize that meaning is both temporary and precarious. According to Jacques Derrida, dominant meanings within western philosophy are created through comparison with an 'other', that is a principle of *differance*, according to which meaning is both the result of differences between a plurality of 'signifiers' and the resulting precariousness of fixed meaning. Hence knowledge of more than one meaning and the recognition of this allows for a measure of choice on the part of the individual, even if this is simply one of resistance. All meanings must be analysed in the way they are constructed and used, thus rejecting and deconstructing universal, simplified definitions in order to reveal the complexity of 'real' lived experience. Even silences and contradictions may hide notions of identity and meaning. Thus such an approach emphasizes local, specific and historical analysis, the importance of difference and the shortcomings of any universalized essentialism.[11]

Initially, postmodernism seems to have a great deal in common with those aspects of radical feminism, which also challenges the Enlightenment celebration of reason and in particular Western philosophy's quest for truth and certainty. However, whilst it would be true to say that a number of positions have been ascribed to 'postmodernism', the term and the ideas originally championed by Lyotard, is seriously at odds with those other theories ascribed under this term. In fact these 'new' theories involve a plethora of overlapping and sometimes contradictory schools of thought, which have been variously labelled as 'poststructuralist', 'discourse', 'deconstructionist',

24

'psychoanalytic', 'linguistic' or 'French' theory.   However, a feminist critical position has been drawn from developments in the psychoanalytic and linguistic theories of Derrida, Foucault and Lacan, especially the crucial importance of language and how it determines who we are, how we see the world and how we exist. Hence the fluidity of the meaning of words, like our sense of ourselves or our view of the world, is constantly being modified, resulting in the meaning of words becoming a critical site of the power struggle between dominant group 'discourses'.   Weedon suggests that the ideas of Derrida are particularly useful for feminist critical practice, that is not only his critique of subjectivity and language, but also the philosophical precepts which are derived from *'differance'*. That is, criticism is based upon binary opposites, such as unity/diversity, reason/emotion, man/woman and because these are both embedded within their opposite and hierarchically defined, the first term depends on the definition of its other. Such a 'deconstruction' methodology is useful for feminism as it offers a means of 'decentring the hierarchical oppositions which underpin gender, race and class oppression and of instigating new, more progressive theories'.[12]

For a group of French feminists writers, of whom the most familiar are probably Julia Kristeva, Luce Irigaray and Helene Cixous, the struggle over language, particularly men's definition and articulation of womanhood, is a key issue and indicative of male structural control. However, as Valerie Bryson reminds us, there are a number of problems with these writers. Their tendency to imply not only biological essentialism, but a sexual reductionism without any social context, ignores the fact that we can experience our bodies in non sexual ways and that this in turn questions the assertions about the limited nature of male sexuality. Also, because they imply that feminist practice should be critical or literary, rather than political, and that any encounter with existing male structures should be rejected in favour of a separatist feminine discourse, means that any kind of cohesive political action is impossible. Similarly, it could be argued that by refusing to ask 'big' questions concerning political and social arrangements, then, as Lovibond asks, 'How can there be any effective

challenge to a social order which distributes its benefits and burdens in a systematically unequal way between the sexes'?[13]

Alternatively, of course, the danger is that by insisting that all is plural, multiple and different, then a traditional metaphysical position is also effectively asserted and for this reason some postmodern feminists are even anxious to reject the label of 'feminism'. However, as Rosemarie Tong maintains their work is, 'profoundly feminist in the sense that they offer to women the most fundamental liberation of all - freedom from oppressive thought'.[14] Whilst few feminists argue for a total adoption of postmodernism, some in fact believe that there can be a postmodern perspective within feminism. Fraser and Nicholson, who provide the vanguard of this move, emphasise the similarity and compatibility of feminist and postmodernist thought. They argue that both have sought to develop new paradigms of social criticisms, which reject traditional philosophical foundations. Furthermore, because postmodernism has focused upon philosophical problems, while feminism has been more concerned with practical political questions, Fraser and Nicholson believe that the two approaches complement one another. Their belief that the postmodernist offer of 'sophisticated and persuasive criticisms of foundationalism and essentialism', will encourage recognition of differences and ambiguities without sacrificing the search for a 'broader, richer, more complex and multi-layered feminist solidarity, and thus overcome 'the oppression of women in its 'endless variety and monotonous similarity'.[15]

Such perspectives have particularly questioned the analytical category of gender, a point taken up by the historian, Joan Wallach Scott who states,

> Instead of attributing a transparent and shared meaning to cultural concepts, post-structuralists insist that meanings are not fixed in a cultural lexicon but are rather dynamic, always potentially in flux.[16]

Yet, as Susan Bordo warns, an uncritical postmodernism could encourage gender to be seen as endlessly multiple, inherently unstable and continually self destructing,

susceptible to dissolving into relativity and political paralysis. Admittedly gender never portrays itself in 'pure' form, but rather in the context of lives shaped and influenced in multiple ways. Nevertheless, there are many circumstances in which, for example, white women and women of colour discover profound 'commonalities' in their experiences along with differences.[17] However, such tensions surrounding the deconstruction of gender continue to be a central theme throughout this thesis.

Another important influence on recent feminist thinking, is that of the position of the subject put forward by the theorist, Foucault. As subjectivity is created in and through discourses, there are multiple as well as contradictory threads to an individual's identity, thus by highlighting gender alone, this may repress or marginalize other positions, whilst privileging the white, middle class, heterosexual position. A point stressed by bell hooks on the isolation of coloured women.[18] Similarly it is not simply what is literally said which is open to contention, but also the ways in which arguments are structured and presented as well. As previously argued, the deconstructionist, Derridean analysis undermines any claim to neutral, objective or universal mastery and instead believes that meanings can in fact be constructed through exclusions. Not only does this challenge absolute standpoints by purporting that any theory necessarily only provides a partial account, but also highlights the active role of producing knowledge and that to provide a total account can only be regarded as authoritarian. This is also supported by Joan Wallach Scott's argument;

> Feminist history then becomes not just an attempt to correct or supplement an incomplete record of the past but a way of critically understanding how history operates as a site of the production of gender knowledge'.[19]

Such a stance which calls into question the hierarchies of difference inevitably opens the way to change and in the area of political thought this is not possible without a major transformational rethink. Nevertheless, many feminists feel deeply

ambivalent towards such views on theory and truth and whilst many accept the social constitution of knowledge, most also support 'the truth' concerning gender oppression. Such a relativist post structuralist perspective indicating the prevalence of powerful group positions is extremely negative for those groups who are traditionally weak and yet remain committed to social change. Thus deconstruction is perhaps better thought of as a 'moment in critical theory, rather than a final objective or goal'.[20] Perhaps this serves as a useful reminder that if all categories are provisional, involving the dynamics of inclusion and exclusion, then feminism is also not immune from the possibility of authoritarianism. It is important, therefore, that there is an awareness of the diversity between the different types of feminist critical analysis, that is, especially between academic scholarship and activist political work. If this is seen in a positive way, then as Geraldine Pratt suggests it could provide a starting point for a cooperative meaningful and realistic alliances among women and between women and men.[21] At worst, it could be argued that such ideas, have in many ways turned feminism from a 'subversive social movement into an inward looking elite activity'....'elitist, intolerant, deliberately inaccessible and also essentially conservative',[22] but optimistically at best such analysis could provide a 'framework that can be applied to all forms of social and political practice'.[23]

To conclude, it is the intention of the initial section of this thesis to confront political philosophy from a feminist discourse, that is, to take as the methodology a feminist perspective as the starting point and political philosophy itself as the object of study. It is only in this way that problems concerning the neutrality of the theoretical frameworks and women's invisibility, as both objects and subjects of the discourse, as well as the process by which such philosophy legitimates itself, can be addressed. As Moira Gatens suggests it is by 'self-consciously' demonstrating that any philosophical paradigm is not neutral, that feminists, as philosophers are able to make women 'visible'. In turn, this visibility then questions the legitimacy of those theoretical claims and assumptions which have so far been taken as infallible. The unique essence of

human nature within Enlightenment epistemology, which sees the rational, conscious individual striving for self determination, is fundamentally gender blind.

It is also hoped that the value of thinking through the impact of some poststructural ideas in the context of a specific theoretical and empirical study of citizenship may curb some of the worse abstract excesses of poststructuralist epistemology as well as diffuse some of the tensions both within feminism and between feminist politics and poststructural theories. Also that the danger of sliding into an uncritical celebration of plurality and uniqueness is checked by a 'continuing dialogue between genealogical and interpretive traditions' and a close affinity with 'the structured nature of everyday life and a feminist political commitment to positive social change'.[24] Such a rejection of universal truths does not produce a negative anti theoretical stance or a philosophy of ambiguity, but rather a commitment to a strategy of theory and practice. However there can be no clear ethos, no 'blueprint' notion of political action. To arrive beyond patriarchal theory and practice into a truly universal human philosophy would render feminism redundant, a dream unsuccessfully pursued by feminism's first approach. Rather a commitment to feminist politics will continue the necessary perpetual act of critical analysis.

Finally, over the last 25 years feminist theory has developed in such a way as to be able to look at women in new and varying ways, refusing to reduce or explain women's particularity in terms of what is inherently masculine. Rather from the point of view of women's perspectives and interests, feminist theory has gone beyond 'male stream' theoretical positions in developing differing forms of theory and practice. Thus as Shulamit Reinharz states:

> Making the invisible visible, bringing the margin to the centre, rendering the trivial important, putting the spotlight on women as competent actors, understanding women as subjects in their own right rather than objects for men - all continue to be elements of feminist research.[25]

This concentration on how the lack of knowledge is constructed remains a constant theme through feminist research and also reflects that such research is grounded both within the discipline and its critique. In the words of Elizabeth Gross; 'Theory in the future would be seen as a sexual, textual, political and historical production.'[26]

Endnotes:

[1]   D. Spender, 1985, *For the Record: The Meaning and Making of Feminist Knowledge*, London, The Women's Press, p5-6.

[2]   Stefan Collini, ed 1989 *J.S.Mill: On Liberty and other writings*, (1859), Cambridge University Press, p 213.

[3]   V. Woolf, quoted in J.Scott, 1988, *Gender and the Politics of History*, Columbia University, p17.

[4]   Chris Weedon, 1987, *Feminist Practice and Poststructuralist Theory*, Oxford, Blackwell p21.

[5]   Carole Pateman & Elizabeth Gross, (Eds.), 1986, *Feminist Challenges*, Sydney, Allen & Unwin, p.16.

[6]   Mary Daly, 1979, *Gyn/Ecology*, Boston, Beacon Press, pp 107-175.

[7]   Joan W. Scott, 1988, *Gender and the Politics of History*, Columbia University, p2.

[8]   Lois McNay, 1992, *Foucault and Feminism*, Oxford, Polity, p70-74.

[9]   J-F. Lyotard, 1984, 'The Postmodern Condition', p37, quoted in Malcolm Waters, 1994, *Modern Sociological Theory*, London Sage, p 209.

[10]   Michel Foucault, 1980, "Truth and Power," R. Rainow, ed., 1991, *The Foucault Reader*, London, Penguin, pp 51-75.

[11]   J. Derrida, 1976, 'Of Grammatology', explanation Chris Weedon, 1987, *Feminist Practice and Poststructural Theory*, Oxford, Blackwell, pp 105-6.

[12]   Ibid., p 165.

[13]   S. Lovibond, 'Feminism and Postmodernity' in R. Boyne and A Rattansi, eds., 1990, *Postmodernism and Society*, Basingstoke, Macmillan, p 172.

[14]   Rosemarie Tong, 1989, *Feminist Thought*, London, Unwin Hyman p223.

[15]   Nancy Fraser and Linda Nicholson 'Social Criticism without Philosophy: An Encounter between Feminism and Postmodernism', in Nicholson, L. ed. 1990, *Feminism/Postmodernism*, London, Routledge, p34.

[16]   Joan Scott, 1988, *Gender and the Politics of History*, Columbia University, p5.

[17]   S. Bordo, 'Feminism, Postmodernism, and Gender-Scepticism', in Nicholson, L. ed. 1990 *Feminism/Postmodernism*, London, Routledge, p134.

[18]   Black writer and teacher bell hooks maintains that 'the idea of common oppression was a false and corrupt platform disguising and mystifying the true nature of women's varied and complex social reality', *Femininst Theory: From Margin to Centre*, 1984 Boston p44, cited in Elizabeth Spelman, 1990, *Inessential Woman*, London, The Women's Press, p189.

[19]   J. W. Scott, 1988, *Gender and the Politics of History*, Columbia University, p10.

[20]   G. Pratt, 'Debates and Reports: Reflections on Poststructuralism and Feminist Empirics, Theory and Practice', in *Antipode* 25:1, 1993, p59.

[21]   Ibid. p60.

[22]   Valerie Bryson, 1992, *Feminist Political Theory*, New York, Paragon House, p228.

[23]   Chris Weedon, 1987, *Feminist Practice & Poststructuralist Theory*, 1987, p87.

[24]   G. Pratt, 'Debates and Reports: Reflections on Poststructuralism and Feminist Empirics, Theory and Practice', in *Antipode* 25:1, 1993, p61.

[25]   S. Reinharz, 1992, *Feminist Methods in Social Research*, Oxford University, p248.

26   E. Gross, 'What is Feminist Theory?', in C. Pateman & E. Gross eds., 1986, *Feminist Challenges,* Sydney, Allen & Unwin, p204.

Chapter Three

Feminist Answers:

Theory and practice.

> The point...is not to find the lowest denominator...not so much to unite as to
> congeal - each element retaining its integrity and value, stuck together for a
> particular purpose, each of us using our skills to shift and relate, adjust and
> integrate.[1]

Feminists are continually stretching the boundaries of what constitutes a search for knowledge and perhaps the above quotation from Bettina Aptheker's Tapestries of Life, in claiming that integration can still reflect diversity, as well as disagreement, epitomises the aims of this thesis. In many ways, Betty Friedan's pioneer work, The *Feminist Mystique* (1963), started it all, when she talked to women and concluded that, 'There was a strange discrepancy between the reality of our lives as women and the image to which we were trying to conform'.[2] Challenging the usual social science 'academic conventions of distance and methodology', her starting point of women's experience, rather than that of a unitary disciplinary problem, not only identified with the women she talked to but also deliberately drew upon her own very similar experiences. In fact, her research model which was criticized and devalued as investigative journalism, proved an effective approach in her quest to assess the reality of women's lives. Her exposure of the myth of the contented suburban American housewife, whose frustration and disappointment, had neither acknowledgement or credibility within male based public knowledge, was consequentially labelled by her as the 'problem without a name'. Although her work did not explicitly link the ordering of such processes, with the power of a male based view of the world, as the more radical critiques of feminists such as Mary Daly or Sheila Rowbotham established later[3], nevertheless, the essential recognition was that, 'All human beings have a biased and

limited view of the world: biased in that it begins with self, and limited in that it is restrained by experience'.[4]

In accepting that there are many ways of viewing and experiencing the world, personal involvement is now regarded as not only characteristic of feminist research, but also central to the crucial issue of challenging men's authority to construct knowledge about women. Thus starting from this central strategy of 'one's own experience', the following considerations will reflect those personal interests and concerns which have influenced my own empirical and theoretical work within the discipline of politics. Therefore, it is the intention of Section One and Two of this thesis to formulate a synthesis of the ideas surrounding 'citizenship'; and in Section Three, with the use of empirical work, tell an expanded story of women's relationship within the 'public' arena of 'political' activity within the North East of England. Keeping in mind the familiar adage that 'politics is a man's world' and moreover that the discipline of political science tends to keep it that way,[5] the narrow sexual definition accorded to politics will be examined, that is, as society assigns roles by sex, then in turn political activity is limited to a set of roles which are mainly regarded by society as 'male'. Hence, in any attempt to unravel such an amalgam of gender and power, there can be no neutral interrogation of theory. Rather any such explanation will reflect ambiguity, contradictions, diversity, resisting as well as welcoming change, along with the interwoven dimensions of class and gender power.

Although such formulations are obviously in line with those post structural tendencies, which have closely questioned the value laden nature of 'truths', the analysis has not been directly influenced by any specific poststructuralist thinker, but rather reflects a more general influence that such theories have had upon what constitutes an acceptable account. Also, if one claims to be "starting from one's own experience" in order to produce some useful data, define the research questions, and also build up the trust of others involved in the research, it is important to remember that such research may read as partly informal, engaging with micro, personal problems as well as macro, public concerns. This is a common theme within much

33

feminist work. Thus, in her introduction to *Public Man, Private Woman* (1981), the political scientist, Jean Bethke Elshtain states;

> I started this book many times. I experimented with different ways to write it. I tried out alternative voices. Each rethinking and reworking gave me the courage to be more provocative and less abstracted from the wellsprings of my own thought and action as these revolve around the public and private theme.[6]

However as outlined in the preceding chapter, the political implications of a postmodern perspective has produced scepticism amongst many feminists, and certainly if taken to its logical extreme, such thoughts would appear to undermine the feminist emancipatory goals for a better, more egalitarian world. As Seyla Benhabib states:

> For feminist theory, the most important "knowledge-guiding interest" in Habermas's terms, or disciplinary matrix of truth and power in Foucault's terms, are gender relations and social, economic, political and symbolic constitution of gender differences among human beings.[7]

Similarly, Susan Hekman observes that because feminism is challenging the 'very foundations of western thought and social structure', the political and philosophical demands of postmodernism are not equal to the task. She also warns that by arguing that all knowledge is 'contextual and historical', then the Enlightenment epistemology that defines knowledge as either absolute or relative, is rendered obsolete. Likewise the abandonment for a search for truth reveals a 'parasitic' assumption of the modernist position, that is, 'the necessity for a foundation for knowledge'.[8] This is also particularly evident for feminists, who remain consistently united to modernist assumptions about knowledge. For example not only the adherence to modernist creeds by liberal and socialist feminists, but it could also be argued that radical feminist rejection of masculine epistemology and an attempt to

34

provide an absolute feminist knowledge, follows the foundationalist principles of Enlightenment thought.

Yet, as Pauline Marie Rosenau argues, it is also relevant that the sceptical postmodernist view, which sees the 'political as a construction in the sense that any political stance originates not in conclusive generalizations but in uncertainties, subjective interpretations and contradictions' is very relevant for feminist epistemology.[9] Certainly, many of the empirical pursuits of the past have become so ambiguous as to be rendered meaningless. For example, although the concept of 'social class' was understood within the varying theoretical frameworks of functionalism, Marxism, conflict and Weberian perspectives by using the 'common' framework of an 'action approach',[10] in fact, class was defined as a collection of individuals with common characteristics that place them in the same status.[11] The measurement by occupation, education or median family income, had particularly acute problems for women even up to 1970, because their earning power was ignored. In political science, it was not until 1982 that Eilleen McDonough compared the derived status that women get from their husbands, with those of women who had achieved status through their own accomplishments. Similarly, the sociological study of gender was deeply shaped by the functionalist developments of Talcott Parsons.[12] Thus the complementary 'expressive' and 'instrumental' roles portrayed as functional in the maintenance of social stability and equilibrium, not only posed significant obstacles to feminist rethinking, but also encouraged the view that gender was simply another variable, rather than a basic social category which could be challenged.

Feminists, such as Nancy Harstock see a link between positivist knowledge and the dominance and control of subordinate groups, that is, in the relationship between the disjunction of subject and object and the organization of gender.[13] Thus from this perspective, the separation between acts, actions and action meanings, particularly in research on women and politics, certainly stems from the masculine gender bias in positivistic epistemology.[14] This is particularly evident in the manifold ways in which the assumptions of 'behavioural methodology' has trivialized women's

condition, excluded women as objects of study, precluded the examination of the explanatory concept of gender, reduced the moral claims for equal treatment to mere interest group ideology, so implying that the construction of social relations are unchangeable. Hence the study of women and politics contains a particular challenge to the inadequacy of mainstream Liberal epistemological tradition, particularly the 'add women and stir' prescription.[15]

One approach, which has enabled researchers to perceive women's self understanding within the context of larger social and political values, adopts a methodology which blends techniques of 'structural anthropology and philosophical hemeneutics'.[16] In fact, there are many case studies, which demonstrate that women have a long history of participation, often as leaders, within community affairs, thus dispelling distorted stereotypes of women's 'apolitical nature'. Of course, such studies also underline the restraints and social expectations concerning women's domestic responsibilities which either validate or stigmatize women's political action.[17]

Indeed the view that women are so different to men, that knowledge about them requires a total reconceptualization of existing theories and methodologies has been forwarded mainly by those strategies derived from psychoanalysis rather than hermeneutics. Developed from the work of Luce Irigaray and premised upon the Lacanian assumption of the Symbolic Order,[18] such theorists use an analogy of women's sexuality, that is, as a celebration of something which is 'multiple, diffuse and heterogeneous', in order to reject masculinist methods, as well as assuming essentialist strategies for all women. However as some observers cautiously advise, such jamming 'of the theoretical machinery', also means that there is a methodological problem for feminist researchers in that they must 'suspend the pretension of truth'.[19]

In *Money, Sex and Power*, (1983), Nancy Harstock summarises the problems.

The real issues are the extent to which feminists can borrow from phallocratic ideologies without their own analysis suffering in consequence, and the extent to

which feminist theory can take place without being relocated onto the ground provided by a specifically feminist epistemology.[20]

Therefore for women to 'transcend' their marginalized, inferior position is obviously an impossible achievement in a postmodern world which rejects the epistemology of subjects and objects, thus they must insist on a central vision of the world. Also postmodern strategies of 'resistance to power,[21] and 'conversation',[22] although useful supplementary tools, offer no help in the 'goal' of political change.

Finally, it can be argued that as postmodernism ultimately denies knowledge, it can offer no possibility for the creation of a feminist epistemology. Thus the quest towards a feminist epistemology, which as Susan Hekman suggests, 'is decentred, rejects the search for an absolute grounding for knowledge, espouses pluralism, and focuses on the phenomenon of human understanding as a mutual, contextual process', cannot be an easy task. However, in a positive vein, Hekman also argues that the tensions uncovered by the critiques of Enlightenment 'reason' provide an important insight to the deficiencies within much of social science behavioural research. For example, the rejection of binary oppositions and the absolute grounding for knowledge, could free such research from the unproductive quest for objectivity, which in reality simply reproduces 'valueless' research blinded within its own normative presuppositions. Moreover, her viewpoint is also cautious about the search for a feminist epistemology which is grounded in the belief that women are essentially different from men and hence there must be a distinct 'female reason'.[23]

However such arguments regarding women's 'essential differences' are not new. Attacking the adequacy and clarity of men's perceptions of women proved the foundation for Mary Wollstonecraft's fierce criticism of 'partial experience masquerading as truth' in the texts of male theorists.[24] Similarly, J.S. Mill argued cogently that there were good reasons to suspect men's claims to know about women, because of men's power over women's economic and emotional security. The resulting relationship of 'master' and 'slave' meant it was unlikely that women would challenge

37

their 'master's expectations'. Also, the restrictions upon women's opportunities, given the legal and social restriction, made it impossible to assess the scope or nature of women's potential.[25]

Also, it can be argued that the 'ethic of care' developed by a number of feminists as an account of women's 'unique' moral and political sensibilities is not unlike that developed about men's moral capacities by the 18th century Scottish moral and political philosophers. Carol Gilligan's account of an 'ethic of care', which developed out of a critique of the theory of moral development proposed by the psychologist Lawrence Kohlberg et al. argued that men and women reflect a very different conception of the essence of morality, that is, women tend to display the morality of caring, more than men.[26] Similarly, Scottish Enlightenment moral theory also concentrated on the 'objective reality of morality'. For example, Francis Hutcheson's account of morality was based upon a sense of 'benevolence', or the connection we feel with others, whilst David Hume's complex 'interaction of sympathy' was grounded in our particular circumstances[27]. Furthermore, Adam Smith's synthesis of sympathy was built upon 'empathy' or our ability to imagine how we would feel in the same situation as another[28]. As Joan Tronto summarises; 'Nonetheless, Gilligan's ethic of care seems much closer to the moral philosophy of the Scottish Enlightenment than it does to the views of Lawrence Kohlberg'.[29] However, is it relevant that such a philosophy dismissed any biological claims about caring being innately female? Joan Tronto suggests that perhaps 'caring was attributed to women only because in a post-Kantian world contextual moral theories were devalued'.[30] However, to continue along this line of argument is beyond the scope of this chapter, but will be developed further within the next section.

Similarly, those 'essentialist' ideas taken up by contemporary radical feminists, which regards the attributes of reason and objectivity as inherently male, whilst the qualities of emotion and intuition are innately female, simply reproduces patriarchal gender stereotypes rather than those produced by a more argued analysis. Also criticising this key theme, the work of Judith Grant suggests, such foundations 'posits

an invariant female experience at odds with the multiplicity of women's lives. And it is grounded in an appeal to intuition which is at once authoritarian and relativist'.[31] Hence given such problems any foundation for epistemology or methodology would prove to be highly unsatisfactory.

It is important to recognise that we need to be aware of the political nature of our attempts to know and thus approach questions from a political as well as historical and contextual framework. There is also a need for feminist knowledge to be wary of a total rejection of those democratic ideals of reason and discourse, which takes into account the plurality of theories and reflections. Rather a feminist epistemology must be based upon an ability to 'show us the significance of distinguishing raw experience from interpreted experience'.[32] How experiences are interpreted remains an open question, positing queries about the boundaries between male and female, and intuition and rationality. If experience is to be used as the basis for feminist epistemology, then this needs to be refined. As 'experience simply exists', as a basis for theory, there needs to be 'an evaluation of the interpretation of such experience'. How experiences are interpreted remains an open question, positing queries about the boundaries between male and female, and intuition and rationality. If experience is to be used as the basis for feminist epistemology, then this needs to be refined. As 'experience simply exists, as a basis for theory, there needs to be 'an evaluation of the interpretation of such experience'. Thus Judith Grant further ascertains:

> A theory which rejects reason and also wants to be democratic is highly problematic. Without reason, analogy, axiom, and assertion can pass for argument. And assertion can only be refuted with other assertions. Thus, such theories risk devolving into authoritarian non-theories more akin to religions. It is reason which makes discourse possible.....It is faith and intuition which cannot be challenged'.[33]

Sandra Harding also concurs that feminist empiricism is problematic. She pertinently states, 'I think my thoughts, but it is my culture that observes through my eyes and arranges and rearranges thoughts in my mind'.[34]

Thus, feminism and mainstream foundational empiricism are in tension with one another. On the one hand, feminism claims to be following the principles of enquiry even more rigorously than their androcentric predecessors, who have ignored gender bias; whilst on the other, such a view states that without feminism's challenge to scientific method, sexist and androcentric biases cannot be detected or eliminated. Harding regards that her 'feminist standpoint' theory has successfully challenged the concept that knowledge in modern Western cultures originates and is tested against a very limited and distorted type of social experience. She states:

> Women are thus excluded from men's conceptions of culture. Furthermore, women's actual experiences of their own activities are incomprehensible and inexpressible within the distorted abstractions of men's conceptual schemes. Women are alienated from their own experience by the use of the dominant conceptual schemes'.[35]

Her argument continues with the development of the view that if daily activity is structured by the social divisions of gender, then limits are set upon one's experience. Also, if it is accepted that the advancement of 'ideas' are inextricably tied to changes in concrete social relations, then, 'movements of social liberation make possible new kinds of human activity and it is on the basis of this activity that new sciences can emerge'.[36]

Thus, the conclusion of this chapter is in sympathy with Thomas Kuhn's argument that it is better to understand the history of science in terms of increasing distance from falsity rather than closeness to truth.[37] Therefore, feminist inquiry, whilst avoiding absolute, universal and complete explanations, should equally aim to produce the less partial and tenacious representations usually expressed within

western political thought. However, at this point in time, although there are obvious tensions, feminism needs both Enlightenment and postmodern agendas.

Endnotes:

1   B. Aptheker, 'Tapestries of Life: Women's Work, Women's Consciousness and the Meaning of Daily Experience', (Amerherst, MA:University of Massachusetts Press, 1989), p251, in Shulamit Reinharz, (1992) *Feminist Methods in Social Research*, New York, Oxford University, p240.

2   Betty Friedan, 1986, The Feminist Mystique (1963), Penguin, p9.

3   M.Daly, 1973 *Beyond God the Father: Toward a Philosophy of Women's Liberation* presents a radical feminism based upon an explanation concerning biological sex and Patriarchal gender; S.Rowbotham, 1973 *Women's Consciousness, Man's World*, presents a contemporary Marxist feminist explanation.

4   Dale Spender, 1985, *For the Record, The Making and Meaning of Feminist Knowledge*, London, The Women's Press, p10.

5   S. Bourque & J. Grossholtz, 1974, "Politics an Unnatural Practice", in *Politics and Society*, p225. Also S. Reinharz,1992, *Feminist Methods in Social Research*, Oxford University Press, p248.

6   Jean Bethke Elshtain, 1981, *Public Man, Private Woman*, Oxford, Martin Robertson, pxii.

7   S. Benhabib, 'Feminism & postmodernism: An uneasy alliance', in *Praxis International*, 11:2 July 1992.

8   S. Hekman, 1990, *Gender & Knowledge*, Cambridge, Polity, p152.

9   P.M. Rosenau, 1992, 'Post-Modern Political Orientations and Social Science', in *Post Modernism & the Social Sciences, Insights, Inroads and Intrusions*, Princeton, p139

10   'action approach' - 'the central idea of this approach is that the sociologist should proceed by seeking to 'understand' those he studies', cited in Cuff and Payne, 1984, *Persectives in Sociology*, London, Allen & Unwin, p113.

11   Davis and Moore, *Sociological Review* vol 10, 1945, cited Cuff and Payne, 1984, *Perspectives in Sociology*, London, Allen & Unwin, p61-2.

12   Talcott Parsons, 'The social structure of the family', 1959, cited in Cuff and Payne, *Perspectives in Sociology*, London, Allen & Unwin, p63-66.

13   Nancy Harstock, 1983, *Money Sex and Power: Towards a Feminist Historical Materialism*, New York, Longman.

14   R. Kelly, B. Ronan, M. Cawley, 'Liberal Positivistic Epistemology and Research on Women and Politics', in *Women & Politics*, Vol 7 no 3 1987, p25.

15   M. Hawkesworth, 'Beyond Methodological Monism', in *Women & Politics*, Vol 7 no 3 1987, p6.

16   E. Buker, 'Storytelling Power: Personal Narratives and Political Analysis', in *Women & Politics*, Vol 7 no 3 1987, p29.

17   M. Segalen, 1983, *Love and Power in the Peasant Family*, Oxford, Basil Blackwell; O.Banks, 1981 *Faces of Feminism, a study of feminism as a Social Movement*, Oxford, Martin Robertson, B. Hill, 1989, *Women, Work and Sexual Politics in Eighteenth-Century England*, Oxford, Basil Blackwell.

18   'The symbolic order in Lacanian theory is the social and cultural order in which we live our lives ad conscious, gendered subjects. It is structured by language and the laws and social institutions which language guarantees', citation from Chris Weedon, 1987, *Feminist Practice and Poststructuralist Theory*, Oxfrod, Basil Blackwell, p52.

19   P. McDermott, 'Post Lacanian French Feminist Theory: Luce Irigaray", quoted by M. Hawkesworth in *Women & Politics*, Vol 7 no3 1987, p7.

20   Nancy Harstock, 1983, *Money, Sex and Power: Towards a Feminist Historical Materialism*, New York, Longman, p295.

21   See P. Rabinow, ed., 1991, *The Foucault Reader*, London, Penguin.

22   Richard Rorty, 1991, *Objectivity, Relativism and Truth*, Cambridge University Press, in S.

Mulhall & A. Swift, 1992, *Liberals and Communitarians*, Oxford, Blackwell, pp 232 - 247.

23   S. Hekman quoted in D. Fowlkes, 'Feminist Epistemology Is Political Action' in *Women and Politics*, Vol 7 no 3 1987, p2.

24   M. Wollstonecraft, 1985, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, (1792), London, Penguin.

25   Stefan Collini, ed., 1989, *J.S. Mill: On Liberty and other writings*, see *The Subjection of Women*, (1869), Cambridge University Press.

26   The Gilligan/Kohlberge debate; C. Gilligan,1982 *In a Different Voice*; L.Kohlberge, 1971, 'From Is To Ought: How to commit the Naturalistic Fallacy and Get Away With It in the Study of Moral Development' in *Cognitive Development and Epistemology*.

27   J.Tronto, 'Political Science and Caring: Or, The Perils of Balkanized Social Science', in *Women and Politics*, Vol 7 no3 1987, p90-91.

28   Ibid., p92

29   Ibid., p93

30   Ibid.

31   J. Grant discusses some of the cultural radical feminist persepctives, such as Mary Daly and Adrienne Rich, in "I Feel Therefore I Am: A Critique of Female Experience as the Basis for a Feminist Epistemology", quoted by M. Hawkesworth in *Women and Politics*, Vol 7 no 3 1987, p8.

32   Ibid., p 99.

33   Ibid., p113.

34   S. Harding, "Feminism, Science and the Anti-Enlightemnment Critiques," in L. Nicholson, 1990, Feminism/Postmodernism, p94.

35   Ibid., p95.

36   Ibid., p98.

37   T. Kuhn, 1970, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*,Chicago Press.

Chapter Four

Equality or Difference?:

The way forward.

Feminism is necessarily pro-woman. However is does not follow that it must be anti

man; indeed, in time past some of the most important advocates of women's cause

have been men. Feminism makes claims for a rebalancing between women and men

of the social, economic and political power within a given society, on behalf of both

sexes in the name of their common humanity, but with respect for their differences.[1]

This final chapter within the first section of the thesis continues that analysis into 'women's silence in the encoded knowledge of our society',[2] by analysing the influence of history upon the definitions of feminist theory and practice. However, it is relevant that as both feminism and history are social products, to participate in such an examination must be moderated by the knowledge that the ideas produced can, in part, only be determined by their circumstances. From this perspective, feminism is not only concerned with many varieties of political discourse, but also with 'the activity of giving them a voice, an access to power hitherto denied',[3] Those arguments setting out the pretext that the basic equality between men and women is an attainable goal, as well as the assertion that the subordination of women, created by the genuine unalterable male/female differences, can also be overcome, have been further complicated by the view that feminism is in fact for and about only 'some' women, that is, usually white, middle class women. Nevertheless, by examining the interrelationship between feminism and history, such a standpoint draws attention to a great variety of understandings concerning women's identities over the years. For example, in *Feminism and Equality*, (1987), Anne Phillips was aware that the choice of words used by women describing the origins of their problems differed considerably. Those

writers, especially within the social sciences referred to women's inequality by stressing women's omission from what has been granted to men, as active oppression and subordination by the holders of power.

Similarly Kate Campbell addresses the critical motif of women's voices by stating:

> Of course our voices need to be heard, and feminism depends on women learning to give their own accounts and to speak on their own behalf, breaking silence. But voices can easily be plaintive as silence, the two together the recto and the verso of a mythologizing and incapacitating literary book: we have to reckon with the fact that as voices we're at our most incorporeal, and apt to be locked into victim scenarios. [4]

Such ambiguity means that to project any trace of similarity or homogeniety must be fraught with difficulties, so in order to comprehend the origins of such discrepancies, it is valuable to understand how such differences were expressed within the history of feminism. Certainly Virginia Woolf's call for 'a history of women' has been extensively addressed and during the last decade has in fact accumulated a vast 'new knowledge about women',[5] Furthermore, the political arguments have ranged from Mary Wollstonecraft's 'wild wish' rejecting women's subordination to their bodies and passions,[6] or the later argument made by suffragists that sexuality was not as significant as their lack of citizenship, to the deterministic existentialism of de Beauvoir's *Second Sex,* (1949) and the challenge to the public arena of politics by Kate Millet, *Sexual Politics,* (1970). Thus the production of such a body of knowledge, which has proved to be diverse in topic, methodology and interpretation, has often resulted in the subject matter either being added on to other traditions, or following an independent disconnected path. There can be no doubt that despite its diverse connotations, the term feminism continues to convey both controversy and antipathy. However, in order that women's ideals can be effectively articulated both today and in

the future, a historical understanding and re-examination of its conception is an essential condition for any political effectiveness.

Perhaps in order to be able to argue productively, it has been necessary to formulate a broad consensus of the term feminism. Certainly, central to any historical thought surrounding feminism is the belief that feminism is a social force, that is, those ideas and political actions surrounding feminism are dependent upon the belief that in all societies which divide the sexes into differing political, economic and cultural spheres, women are less valued than men. Also important to this end, is the view that women can consciously and collectively change their social positions. However, as this chapter hopes to explore, even by reflecting upon the cumulative knowledge of the comparable cultures of western liberal democracy, the contributions and political dynamics embedded within continental European women's history has differed with that which has been generally understood as emerging from the Anglo-American tradition.

For example: a composite dictionary definition of 'feminism' reads as follows:

> a theory and/or movement concerned with advancing the position of women through
> such means as achievement of political, legal or economic rights equal to those
> granted men.'[7]

Such a definition is in line with the accepted portrayal of both British and American women's movement, which centred upon women's formal entry into the public arena. This powerful movement, acknowledged as first wave feminism, dated from around 1848, (when the Senaca Falls conference was held in the USA and the employment bureaux concerning the lack of access of middle class women to suitable employment, was set up in Britain), to 1930, (when women between 21 and 30 and without property finally became enfranchised in 1928). Thus by symbolizing the movement as campaigning on a very narrow range of issues, that is, primarily a struggle for the vote, the key notion of 'advancement' was encapsulated; that is, as the above dictionary

45

definition states: 'rights equal to those granted to men'. Although the concept of 'rights' is a common theme within all traditional western political theory and practice, it is particularly relevant to Anglo-American arguments and it was within this tradition that the important issues for women became the attainment of the vote, legal control over property and the person, along with entry into the male dominated institutional and professional hierarchies.

Although the issues of male privilege and power were also an important part of nineteenth century European enquiry, Karen Offen believes that feminists 'sought other goals as well'. This was manifest in their celebration of sexual difference which was expressed within a complementary male/female framework; also, rather than seeking unqualified admission to male dominated society, they mounted a broad castigation of society itself. Such evaluations of European feminist contributions have produced interpretative problems for Anglo-American assessments. As Cheryl Register's assessment of the influential Swedish feminist Ellen Key states:

> How should one evaluate a woman who stays independent of organisations and doctrines, extols private virtues, and sees love, an unlegislatable emotion, as the crux of liberation?....Such a woman looks suspiciously anti feminist, unless we broaden our view of what feminism encompasses.[8]

It is important to note that Key's work, which included a demand for state subsidies for every mother, had a considerable impact upon both the theory and the practice within the European women's movement.

Thus a close reading of much historical material reveals the persistent question of who could properly be called a feminist and who could not; this in turn leads on to such questions as: Which resolutions advocated women's best interests? What must the fundamental criteria be? When is a feminist and anti feminist?...and most important of all: Who will decide? Undoubtedly, few authors kept to a consistent definition of 'feminism' and in fact most commentators have resorted to the use of loose terms such

as "forerunners" or "precursors" of feminism. Hence, assumptions about women's natures and their relationship to men and the family within the structure and purpose of sixteenth century English social order, must be made in accordance with the cultural context. This problem remains evident even within the analysis of women's roles within eighteenth century households. As Bridget Hill concludes in her study of women in eighteenth-century England, much of women's work 'defied recording and quantification' because it was deeply characterised by the fact that they 'moved between occupations that were part-time or seasonal'.[9] She also maintains that although there always had been certain tasks normally undertaken by women, 'there had been others where the men, and sometimes all members of the household, co-operated; there was no rigid sexual division of labour'.[10]

Having acknowledged that the maintenance of the rudimentary core within feminism has proved complex for historical feminist analysis prior to the twentieth century, that is, 'what they share with their successors is the impetus to critique and improve the disadvantaged status of women relative to men within their particular cultural situation',[11] Karen Offen has concentrated on two modes of thinking, based upon the liberal dichotomy between individualism and solidarity. Her characterisation of two modes of analysis as 'relational', that is, a gender based rights campaign within a companionate, non-hierarchical egalitarian vision of society; and 'individualist', that is, argued from an autonomous, abstract, non-gendered self as the basic unit of society, expresses the divergent ways in which men and women understand their respective places within social organisation. Her scholarship suggests that relational feminism represented the dominant line of argument prior to the twentieth century and until very recently within European continental debates, whereas the now prominent vogue within the Anglo/American debate, for 'transcendental' individualist feminism, did not develop until around the time of John Stuart Mill's influential watershed, *The Subjection of Women,*(1869). Furthermore, current concentration upon individualist feminist arguments has meant that the 'rich historical complexity of protests concerning women's subordination', has subsequently been ignored.[12]

However, to portray these arguments as analytically distinct is mistaken. Although the critiques have stated that within the Anglo-American tradition rationalist debates dominate, there is an obvious interweaving of the two modes of thinking. For example, Mary Wollstonecraft's demands in her *Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, (1792), clearly delineated women's roles and duties as mothers. Similarly, Elizabeth Cady Stanton argued for both women's influence in national affairs as a complement to that of men,(1869), and women's right to self sovereignty,(1892).[13] However, such ideas about autonomy and self sovereignty contained moral imperatives rather than the abstract, strictly absolute notions offered by some current feminist arguments.

Because these two ways of thinking reflect upon those profound differences within western discourse concerning the basic structural questions about individual and family relationships, two very different logical conclusions for feminist theory and practice have been established. Thus the needs expressed from an individualist historical interpretation of feminism have proved to be different to that of the 'couple centred vision' of relational feminist accounts. In particular, the French experience has culminated in the paradoxical creed of equality and difference, in which both physiological and cultural differences between the sexes has resulted in a sharply defined sexual division of roles within the organisational structures of society. Thus such a view formed the central hypothesis of Martine Segalen's book, *Love and Power in the Peasant Family, Rural France in the Nineteenth Century*, (1980), in which she believed that the man-wife relationship in peasant society was not based upon the absolute authority of one over the other, but, in accordance with woman's 'productive' function, was based upon a complementarity of the two.

In a notable article during the 1970s, Michelle Rosaldo, suggested that the status of women was lowest in any society where there was a firm differentiation between domestic and public spheres, particularly where women were isolated within their homes. In nineteenth century England, such differentiation had come to exist as a prescriptive model. Thus in order to challenge male dominance, women could either seek to enter a male world or stress their own different, unique world.

48

More commonly, in those societies where domestic and public spheres are firmly differentiated, women may win power and value by stressing their differences from men. By accepting and elaborating upon the symbols and expectations associated with their cultural definition, they may goad men into compliance, or establish a society unto themselves.[14]

Thus the distinction between public and private became entwined within a growing and authoritative model of an English political tradition, in which the individual was based upon a moral, rational, propertied head of the household. Yet many women and men believed that the liberal promise could be extended to contain the granting of individual and equal public rights to women; however, such rights did not include any reordering of the private sphere of family life. In *The Subjection of Women*, (1869) John Stuart Mill wrote eloquently of women's oppression and their need for legal and political emancipation, but remained silent with regard to the inequalities rendered by the division of labour and its consequential power imbalance within family life.

For many contemporary feminists the liberal promise of women's continuing progress along egalitarian and individualist lines has been discarded and in fact, it is relevant that the autonomous subject of feminism is female. During the first wave of feminist aspirations in the nineteenth century, John Stuart Mill appeared an adequate representative and even in 1972, de Beauvoir referred to feminists as 'those women or even men who fight to change the position of women'.[15] However, as Lynne Segal suggests, much of contemporary feminism is now understood as,

gender specific, created for and on behalf of women. This has not only created pessimism about men's ability to change themselves but has also led to the condemnation of anti sexist men as worse than the old breed.,[16]

For radical feminists, for example Andrea Dworkin, the sharp gendered division within sexual roles is always structured by one central ahistorical fact, that is 'men oppress women...and the agency of that oppression is heterosexual intercourse'.[17] Similarly this argument is followed through by Catherine Mackinnon, whose analysis of women and the state concludes:

> The rule of law and the rule of men are one thing, indivisible, at once official and unofficial - officially circumscribed, unofficially not. State power, embodied in law, exists throughout society as male power, at the same time as the power of men over women throughout society is organised as the power of the state.[18]

However, not too far from both these positions was that of suffragist agitator, Christabel Pankhurst, whose demand for the end of women's oppression was voiced via the slogan 'Votes for Women and Chastity for Men'. Her argument calling for celibacy for men, which she believed would ultimately lead to chastity for women, was based on the difference between male and female sexual desire. Concern over sexuality and its manifestation in the great scourge of sexually transmitted disease spearheaded the work of many Victorian feminists. The concern at men's abuse of women in prostitution and the introduction of the Contagious Diseases Acts of 1864, 66 and 69, which aimed to decrease the level of venereal disease in the troops, brought together most of the feminist activists of the time. From Harriet Martineau's (1863) belief that the problem was one of temptation, resolved by the suppression of brothels and wives being allowed onto camps, to the work of Annie Besant (1876) who believed that the remedy for prostitution was to give women alternative employment, that is, men were the immoral party and women entered prostitution because it was the only way they could earn a living. It was perhaps the successful efforts of Josephine Butler (1870) in obtaining a suspension of the Acts, which highlighted the impact on women of society's double standards in sexual morality, especially as the legislation had applied to only

one half of those involved, as well as being instrumental in the repression of female sexuality.[19]

An important influence upon such historical interpretation has been that of Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Vol 1*, (1976), in which he saw individuals not as autonomous agents but as mere pawns in the discourse of their time and culture. Also this close attention to sex and sexuality, because this is where gender is closely inscribed within the individual, has resulted in the broadening of historical discussion into the private and the sexual. Such perspectives were also articulated by feminists whose belief that the 'personal is political', had been expressed during the seventies and centred around the work of Kate Millett, *Sexual Politics*, (1970) and Shulamith Firestone, *The Dialectic of Sex*, (1970). Thus the view that sexual discourse contained an important domain of power has been particularly influential in creating an awareness of how law constrained women's actions through the regulation of deviant female sexual behaviour, rather than that of male behaviour.[20] Furthermore this has led to contemporary radical feminists, such as Adrienne Rich, stating that women's life role is continually maintained by the concept of her 'sexed being'.[21]

Once again such issues were confronted by Mary Wollstonecraft, and although she constantly exploited the idea that 'the personal is political', she also undermined this by accepting that the 'tyranny of the emotional life' was part of women's burden. Arguing that women's subordination was erroneously based upon the premise that passion is disturbing to the order of society, a point taken up by Carole Pateman in *The Disorder of Women*, (1989), Wollstonecraft's continual theme was that society would benefit from an educated womanhood, whose 'conscious virtue' would enable her to become a 'better wife and mother'.[22] As Deborah Thom concludes, her work illustrates the 'double tension' which exists 'between the interests of men and women and the between the interests of women's particular social role and their universal humanity'.[23] Thus, although she did not completely overcome Rousseau's 'state of nature' stance by claiming that gender relations were culturally defined; her contribution, from the standpoint of women's basic humanity, enveloped the

Enlightenment demand for free individual development within society by extending the criticisms of hereditary rights, duties and exclusions to those derived from sexual difference.

As historical inquiry into the feminist movement and its aims has evolved, it has become increasingly difficult to pinpoint one overall theme or even ideal. Instead the emergent picture is one of a fragmented movement concerned with multifarious, although often interconnected aims, which extended into social, political, economic and cultural life. Nevertheless, although the vote could never have been regarded as the total object of feminist aspirations, by the turn of the century the aim of female suffrage became the touchstone of feminism. In fact for many feminist commentators, for example Ray Stracey, *The Cause*, (1928), whose objective was to produce a picture of unity, the triumph of the vote indicated a climax.[24] Even Mary Wollstonecraft, who was cautious about the enfranchisement of women, believed in the importance of political representation. In her *Vindication*, (1792), she states:

> ...for I really think that women ought to have representatives, instead of being arbitrarily governed without having any direct share allowed them in the deliberations of government. But, as the whole system of representation is now, in this country, only a convenient handle for despotism, they need not complain, for they are as well represented as a numerous class of hard working mechanics, who pay for the support of royalty when they can scarcely stop their children's mouths with bread.[25]

However, along with the fragility of the natural human rights concept, Wollstonecraft's link between women and 'hard working mechanics' was lost. Thus its replacement with a notion of women's rights and its dependence upon the concept of woman as a member of a specific social group, resulted in the construction of women as a unified category. Furthermore, even this was initially compromised, with the exclusion of

married women,[26] with the belief that they would be well represented by their single sisters.

Such an analysis of feminism during the nineteenth century has without a doubt provided a satisfying, unified account of a progressive women's movement. Furthermore, over time, this has received further authentification with the linking of past and present day concerns and commitments. Thus contemporary feminism contains an admixture of blurred past and present boundaries and this is particularly relevant in the use of 'sexual politics' in holding together the idea of women as a social group being dominated by men as a social group. However as Rosalind Delmar warns:

> Feminism's fascination with women is also the conditions of the easy slippage from feminist to woman and back: the feminist becomes the representative of woman, just as feminist history becomes the same as women's history and so on.[27]

Hence the influence of postmodernist deconstruction has meant that the end product of much feminist research has shown that across time and cultures the meaning of womanhood is tremendously diverse. However, whilst supporting evidence about the social construction of womanhood, similarly, it challenges any conception of unity, pinpointing to the fact that any concept of woman can only be partial. It may be considered that such a deconstruction of the subject 'woman' may be an inherent force within the fragmentation of contemporary feminism. As bell hooks claims:

> The vision of sisterhood evoked by women's liberationists was based on the idea of common oppression...a false and corrupt platform disguising and mystifying the true nature of women's varied and complex social reality.[28]

Since its conception women's resistance has followed a diverse and fragmented path, yet at a general level the feminist cause has centred around the political crisis of representation. Of course, as Yuval-Davies reminds us the development of essentialist

notions of difference means that some forms of politics are very problematic when it comes to questions of representation.[29]   However, in the last instance, as Rosalind Brunt argues, 'all popular struggles are inherently progressive' ; furthermore:

> Political action should be based on unity in diversity, which should be founded not on common denominators but on a whole variety of heterogeneous, possible antagonistic, maybe magnificently diverse, identities and circumstances...the politics of identity recognizes that there will be many struggles and perhaps a few celebrations.[30]

Finally, this section concludes with a quotation from Karen Offen in which she challenges the Western theoretical tradition by calling for unity and introducing a greater understanding of an emancipatory discourse, which is enhanced through acknowledging both 'relationalist' and 'individualist' goals.

> Armed with a richer history and a more comprehensive working definition of feminism, I suggest that, with compromises and concessions on both sides, we can make both modes of feminist discourse work together on behalf of an equitable world, a world in which women and men can be at once equal and different, a world free of male privilege and male hierarchy and authority over women.[31]

Endnotes:

1   Karen Offen, 'Defining feminism: a comparative historical approach' G. Bock and S. James. eds.,(1992) *Beyond Equality and Difference*, London, Routledge, p82.
2   Dale Spender,(1983) *There's always been a Women's Movement This Century*, Pandora, p2.
3   Deborah Thom, 'A lop-sided view: feminist history or the history of women? Kate Campbell,ed., (1992), *Critical Feminism*, Open University p25.
4   Kate Campbell, (1992,) *Critical Feminism*, Open University, p10.
5   Joan Wallach Scott, (1983) 'Women in History: The Modern Period' in *Past and Present, A Journal of Historical Studies*, 101, pp141-157.
6   Mary Wollstonecraft, (1985), *Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, 1792, London Penguin.
7   Karen Offen, 'Defining feminism': G. Bock and S.James, ed., (1992) *Beyond Equality and Difference*, London, Routledge, p70.
8   Cheryl Register, 'Motherhood at centre: Ellen Key's social vision', in *Women's Studies*

International Forum, 5(6), (1982), p602.

9   Bridget Hill, (1989), *Women, Work, and Sexual Politics in Eighteenth-Century_England*, Oxford, Basil Blackwell, p259.

10   Ibid., p260.

11   Ibid., p74.

12   Karen Offen, 'Defining feminism'. G.Bock and S.James, eds., (1992) *Beyond Equality and Difference*, London Routledge, p75.

13   Shiela Rowbotham, *(*1992), *Women in Movement*, London, Routledge, p46.

14   Michelle Rosaldo, in *Woman, Culture and Society*, 1974, p37.

15   Simone de Beauvoir quoted in Juliet Mitchell & Anne Oakley, eds., (1986) *What is Feminism?* Oxford, Blackwell, p27.

16   Lynne Segal, (1990), *Slow Motion, Changing Masculinities, Changing Men*, London, Virago, p281.

17   Andrea Dworkin quoted by D. Thom, 'A lop-sided view:' K.Campbell, ed., *Critical Feminism*, Open University, p28.

18   Catherine Mckinnon, (1989) *Towards a Feminist Theory of the State*, Harvard_University, p170.

19   See Carol Smart, 'Disruptive bodies and unruly sex; The regulation of reproduction and sexuality in the nineteenth century' in Carol Smart, ed., *Regulating Womanhood, historical essays on marriage, motherhood and sexuality,*(1992) London, Routledge, pp7-32.

20   Further reading; Jeffrey Weeks, *Sexuality,* (1986): also Lucy Bland and Judith Walkowitz, *Prostitution and Victorian Society*, (1980).

21   Adrienne Rich, 'Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence' in Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society, 5(4) Summer 1980.

22   Mary Wollstonecraft, 'Thoughts on the Education of Daughters', 'Vindication of the Rights_of Woman', 'The Wrongs of Woman: or Maria', selections from Janet Todd, ed.,(1989), *A Wollstonecraft Anthology*, Cambridge, Polity.

23   Deborah Thom, 'Am I that name?' Kate Campbell, ed. (1992) *Critical Feminism,* Open University p33.

24   . Rosalind Delmar, 'What is feminism', A.Oakley & J. Mitchell,eds., (1986), *What is Feminism?* Oxford, Blackwell.

25   Mary Wollstonecraft, (1985), *Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, 1792, London Penguin. Vindication p?

26   The priciple of coveture, which meant that generally a married women did not exist as a legal subject or property owner, William Blacksone's Commentaries on the Laws of England; see Rosalind Delmar, What is feminism? Oakley and Mitchell eds, (1986) *What is feminism?*;   C. Pateman, (1988), *The Sexual Contract*, Cambridge, Polity, pp25-27. Also discussion in Chapter Six.

27   Rosalind Delmar, What is Feminism?, Oakley and Mitchell eds., 1986, *What is feminism?* Oxford, Blackwell, p27.

28   bell hooks, 'Sisterhood: Political solidarity between women', S. Gunew, ed. (1991), *A Reader in Feminist Knowledge: Critique and Costruction*, London, Routledge, p29.

29 Yuval-Davies, 'Beyond Difference', M. Kennedy, C. Lubelska, V. Walsh, eds., (1993), *Making Connections*, USA, Taylor and Francis, p6.

30   Rosalind Brunt (New Times, 1989, p158), quoted by Y. Davis, 'Beyond Difference', M. Kennedy, C. Lubelska, V. Walsh, eds., (1993), *Making Connections*, USA, Taylor and Francis, p7..

31   Karen Offen, 'Defining feminism: a comparative historical approach' G. Bock and S. James. eds., (1992) *Beyond Equality and Difference*, London, Routledge, p86.

Section Two
Theories of Citizenship.

It is now obvious that old style 'neutered' abstractions used to define 'citizenship', for example contract- based- civil equality, can no longer be the basis for women's aims and aspirations. However, this does not mean that women can do without a capacity for self deliberation and some idea of reaching outside of ourselves in some practical way to those who are deemed 'different'. Thus the category of citizenship must acknowledge the fact that as citizens we do need to detach ourselves, albeit imperfectly, from the facts of our sex, beliefs, class etc., if we are to enter with empathy into those experiences of essentially different others.[1]

Undoubtedly, any view of citizenship, and particularly T.H. Marshall's definition, that is of, 'full membership of a community',[2] cannot be complete without recognizing the special contribution that women could bring to an account which is nearer to a more meaningful, positive, concept of liberal autonomy. This is further supported by the view of Joseph Raz, who maintains that 'a moral theory which recognizes the value of autonomy inevitably upholds a pluralistic view'.[3] In keeping with these pluralistic observations within the first section, it is the intention of this following section to show that the continuing postmodern critiques not only contest fundamental notions such as 'human values', but also demonstrate that the abundant diversity of culture should be regarded as a rich tapestry, rather than an impoverishing fragmentation.

A final sentence from Stephen Macedo sums up the intended role of citizenship which this thesis hopes to argue:

> Autonomy is not a matter of discovering a deep, fixed core of individuality within
>
> the self, it is an actively critical and reflective way of comporting oneself within the
>
> complex matrix of a pluralistic culture and of making its resources one' own'.[4]

Endnotes:

1 M. Barrett, and A. Phillips, eds., (1992), *Destabilizing Theory*, Cambridge, Polity, p26.

2 T.H. Marshall, 'Citizenship and Social Class',1950, David Held et al.,eds., (1985), *States and Societies*, Oxford, Basil Blackwell, p253.

3 J. Raz, (1986), *The Morality of Freedom*, Oxford, Clarendon, p 381.

4 S. Macedo,(1990), *Liberal Virtues*, Oxford, Clarendon, p270.

Chapter Five

The Embodiment of the Citizen

> There are important differences among the various critiques of the modernist
> subject. The postmodern critique is largely gender blind, ignoring the central
> insight of the feminist critique. Many feminist critics of the modernist subject,
> furthermore, embrace an essentialism that is antithetical to postmodernism. Some
> communitarians, finally hark back to a romantic conceptualisation of the
> premodern community that is an anathema to both feminists and postmodernists.[1]

The first chapter within this section intends to return to the initial theoretical
question posed, that is, what are the limits and possibilities of liberal feminism in
understanding that central concept of traditional political theory, the citizen?
Furthermore, it will extend the view that feminism is placed in a complex double
relationship to liberal thought. As Franzway, Court and Connell suggest, 'feminism is
both a form of liberal theory, as well as its most powerful modern critic'.[2] As the last
section has outlined feminism relied upon the Enlightenment ideal of the 'citizen-
subject', that is, supposedly universal, free and equal, revising the whole concept in
order to include women as well as men. Moreover, within contemporary liberal
democracy, it has been liberal feminism, which has successfully provided arguments
concerning unequal treatment and access, and has provided the basis for
anti-discriminatory legislation and increased women's services.

However, as poststructural discourse has reminded us, the Enlightenment
model for humanity rests upon a concept of white male 'reasoning', which further
extends the conflict for feminism between freedom from an Enlightenment ideal of
equality and universality or the postmodern position of extensive plurality and
diversity. This latter aspect, which is not unlike that of eighteenth century

Romanticism's 'aesthetic ideal of the many-faceted human personality in whom all faculties - reason and feeling, spirituality and sensuality - are fully harmoniously developed',[3] reminds us of the diversity of 'male' and 'female' and similarly revels in the contrast and conflict of bodily difference and sensuous desire. Furthermore as those critiques of liberalism's affinity with feminism, such as Carole Pateman argues in the *Sexual Contract*,[4] liberalism's grounding in an exclusively fraternal social contract, which refuses bodily and other difference, cannot provide a satisfactory basis for women to take an equal place within a patriarchal civil order. Thus her belief that the contract guarantees the rule of men over women because women are excluded from the central category of 'the individual', becomes resolved by politically addressing sexual difference so that the achievement of legal freedom and equality becomes not the end of feminism but the recondition for developing a woman's unique autonomy. However, such an argument is formulated within a binary framework which stresses a unitary, definable concept of female interests and demands, which not only differs from that of men, but also ignores questions of class and race.

Furthermore, such arguments have similarly influenced those debates which questioned how feminist theory should understand the concept of the state and the relationship of citizenship generally. In fact some feminists did not believe the they needed a concept of the state at all effectively arguing that theories concerning the state's guarantee of male power are pointless, as male power is everywhere and better thought of 'within broader zones of phallocentric culture'.[5] Many feminists have regarded the state as an arena of political practice, with which feminist political activists could choose or refuse to engage with, often seeing such engagement in terms of either diluting or co-opting feminist demands. However, in line with poststructural argument, particularly the Derridean view that we cannot stand outside of those concepts we are criticising, the state can no longer be regarded as something outside of us only to be corrected by an uncontaminated feminism. Perhaps as a result of recognising such tensions, there has been a change in emphasis from theorising about the state to considering the importance of citizenship and in particular, deconstructing

the idea of the citizen who inhabits the state and emphasising the nature of political discourse and culture. It is in line with such shifts in emphasis that the remainder of this thesis is concerned, that is, not so much the structural limitations to women's freedom, but within the competing attempts, both feminists and anti-feminist, to define, expand and limit women's sphere of political activity.

Nevertheless, the fundamental ambiguity within the legacy of contemporary feminism is not easily resolved, especially as feminism's ties to the politics and epistemology of liberalism are deep. As examined previously, this understanding of the profound limitations of Enlightenment epistemology has forced feminist theorists to look elsewhere for an approach to both knowledge and politics, and most important of all, the central concept of meaning, the 'rational, autonomous, sexually particular' subject. As Carole Pateman argues, perhaps the difficulties of fitting women into a 'unitary, undifferentiated framework that assumes that there is only one-universal-sex', may be answered by insisting that sexual difference is irrelevant. However, such views leave intact 'the sexually particular characterisation of the public world, the individual and his capacities'.[6] Such a rejection of bodily connectedness in preference to the conventional understanding of the 'political' as the creation of social and political order is similarly taken up by communitarians. Based upon the view that an individual is necessarily constituted by those connections that bind us together as human beings, communitarians have also argued that the 'unencumbered autonomous' subject of liberalism is incoherent. Furthermore, such theorists have also argued that an intelligible transcendental subject aids the characteristics within liberal society of loneliness and alienation. However to argue that there could be a unitary alternative to the Enlightenment subject would be premature and as the quotation from Susan Hekman at the beginning of this chapter suggests, 'there are important differences between these critiques'.[7]

The most significant difference is whether or not to accept the constituted dichotomy. For example, most feminists and communitarians argue that there must be a choice between a rational, autonomous subject or a passive, determined one or a

60

compromise between them, which leaves the dichotomy intact. The belief that a rejection of the autonomous subject necessarily entails a determined subject that is passive, or that a replacement embodied subject must mean the acceptance of the traditional, conservative definitions within given communities, is contrasted by the postmodern argument, which rejects such a dichotomy by attempting to formulate a constructed, creative concept of the subject. Susan Hekman believes that the 'displacement of this dichotomy' in what she calls 'the discursive subject offers the best means of overcoming the deadlock of the debate'.[8]

It may appear that the communitarian and feminist critiques have much in common, that is, both attack the Enlightenment individual because it denies any embeddedness within the human social world. However, in fact the communitarian replacement encumbered subject has been further enhanced by feminist additions of gendered dimensions. The initial work by feminists, such as Dinnerstein(1976), Chodorow(1978) and Gilligan(1982), argued that such concepts as autonomy, rationality and separation are exclusively traits of masculinity, which followed from the differing psychoanalytic development of boys and their active encouragement to develop such aspects. However, as girls are actively discouraged from such features, women, become connected by and through links with others, whereas, men find it difficult to form intimate relationships and maintain their capability of a separate sense of identity. Similarly, communitarians reject moral epistemology enveloped by liberal individualism, stating that moral values can only be socially attributed. Furthermore, feminists have also argued that the connectedness that defines women as subjects in fact defines their moral inferiority within a masculine society of separate selves.

According to Rousseau, the social equality of the sexes would present a serious danger to civic virtue. A fact he attributed to the women of Paris, whom he saw as being responsible for much of the moral corruption and decadence of the time. In *Emile*, he sets out the essential contribution that women should make to a good society, that of playing a 'feminine' role of 'propriety' within the family and thus engendering 'amour de la patrie' and a 'nursery for good citizens'.[9] Likewise,

Tocqueville regarded that "morals are the work of women", but saw this as confined to a separate, private world.[10] Even Mill was aware that the constructed role of women within the private family world, as softeners and civilizers, became an obstacle to public morality, because 'an active and energetic mind, when denied liberty, will seek for power'.[11]

However, on the contrary, many feminist theorists have in fact argued that such a connected self provides a superior form of moral reasoning, which is uniquely provided by their experience of motherhood. Like the campaigners against double standards in first wave feminism, once the private had become public, it would become transformed into a morally superior arena. Contemporary feminist theorists are arguing that because women possess a special affinity with embeddedness and connectiveness, they are superior to masculine models of subjecthood and moral reasoning and have thus reclaimed the ground as moral agents.[12]

As Elizabeth Fox-Genovese states:

> Such attributes have tended to associate public men with the harsh virtues of competition, struggle, rationality, justice and private women with gentler virtues of compassion, piety and selfless service. As a result, and at the risk of crude oversimplification, they tended to attribute production and politics to men, while attributing reproduction and morality to women.[13]

Similarly, Jean Bethke Elshtain argues that to allow men and women to participate equally would produce an 'ethical polity', in which, 'the active citizen would be one who had affirmed as part of what it meant to be fully human a devotion to public, moral responsibilities and ends'.[14]

Although a closer examination into such issues will be taken up later in this section, there are certain significant similarities between the feminist and communitarian critiques of what it is to be a citizen, especially their common rejection of the masculine concept of the autonomous individual in favour of a more connected,

embedded subject. However, such a concept of a caring community can also be problematic. As Virginia Woolf pointed out 'mothering' can be oppressive for both parties, resulting in a yearning for 'a room of one's own'.[15] Thus personal identity and autonomy comes from our distancing ourselves from others as well as aspects of relationalism. Such a concept provides a continuing theme throughout the thesis and particularly to further discussion of existing political practices. As the previous section has outlined liberal feminists have long insisted that the facts of sexual inequality and oppression are based upon socially constructed 'facts' and 'realities'. Furthermore, the first counter attacks upon 'grand narratives' were to be found in feminist social history and more broadly in their challenges to the conventional definition of the 'political'.

The meaning and significance of politics, as well as a definition of the political arena and appropriate feminist political strategy has proved to be contentious within feminism, but during the course of the 1980s a more divergent perspective emerged in which a more sophisticated understanding into the diverse composition of political identities developed. Furthermore, Lovenduski and Randall believe that as the political aims and tactics between the various feminist factions became more difficult to distinguish, this has resulted in 'something akin to 'liberal' feminism' becoming more influential, that is, although 'fewer women claim to be liberal feminists, many pursue liberal feminist goals of seeking to promote and integrate women into public life, in the hope that the implementation of feminist policies will follow'.[16]

Nevertheless despite the background tension, which is upheld by the view that the diversity of feminist perspectives has meant that a unified movement is no longer a tenable option, it is the intention of the next section to show how a theoretical and practical strategy is in fact being supported by British women, albeit through more complex forms and scale of movement activity. The growing importance of 'identity politics' which challenged the class and racial concept of woman and also the 'deradicalization' which similarly challenged the more extreme, separatist radical views, resulted in the need for women to integrate and engage with those issues and definitions which found their way onto mainstream political agendas. In particular

63

during the 1980s the changes encouraged by the ethos of Thatcherite central government within the orientation of local democracy contributed to an increasingly precarious reliance upon state support. As a result the initial feminist goals of self help and 'empowerment' were replaced by a more 'realistic' acceptance of the traditional relationships of women and women's groups as 'clients' of state agencies. Similarly, during this period, women, as individuals increasingly maintained steady inroads into mainstream public institutions. That is, although the extent of such progress can be challenged, women gained some recognition within the public arena in many of the professions, particularly law and medicine, and also within the crucial areas of the Labour party and trade union movement, to the extent that, 'despite the attempts by the moral Right to contain women's emancipation, there has been a steady diffusion of feminist perspectives and values'.[17]

Thus, this has meant that feminist activity and influence has increasingly manifested itself within an increasing range of public and political arenas. Such a perspective is in line with those historical considerations of the last chapter, which posed the view that it was only within the portrayal of Anglo-American 'individualistic' feminist goals that advancement had been centred upon women's formal entry into the public arena, and that the history of the European 'relational' tradition included a much broader agenda. Therefore, following on from this theme, that is, that women's resistance has followed a diversity of paths within the sphere of public representation, the final discussion within this chapter will explore how women's exclusion from the category of citizen meant that questions concerning economic and social power frequently failed to arise.

Furthermore, with the view that an alternative solution can be achieved via a synthesis between a socialist ideal of equality and community, the liberal ideal of freedom and justice, along with the belief that the economic realm is fundamental to the explanation of all other social relations, a feminist perspective will be formulated to take into account the 'complex conception of the vicissitudes of oppression'.[18] Thus such a pursuit must address oppression within both personal relations as well as those

of the larger social forces of the market, whilst recognising that there can no longer be a singular, homogenous agent, but a plurality of new subjects.

In order to reformulate both liberal and communitarian sympathies within feminism, Christine Sypnowich believes that it may be useful to consider Marx's philosophical anthropology, that is, the link between personhood and social origins and also the concern with aspects of oppression. Further she states:

> the Marxist analysis of the social genesis of the self has a critical edge: a concern for the political that is lacking is many other positions, which can steer a course for social theory between romanticisation of community, on the one hand, or, on the other, cynicism about critique or liberation to which postmodernism is prey.[19]

According to this argument the concept of the self is derived from a transformational community stance, which, thus, offers a possibility for liberation from oppressive social institutions and therefore enables the self to be both capable of autonomy and change.

However, although there can be great sympathy with Marx's cynical attitude towards communitarian ideas of care and altruism, preferring the contention that the goal for society was one in which creative beings engage in meaningful activity for their own fulfilment,[20] it is far from the intentions of this thesis to engage with 'revolutionary socialism'. To endorse such a radical project, as Mill states; 'in the hope that out of chaos would arise a better Kosmos', completely ignores the difficulties of such a restructuring of society. Thus a preferable route builds upon Mill's view that the 'two great changes which will regenerate society' are the 'emancipation of women and cooperative production'.[21] Mill's work, as an orthodox classical political economist, is particularly pertinent for the 1990s. His respect for the laws of political economics and an understanding of the benefit of a competative outlook, was combined with the view that such cooperation, not only enhanced individual liberty and decreased state involvement, but also could be introduced in a 'localised' manner, rather than by means of some 'abstract blueprint'. The establishment of such

'co-operative communities' continues to attract those seeking an alternative 'capitalism with a human face'.[22]   Certainly, as the market economy continues to be in crisis, that is, as far as supplying the 'good' for many now decimated communities is concerned, as Richard Arneson concludes, 'people cease to want what they cannot have (and can do without)'.[23]

The influence of Owenite feminism upon Mill by his partner, Harriet Taylor, was evident in both her contributions and amendments to the Principles of Political Economy.[24] Also, although Mill was sceptical of married women seeking employment, believing that such employment would flood the labour market and hence lower the wages paid,(a point not lost on the current feminisation of the labour force), Harriet realised that women's equal economic independance was of fundamental importance. In the *Enfranchisement of Women*, (1851), she concludes that 'a woman who contributes materially to the support of the family, cannot be treated in the same contemptuously tyrannical manner as one who, however she may toil as a domestic drudge, is dependent on the man for subsistence'.[25]

Thus, with such views in mind, a reconceptualisation of the liberal ideal of individual rights can be formulated, that is, not the liberal contractarian idea of isolated, prior societal, natural rights, but human rights that can be expressed within a social and historical context. Such rights not only protect a fundamental condition of human existence, but also express how oppression protrays a 'shifting character'; for example, the liberal rights demanded by a newly conscious women's movement at the beginning of the century, was no more important than the right to equitable childcare arrangements today.   As the previous section outlined, the doctrine of equality proposed by democratic theorists was in fact concerned with minimizing difference, due to the fact that the standard for normality was not gender neutral but male. Moreover, as Susan Mendus reminds us the work of John Stuart Mill is paramount to the quest for subjectivity. Furthermore, his observation that, "human beings are not like sheep", is further supported by the suggestion that if such differences are ineradicable, difference must have priority over equality.[26] However, as feminist

history has shown us, difference is not absolute. Feminist theory would do well to acquire a 'new conceptual apparatus, which appropriates and synthesizes the strengths of the liberal and the communitarian, in feminism and in political philosophy in general'.[27]

Finally, in line with the views of Michele Barrett and Anne Phillips this chapter concludes that in order to present a reconstruction of citizenship, there can be no escape from a feminist interpretation of a modernist history engaged with an egalitarian and emancipatory movement. Thus:

The strategic questions that face contemporary feminism are now informed by a richer understanding of heterogeniety and diversity; but they continue to revolve around the alliances, coalitions and commonalities that give meaning to the idea of feminism.[28]

Endnotes:

1   S. Hekman, The Embodiment of the Subject, in the *Journal of Politics*, Vol 54 No 4 Nov. 92, p1099.
2   Suzanne Franzway, Dianne Court, R.W.Connell, (1989), *Staking a Claim*, Cambridge, Polity, p13.
3   Ursula Vogel, 'Rationalism and romanticism: two strategies for women's liberation', Judith Evans et al., eds., 1986, *Feminism and Political Theory*, London Sage, p19.
4   Carole Pateman, (1988) *Sexual Contract* Cambridge, Polity.
5   J. Allen, (1990) 'Does feminism need a theory of "the state"?' S. Watson ed., *Playing the State: Australian Feminist Interventions*, Verso, p23.
6   Carole Pateman, 'The theoretical subversiveness of feminism', C. Pateman and E. Gross, eds., (1986), *Feminist Challenges: Social and Political Theory*, London, Unwin Hyman , p7.
7   S. Hekman, The Embodiment of the Subject, in the *Journal of Politics*, Vol 54 No 4 Nov. 92, p1099.
8   Ibid., p1100.
9   L. Lange, in M.L. Shanley and C. Pateman,eds., (1991), *Feminist Interpretations and Political Theory*, Cambridge, Polity, p104.
10   Ibid., p 107.
11   J.S. Mill, 'The Subjection of Women' 1869, S. Collini, ed., (1989) *J.S.Mill: On Liberty and other writings*, Cambridge, p214.
12   M. Walker, Moral Understandings: Alternative Epistemology for a Feminist Ethics, in *Hypatia* 4 (2) p15-28.
13   E. Fox Genovese, 'From Separate Spheres to Dangerous Streets' in *Social Research*, Vol 60 No 2 1993, p238.
14   J. Bethke Elshtain, (1981), *Public Man, Private Woman*, Oxford, Martin Robertson, p351.
15   V. Woolfe, (1974), *A Room of One's Own*, London, Penguin.
16   J. Lovenduski and V. Randall, (1993), *Contemporary Feminist Politics*, Oxford University, p7.
17   Ibid., p12.

18   S. Brown's critique of MacKinnon 'Feminism Unmodified' in *Political Theory*, Aug. 1989.

19   Christine Sypnowich, 'Antimonies of Feminism', in *Political Theory*, Aug. 1993, p498.

20   Karl Marx, 'The German Ideology', 1845, David McLellan,(1987)ed.,*The Thought of Karl Marx*, Basingstoke, Papermac.

21   J.S.Mill, 'Chapters on Socialism', S. Collini, ed.,(1989), *J.S.Mill,On Liberty and other writings*, Cambridge University, p261.

22   Chris Llewelyn, 'Community Business: a type of social movement' (Newcastle University, PhD. thesis, 1997).

23   R. Arneson, 'Prospects for Community in a Market Economy', in *Political Theory*, Vol 9 1981, p207.

24   F.A. Hayek quoted in A. Rossi, (1970), *Essays on Sex Equality*, London, University of Chicago, p41.

25   Harriet Taylor, *Enfranchisement of Women*, 1851, Kate Soper, ed., (1983) London, Virago, p20.

26   S. Mendus, 'Losing the Faith in Democrac', in J. Dunn,ed., (1992), *Democracy: The Unfinished Journey 508BC-1993AD*, Oxford University, p217.

27   Christine Sypnowich, 'Antimonies of Feminism' in *Political Theory*, Aug. 1993, p503.

28   M. Barrett and A. Phillips, eds., (1992) *Destabilising Theory*, Cambridge, Polity, p9.

Chapter Six

The Reformed Citizen?

Citizenship is a status bestowed on those who are full members of a community. All who possess the status are equal with respect to the rights and duties with which the status is endowed. There is no universal principle that determines what those rights and duties shall be, but societies in which citizenship is a developing institution create an image of an ideal citizenship against which achievement can be measured and towards which aspiration can be directed. The urge forward along the path thus plotted is an urge toward a fuller measure of equality, an enrichment of the stuff of which the status is made and an increase in the number of those on whom the status is bestowed', [1]

The intention of the next few chapters is to shape a 'new and enhanced definition of citizenship', that is, not one reflecting a narrow individualistic autonomy, but one which is formulated within a contemporary liberal vision of recognised multiple differences; also an attempt will be made to outline an improved understanding of women's collective action within a newly defined public arena, that is a concept of citizenship which enjoys a status of shared values, an enjoyment of opportunities and takes place within communal activities. Thus returning to the 'dominant citizenship paradigm'[2] this chapter will proceed to investigate the various criticisms made by current feminist theorists.

Contemporary British political rhetoric is awash with the term 'citizenship' and the indication that it encapsulates a notion of justice and equity. Hence the development of the 'Citizens' Charter' and the 'Stakeholding Society'. However, as the section of the thesis will establish there is little sustained agreement within the spectrum of intellectual discourse, although there are two distinct groupings[3].

Moreover, as Sylvia Walby states, 'gender' remains 'absent from many discussions of citizenship',[4] Likewise, feminist responses to the citizenship debate have ranged from those simply asking for more rights,[5] to those who have suggested that 'citizenship' is so imbued with gender specific assumptions, it cannot possibly be regarded as a universal project,[6] Nevertheless, it is with an awareness of such diversity that this chapter intends to question the significance for feminism of citizenship as it is generally understood, and the influence which this has had on the development of gender relations within contemporary society.

Following current debate, Roche comments that within contemporary Western capitalist society, there is an intimate connection between the 'development of, and lately the crisis of, the welfare state' and social citizenship,[7] and such views will be examined in the following chapter. However, whilst mainstream theory looks towards a concept of a strong social citizenship, reviving and maintaining communitarian cohesion, as Judith Squires states in her paper 'Added Values';

> By contrast, feminist theorists have evoked citizenship as a way to deal with the
> dilemmas of democracy and difference, as the way to acknowledge plurality, and
> recognize multi-culturalism, non-essential identities and economic, social and
> political inequalities.[8]

According to much feminist analysis, the classical view of citizenship by Marshall, quoted at the beginning, can provide little relevance for the future status of women. As Carole Pateman suggests, such a 'patriarchal understanding of citizenship.....allows two alternatives only: either women become (like) men, and so full citizens; or they continue at women's work, which is of no value for citizenship',[9]

Marshall's exposition of citizenship was first presented in the Marshall lectures given in Cambridge is 1949. Central to his thesis was a concern that the inherent inequality of a class society would be detrimental to the realisation of a full and equal citizenship. Dividing citizenship into three elements: civil, political and social, he

charted each aspect's formative period as part of wider historical development, thus, 'civil rights were assigned to the eighteenth century, whilst political rights to the nineteenth and social to the twentieth centuries,[10] However, although Marshall is careful to qualify any rigidity with an awareness of differentiation, his discussion expresses a purely male experience.

According to Marshall the development of citizenship consisted of 'the gradual addition of new rights to a status that already existed',[11] For example as the Common Law evolved, it simply reflected the 'common sense' views of the judiciary. However, if we take the formation of civil and political rights, we can see that as far as women's rights are concerned, they did not follow such a pattern. Certainly if we look closely at Marshall's definition of civil rights, that is, those rights which facilitate the operation of individual freedom, for example 'liberty of the person, freedom of speech, thought and faith, the right to own property and to conclude valid contracts and the right to justice'; and his definition of political rights, that is, 'the right to participate in an exercise of political power, as a member of a body invested with political authority or as an elector of the members of such a body'[12], women's experience of such rights differed. The most formative period during which women began to establish both civil citizenship and political rights was not until the early 20th century. It was not until the Franchise Act and the Qualification of Women Act in 1918, that women over the age of thirty were allowed political rights. Similarly women's entry into the public arena of civil society was not fully legalised until the Sex Discrimination Removal Act of 1919. As Yvonne Summers asserts, at the time that Marshall believed that men were claiming their civil rights, women were still held to be represented by their male kin, and thus still fighting to be recognised as 'persons'.[13]

Similarly, even a century after Utilitarian philosophers had called for 'the proper end of government' to be the 'means of restraining those in whose hands are lodged the powers necessary for the protection of all from making bad use of it,'[14] it was still regarded as necessary for women's political interests to be represented by their adult male relatives.

71

However, as this thesis has previously stressed, not only has the goal of women's enfranchisement been well documented, but its narrative has been used to represent a pinnacle of feminist endeavour.[15] Although it must be acknowledged that the gaining of political citizenship played a substantial part in the changing of gender relations, not least forming the basis of the transformation from private to public patriarchy,[16] the struggle for 'personhood' via political citizenship, in many ways overshadowed the parallel campaign for civil and social citizenship.

The right to work was also regarded by Marshall as a fundamental economic civil right, that is: ' the right to follow the occupation of one's choice, in the place of one's choice, subject only to legitimates demands for preliminary technical training.'[17] Furthermore any restrictions on choice with regard to type of employment or place, would be quickly resolved because the 'flexibility' of our common law system reflected societal changes. Nevertheless, this has proved particularly problematic for women, given that they are perceived as possessing a 'deficient citizenship status, due to their location as carers in the family.[18] Also societal changes contain mixed messages. Over the past decade in Western Society we have experienced a 'double language'. Whereas there have been epochal changes in sexuality, law and education, there is still a contradiction between female expectation of equality and the reality of inequality. As Beck summarises; 'consciousness has rushed ahead of conditions'.[19]

Admittedly, following societal expectations of the time, at no point within his work did Marshall question women's overriding familial position and its detrimental affect upon those standard routes towards citizenship, that is, through paid work and political activity. However, the legacy of ascribed gender characteristics which has provided the basis for industrial society and so deprived married women of an existence as an individual, was well accepted even by the latter half of the eighteenth century. As William Blackstone outlines in his *Commentaries on the Laws of England*;

By marriage, the husband and wife are one person in law: that is the very being or

legal existence of the woman is suspended during the marriage, or incorporated and

72

consolidated into that of the husband under whose wing, protection and cover she performs everything. [20]

Thus a married woman had very little opportunity to participate within those aspects appertaining to civil citizenship. They lacked 'liberty of the person', due to their inability to control their own bodies with regard to abortion or contraception, and it was not until the introduction of the 1857 Marriage and Divorce Act that married women were allowed 'the right to own property and to conclude valid contracts' and even to keep their own earnings. Prior to this legislation, any money earned by her, either subsequently or after marriage, automatically became the property of her husband. In effect this meant that any attempt to live out an independent existence whilst her husband survived, was rendered impossible. Furthermore, 'married women did not have "the right to justice", due to their inability to be free from the physical coercion of their husbands or to refuse him sexual intercourse'.[21]

Even after 1928 and the granting of 'political citizenship', the majority of women in the UK found it difficult to work at 'an occupation of their choice' due to the many restrictions on the forms of employment open to women.[22] Furthermore, despite Marshall's focus on 'civil citizenship' and on the dynamics of social class, he failed to see that with respect to women's paid employment, social class contributed to a considerable variety of societal perceptions. Whilst many middle class women aimed to overcome men's 'open exclusion' from their entry into the professions, because of the collusion between capitalism's need for economic effectiveness and male dominated trade union activity, working class women's 'exclusion' was directed through 'protective legislation'.[23] Hence male concern for the delicacy and refinement of women, which appeared to be so threatened by public participation, was not necessarily extended to working class women at first. Certainly as the separation of the home and place of work continued in line with the development of industrialisation and capitalism, working class women driven by economic need took up employment within the factories and mines. However, by the mid nineteenth century, middle class

'paternal' thinking, which was so influential in formulating the pedestal image' led to concern for the moral welfare of working women and the consequences for their children and it was this, rather than their physical welfare, which resulted in the passing of gender- specific legislation reinforcing Victorian middle class stereotypical feminine attributes[24].

Thus Marshall's proposition of social citizenship, defined by him as 'the whole range from the right to a modicum of economic welfare and security to the right to share to the full in the social heritage and to live the life of a civilised being according to the standards prevailing in the society,' [25] appears unobtainable because in many instances women still continue to be unable to participate equally with men in the economic, political and civil spheres of life. Marshall's complete failure to recognize that in fact women have a very special status within the structure of citizenship, that is, not only are they placed within an ideologically secondary position but they also participate within the practice of insecurity, via the dependency which has been built into welfare policies,[26] has meant that in reality the complex and vague concept of 'social citizenship' depends upon being in paid employment.

Ruth Lister in her article; 'Women, economic dependency and citizenship',[27] argues that financial dependency provides a definite obstacle to women's citizenship. She pertinently states the dilemma with her illustration of the 'active citizens', so favoured by conservative policy during the 1980s, which, while promoting an 'ideal of neighbourliness', still managed to neglect those 'exemplary representatives' - women carers. Thus women are held in a double bind, because there are often excessive calls on their time with regard to unpaid work, which in turn limits participation within the public arena. Also the concept of citizenship depends upon 'public activity'. This means that the division of labour which concentrates women within the realms of caring work is, likewise, not regarded as valuable to society. However, it is also relevant that 'caring' is a familial experience and its secondary status is applicable whether it takes place within the private or public sphere.

Will Kymlicka suggests that such a conclusion is a result of Western philosophy's hierarchical distinction between 'the intuitive emotional particularistic dispositions said to be required for women's domestic life from the rational impartial and dispassionate thought said to be required for men's public life'.[28] Hence whilst women's particularistic 'caring' disposition is seen as functional for the family, it is regarded as subversive of the dispassionate mode of justice required for public life.[29] However in answer to the charge that such 'natural' intuitive, caring dispositions are limited to the private sphere, some feminists, such as J.B. Elshtain, argue a 'particularistic' thought is morally superior to the impartiality of male mainstream thought and thus at least a necessary complement within the public arena. For example the experience of women as mothers within the private sphere can provide a valuable understanding to public associations. Unfortunately, this reasoning in a 'different voice',[30] within the public arena, that is as an 'ethic of care' compared to an 'ethic of justice' is more often then not regarded as incompatible. As Kymlicka concludes in his discussion concerning the 'ethic of care';

'Perhaps men and women speak in a different voice, not because their actual thoughts differ, but because men feel they should be concerned with justice and rights, and women feel they should be concerned with preserving social relations'.[31]

Furthermore, those who acknowledge that there is a basic difference between masculine and feminine values, have asserted that there cannot be a homogeneous, universalistic category of citizenship and such concepts should be redressed by a new model of 'politics'. However the contention that the political consciousness of such a 'feminised' version of the public arena and the goal of a 'common good' should be grounded in the virtues of a woman's private sphere, can provide only an equally narrow and exclusionary concept of citizenship.

Moreover Sylvia Walby illustrates this key philosophical and theoretical division within feminist analysis, in her discussion of gender and citizenship (1994) by

quoting Lister's central question, that is; 'Should women seek support for their existing roles in the family as carers, or should they be seeking to leave such roles behind and enter paid employment?' In other words our concept of citizenship is dependent upon whether we contend that 'women are intrinsically different from men and should value this difference, or are basically the same and should claim the same rights on the basis of this similarity'.[32] It is interesting to reflect here upon the discussion within the last section concerning - 'Equality or Difference?: The problem of definition', in which Karen Offen compares the different approaches of European 'relational' and Anglo American 'individualist' feminism. Certainly the 'difference' strategy adopted by European feminists has been more successful in gaining publicly funded childcare and employment entitlements than the 'sameness' position of the Anglo American legacy.

With the recognition that societies are multi cultural and multi ethnic comes the acknowledgement that any political system must incorporate such diversity. Thus Marshall's call for the 'universal status of citizenship',[33] is no longer acceptable. Such an alternative expression of citizenship affirming group difference has been articulated by Iris Marion Young.[34] However, once again such a concept appears as a narrow defence of the status quo. Although Young sees such a notion of citizenship as truly representative of the multiplicity of community and group identifications, Anne Phillips suggests that such a view in fact results in fragmentation and 'a collapse into the politics of the enclave'.[35] Furthermore Judith Squires criticises Young's disregard of the fact that political activity is concerned with the 'construction of new identities rather than the satisfaction of the demands of existing identities'.[36]

As previously discussed, there is a growing recognition that there is not a fixed, unified concept of a rational, knowing subject, but rather identity is fluid and changing. Moreover, as Stuart Hall summarises: in Modernity and its Futures;

'There is always something 'imaginary' or fantasized about its unity. It always remains incomplete, is always 'in process', always 'being formed'.[37]

Furthermore even if such a perspective is not totally accepted, there can be little denial that such 'post modern discourses' have deeply unsettled our view of the subject and the question of identity.

Moreover, as Chantal Mouffe states, 'social identities are not necessarily or even desirably political identities',[38] a point well illustrated by the divergent themes of contemporary feminism and consequential lack of any clear political stategy. In other words, there has been no clear unitary political strategy which has followed from either adopting or rejecting a specific gendered identity. Furthermore, as US feminist Ann Snitow suggests the contradictory pressure experienced by women of either being or not being 'womanly', 'will only change through historical process; it cannot be dissolved through thought alone'.[39]

The point is that identities do not simply originate from gender, class, race or any other particular orientation, but that a sense of belonging to a specific social and historical context is also important. Such views, along with the 'gender similarities or differences debate' are not unconnected to feminism's continued declining relationship with the arena of mainstream political practice. Although 'difference' feminism has always rejected the narrow definition of the political, such frustrations have also been recognised by most feminist theorists. For example, whilst Lynne Segal sympathises with Zillah Eisenstein's disillusionment with socialism and her statement that the radical edge of feminism is now to be maintained through a focus on 'the particularities of women's lives', she is reluctant to dismiss such a legacy. Segal's view that the exponents of difference theory 'can offer little more than the enjoyment of an endless game of self exploration played out on the great board of Identity',[40] has also been acknowledged by a number of British feminists, who are attempting to develop a theory of democratic citizenship, which will recognise difference but will avoid the pitfalls of 'essentialism'.

Such examples are the recent ideas of Chantal Mouffe and Anne Phillips, who, whilst sceptical of the ability of liberal democratic mechanisms to deliver any radical reform or meaningful change, have nevertheless began to accept an inclusion of the

mechanisms of liberal democracy within their definition of 'the political'. However, whilst acknowledging that an understanding of the procedural limitations of liberal democracy are a necessary part of any significant political transformation, such moves are surprising given Anne Phillips own scepticism that 'liberal democracy could deliver the goods'. She returns to the context that it is in fact 'the ideals of democracy' which 'call on us to take seriously the many ways in which sexual difference has thwarted the promises of democratic equality'.[41] However, whilst Phillips recognises that it is the classical liberal separation between public and private spheres which has been perceived as instrumental to the failure of democracy, she also recognises that we require a vision beyond the local and in support of such a view she cites Sheldon Wolin's belief that 'the localism that is the strength of grassroots organizations is also their limitation'.[42] Thus she endorses the view that to achieve those far reaching goals of democracy, which promised empowerment to disadvantaged groups, it is with the mechanisms of political representation that we should be concerned. She affirms this in her view that;

> People have to be drawn into a fuller appreciation of different needs and concerns
>
> and priorities, and there is no substitute for political engagement as the process
>
> through which this occurs.[43]

Phillips' acknowledgement of the importance of political activity, which, for example, leads her to endorse quota systems in order to represent oppressed groups, is made less convincing by her awareness that to focus upon such strategies is fraught with the old problems of elitism and fragmentation. Similarly, Marshall's definition of citizenship is also problematic, that is, if we take it as an emphasis upon the 'passive' entitlements of citizenship, that is, 'the right to have rights'.[44] However as Will Kymlicka believes, Marshall saw citizenship as a 'shared identity', that is, as a means of integrating disadvantaged groups into their 'common possession and heritage'.[45] Thus the view that many groups continue to feel excluded from their 'common possession

and heritage, despite their 'common rights', should at least provide a starting point towards a wider concept of citizenship. That is, a perception in which one's active citizenship is practiced within a community and is a function of both individual and group needs. Also, returning to Habermas' contention that citizenship is a crucial element in the health and stability of a modern democracy,[46] with increasing voter apathy, unemployment and welfare crisis,[47] it is not surprising that there have been calls for a citizenship embracing individual responsibility, loyalty and virtuous roles. However, as Ignatieff reminds us; Marshall's argument that people can be full members and participants in the common life of society only if their basic needs are met 'is as strong now..as it ever was',[48] but the 'clientalization' which welfare dependency and passivity promotes is equally destructive. Furthermore, women are at the interface of such tensions, leading Gillian Pascall to conclude that, 'citizenship, in all its components, is problematic for women'.[49]

Finally, the feminist analysis of Marshall's 'dominant citizenship paradigm' provides a most telling criticism of his failure to comprehend the intense patriarchal nature of the welfare state and hence social rights, that is, that some women and minority groups may posses the right to vote, but do not possess full and effective social citizenship. Certainly the whole structure of the welfare state reflects a patriarchal division of labour in which waged work and the benefit mechanisms is based on this 'idealized' model. For example, caring, as unpaid domestic work is seen as private and therefore not contributing to the public good.[50]

Certainly during recent years, feminist theory and practice has been able to offer many discerning and relevant dialogues concerning citizenship, particularly those suggesting a more participant based communitarian and caring democratic ideal. However, great care must be taken that such views do not become synonymous with the responsible and virtuous citizenship of the New Right[51] that is, with the realisation that as we are now witnessing the 'grim manifestations of post liberalism', a growing 'dependency culture' and subsequent decline in moral values, the qualities and attitudes of 'good' citizens are needed to provide crucial stability and social cohesion.

Moreover, as Judith Squires asserts, as we proceed through the 90s, parliamentary politics is felt to be 'increasingly anachronistic'. It's narrow procedures are the 'preserve of a small professional elite', and thus a meaningful revitalisation of citizenship is unlikely within such a context. Furthermore she states; 'Even if we accept the injunction that we only concern ourselves with the "expressly political" is it any longer clear where the political is located?'[52] Such concerns are central to this thesis: whilst the final section will seek to examine the importance of the political as a distinct arena of activity by focusing attention on the structures of representation, the rest of this section examines current developments in citizenship theory. However, such a process proceeds with caution, and observing Kymlicka and Norman's conclusion that 'it remains unclear what we can expect from a theory of citizenship'.[53]

Endnotes:

[1]   T.H.Marshall, 'Citizenship and Social Class', 1950, David Held et al., eds., (1985), *States and Societies*, Oxford, Basil Blackwell, p253-254.

[2]   Maurice Roche, (1992), *Rethinking Citizenship*, Cambridge, Polity, p3.

[3]   Examples include those concerned with social cohesion and/or rights and duties; see Raymond Plant and Norman Barry, (1990), *Citizenship and Rights in Thatcher's Britain: Two views*, IEA Health and Welfare Unit.

[4]   Sylvia Walby, 'Is citizenship gendered?' *Sociology*, May 1994,p379.

[5]   Anna Coote,ed., (1992), *The Welfare of Citizens, developing new social rights*, London, IPPR/Rivers Oram.

[6]   Carol Pateman, (1989), *The Disorder of Women*, Cambridge, Polity.

[7]   Maurice Roche, (1992), *Rethinking Citizenship*, Cambridge, Polity, p4.

[8]   Judith Squires, 'Added Values' appeared as a *Sign of the Times Discussion Paper*, (1994), London, p1.

[9]   Carol Pateman, (1989), *The Disorder of Women*, Cambridge, Polity, p197.

[10]   T.H.Marshall, 'Citizenship and Social Class', 1950, David Held et al., eds., (1985), *States and Societies*, Oxford, Basil Blackwell, p249-250.

[11]   Ibid, p251.

[12]   Ibid, p249.

[13]   Abbott and Wallace, eds., (1993), *Gender Power and Sexuality*, Basingstoke, Macmillan, p21.

[14]   James Mill, 'An Essay on Government', quoted in G.Williams,(1985) *John Stuart Mill on Politics and Society*, Glasgow, Fontana p20.

[15]   See Chapter Four.

[16]   Sylvia Walby,(1990), *Theorizing Patriarchy*, Oxford, Basil Blackwell, p161.

[17]   T.H.Marshall, 'Citizenship and Social Class', 1950, in *Sociology at the Crossroads*, London, Heinemann, p77.

[18]   Yvonne Summers, "Women and Citizenship" in Gender Power and Sexuality, Abbott and Walace, (Eds). 1993, p21.

[19]   Ulrich Beck,(1992), *Risk Society*, London, Sage, p104.

[20]   William Blackstone, 'Commentaries on the Laws of England, 4 Vols 1765-69', in C.

Pateman, (1988), *The Sexual Contract*, Cambridge, Polity, p91.

21   Sylvia Walby, 'Is Citizenship gendered?' *Sociology*, Vol 28, No 2 May1994, p 381.

22   Full discussion see: Sylvia Walby, (1990), *Theorizing Patriarchy*, Oxford, Basil Blackwell, pp25-60.

23   First wave feminism was fought by both middle class women, and working class women, especially the organised Lancashire cotton workers, 'around a liberal vocabulary of human rights': Sylvia Walby, (1990), *Theorizing Patriarchy*, Oxford, Basil Blackwell, p190; also multiple factors worked together. Capitalism continues to prefer a low paid, flexible workforce; women were excluded from the more skilled work by male dominated guilds and trade unions; patriarchal influences passed legislation to exclude women mainly on moral ground: Linda McDowell, 'Gender divisions in a post-Fordist era: new contradictions or the same old story?' McDowell and Pringle eds., (1992) *Defining Women*, Cambridge, Polity, pp181-193.

24   Further discussion in Harriett Bradley, (1989) *Men's Work, Women's Work*, Cambridge, Polity, pp27-50.

25   T.H.Marshall, (1963), 'Citizenship and Social Class', 1950, in *Sociology at the Crossroads*, London, Heinemann, p74.

26   Much of new policy is specifically designed to increase incentives for individuals to live in couple-headed households, ..Penalties are deemed for those who contradict this ideal; see P. Taylor-Gooby, (1991), *Social Change, Social Welfare and Social Science*, London, Harvester Wheatsheaf, p149.

27   Ruth Lister,(1990) 'Women, economic dependency and citizenship' in Sylvia Walby, 'Is Citizenship gendered?' *Sociology*, Vol 28, No 2 May1994, p 387.

28   Will Kymlicka, (1990), *Contemporary Political Philosophy*, Oxford, Clarendon, p262.

29   There is a great deal of debate within feminist thought regarding this statement; see Mary G. Dietz, 'Citizenship with a Feminist Face: The problem with maternal thinking' in *Political Theory*, Vol 13, No1 February 1985 pp19-37.

30   Carol Gilligan, 1986, *In a Different Voice*, Harvard University.

31   Will Kymlicka, *Contemporary Political Philosophy*, Oxford, Clarendon, p264.

32   Ruth Lister,(1990) 'Women, economic dependency and citizenship' in Sylvia Walby, 'Is Citizenship gendered?' *Sociology*, Vol 28, No 2 May1994, p 388.

33   T.H.Marshall, (1963), 'Citizenship and Social Class', 1950, in *Sociology at the Crossroads*, London, Heinemann, p121.

34   Iris Marion Young, 'Polity and Group Difference: A Critique of the Ideal of Universal Citizenship' in Cass Sunstein, ed., (1990) *Feminism and Political Theory*, London, University of Chicago, pp117-143.

35   Anne Phillips, (1993), *Democracy and Difference*, Cambridge, Polity, p136.

36   Judith Squires, 'Added Values' appeared as a *Sign of the Times Discussion Paper*, (1994), London, p3.

37   Stuart Hall, ed., (1992), *Modernity and its Futures*, Cambridge,Open University/ Polity, p287.

38   Chantal Mouffe, *Socialist Review*, vol 90, no2 1990 p 63.

39   Ann Barr Snitow,(1990), *A Gender Diary*, London, Virago, p19.

40   Lynne Segal, *New Left Review*, 1991 p91.

41   Anne Phillips, (1991), *Engendering Democracy*, Cambridge, Polity, p8.

42   Sheldon Wolin, 'Democracy', 1982, quoted in Anne Phillips, (1993), *Democracy and Difference*, Cambridge, Polity, p13.

43   Anne Phillips,(1993), *Democracy and Difference*, Cambridge, Polity, p20.

44   Will Kymlicka and Wayne Norman, 'Return of the Citizen: A Survey of Recent Work on Citizenship Theory,' *Ethics* 104, Jan 1994, p355.

45   T.H.Marshall, (1963), 'Citizenship and Social Class', 1950, in *Sociology at the Crossroads*, London, Heinemann, p101-102.

46   Jurgen Habermas,1992, 'Citizenship and National Identity', Praxis International 12; in Will Kymlicka and Wayne Norman, 'Return of the Citizen: A Survey of Recent Work on Citizenship Theory,' *Ethics* 104, Jan 1994, p357.

47   Further discussion concerning the 'welfare crisis' in Chapter Seven.

48   Michael Ignatieff, Citizenship and Moral Narcissism, *Political Quarterly* 60 1989, p72.

49   Gillian Pascall, 'citizenship: A Feminist Analysis', G. Drover and P.Kerans, (19930 new Approaches to Welfare Theory, Aldershot, Edward Elgar

50   The 'Wollstonecraft dilemma' is discussed in Chapter Eight.
51   The 'New Right' represents a plethora of views; examples from the Institute of Economic Affairs provided much of the material discussed in the rest of this section.
52   Judith Squires, "Added Values, 1994, p4.
53   Will Kymlicka and Wayne Norman, 'Return of the Citizen: A Survey of Recent Work on Citizenship Theory,' *Ethics* 104, Jan 1994, p377.

Chapter Seven.

Citizenship and Needs:

Rights and Duties.

Social and economic security is a condition for enjoying civil and political rights, but this is because such security provides members of the community with the material preconditions of the freedom with which they can participate in public affairs, discover their communal interests and exchange their opinions'.[1]

On the one hand we have no way of arriving at a universal account of human needs to guide political judgement across societies; on the other, the idea of needs collapses completely into pluralism and relativism.[2]

Need is also a political instrument, meticulously prepared, calculated and used.[3]

Whilst there is general agreement about the wide appeal of citizenship, which maintains a non-partisan appeal, there remains a great deal of tension surrounding the actual perception of this concept. For example, although citizenship has much to do with individual rights, it lacks the implications usually associated with liberal individualism, which the left find so objectionable; and certainly the connection with 'social rights'[4] does not immediately connect with socialist collectivism, which so alienates those on the right. As the previous chapter concluded, 'it is far from clear exactly what citizenship involves, either legally or from a political or social point of view'.[5] Hence the main theme of this chapter is to examine further the tension between those who consider 'citizenship' in terms of participation in the communal and political life of society, that is, Marshall's citizenship which 'requires a direct sense of community membership based on loyalty to a civilisation which is a common

possession',[6] and built upon the paradigm of Athenian participative democracy;[7] and those who define citizenship in terms of a set of basic rights, which individuals' possess by virtue of being a citizen and are thus defended by government. This latter approach has been developed amongst British empiricists,[8] and perhaps the most radical proponent of this stance is Robert Nozick, who proposes:

> The minimal state treats us as inviolate individuals, who may not be used in certain
>
> ways by others as means or tools or instruments or resources; it treats us as persons
>
> having individual rights with the dignity this constitutes.[9]

Such a dichotomy is perhaps narrow and simplistic, especially as there are manifold contrary and diverse themes within citizenship theory, which even cut across the different political standpoints. For example, many defenders of governmental obligation and intervention also regard the notion of citizenship as one of claiming rights. Thus for the purposes of this thesis and an overview of these two approaches the relevance of state welfare will provide a focus of this debate. This approach will also be a useful tool of analysis when examining the plethora of feminist scholarship concerning citizenship, that is, by creating a division between those who believe that full social participation is an essential feature of citizenship and those who aim for an equal citizenship via an erosion of dependency.[10] Similarly throughout Section Three the issue of citizenship as 'a theory of social welfare development'[11] will be maintained in order to provide a link between women's political rights, which sees women as underrepresented and social rights which sees women as dependents. Also to acknowledge that this deeply 'embedded' definition is too concerned with 'service delivery' and not concerned with the problems of 'equality and difference. Thus in order to clarify the best route forward in answering the thesis question of 'how to achieve citizenship for women?', the link between political and social rights will be maintained in the hope that as Taylor-Gooby asserts, 'equal rights will allow citizens of

both sexes to achieve an interdependence in which neither is dominant and both are valued equally'[12]

As discussed in the previous chapter and feminist criticism notwithstanding, in many ways T.H. Marshall's essay on the 'citizenship of entitlement' gives a seminal analysis of citizenship theory, and certainly a good starting point marking a recognition that the aim of citizenship was one of a 'maximization of welfare'.[13] However, certainly since the mid 1970s the achievement of an 'optimum welfare for all' content has been much reduced. For example, there is little doubt that the operation of the electoral system has changed as a result of alterations in the level and distribution of support for the political parties,[14] and in the area of civil liberties.[15] Also the growing mass of unemployed and secondary, flexible workers[16] has hardly increased the process of economic rights, although legislation has expanded to enable such rights as buying council housing and purchasing shares in privatised industries. Perhaps such examples portray a promotion of the individual persona and private autonomy of the individual rather than citizenship in the sense of any relationship between the individual and the state and/ or the community.

In turn, as far as the social component of citizenship is concerned, cuts in public expenditure have resulted in the governmental underfunding of education and public housing, also the standard and availability of many public services, such as transport and the health service. Certainly not all reductions in political, economic and social rights are necessarily unjustified[17] and also the level of provision, particularly of the social element of citizenship has to be dependent upon the country's economic priorities determined by government in allocating resources between investment, private consumption and social services.[18]

Such questions have been strongly debated during the 1990s and possibly more now than at anytime since the Beveridge Report published 50 years ago. However much of the language of the debate seems to have converged into discussions concerning citizens' charters and citizens' rights,[19] rather than any broader transformation of the 'polity', that is, of a renewed politics reviving those aspects of

'civil virtue' and 'local democracy' which have been the concern of varying commissions.[20]   Hence, it is the task of this section to consider 'citizenship' in its plurality, including the material and participatory rights of citizenship, along with the recognition that much of the material is inseparable.[21]   In many ways the current discussion has been used to distance the 'entitlement to welfare' debate and the unpopular 'public' face of state bureaucracy viewpoint. Thus, the intention of this chapter is to further explore the theme that, citizenship is the mechanism for empowering ordinary individuals in the face of a dominant state and market actors.[22] In many ways it may appear that Marshall, along with others, seems to present a 'simple utilitarian moral theory', that is 'state intervention is necessary because it is relatively the most efficient way of ensuring general well being'.[23]   However, those benefits which the welfare system seeks to promote cannot be reduced to a subjective experience of wellbeing. Moreover, social policy which is formulated to alleviate the negative experiences brought about by unregulated markets, generally promote a range of values which stand independently of utility. As David Harris states,

> Social rights based on needs defined in relation to conditions necessary to preserve
>
> an individual's status as a full member of the community, for example, are not
>
> reducible to utility.[24]

Thus in order to focus upon welfare as an enhancement of citizenship, an examination of such concepts as 'needs' and 'social rights' is required.

According to Kate Soper, 'There can be few concepts so frequently involved and yet so little analysed as that of human needs'.[25] However, an understanding of the role of 'need' in mainstream citizenship theory is essential to the investigation of its ideological identity. Such an approach uses the Kantian 'respect for persons' as its starting point, and maintains the over-riding obligation to take 'the ends of others as seriously as you take your own',[26] thus also providing an essential aspect to any theory concerned with citizenship and political obligation. Furthermore such a view

86

also presupposes some form of action to guarantee a measure of equality, that is, as far as possible, people will strive to organise social relations in such a way that the basic needs of others may be met. The final position, however, must take into account the fact that these systems of modern individual human life develop within the context of changing social organisations.

It was not only Marshall who regarded social rights as a vital ingredient for the full status of citizenship and the provision of welfare services to meet the needs required to honour the social rights of such citizens. Other theorists who start from the notion that there are universal, human needs, which form the basis to any moral life include, Richard Titmuss,[27] Raymond Plant,[28] and Anna Coote.[29] However, according to Taylor-Gooby,

> Further analysis shows that such needs must include the principle for autonomy, as
> the cornerstone of a social order in which political authority admits legitimation. It
> then demonstrates that the category of needs must include access to services which
> will advance survival and good health to ensure equal respect for the 'plans of life'
> advanced by different people.[30]

Taking such a view into consideration and that human need is also social and dynamic, any account must include an analysis of the organisational and constitutional arrangement of society. Furthermore the provision and application of available knowledge within a given society is also a key theme, to which much of the first section of the thesis has been concerned, that is the question of bias and distortion, which have limited the discussion of and access to emancipatory goals.[31] Furthermore, such a stance supports a combination of theory and practice, once again quoting Taylor-Gooby:

> The perspective on human needs in the social context leads through an account of
> the significance of social institutions in the production of individual social life to

87

the conclusion that emancipatory learning is a human need, and that it can only be

realised through political debate under social forms which allow the maximum of

freedom'.[32]

The linking of 'need' to the subject of 'rights' within a 'social' context is an important component in the examination of social citizenship, and particularly the way in which the welfare state development reflected the growth and defence of citizenship welfare rights. In other words the development of social rights evolved into benefits distributed in accordance with a principle of social choice, in this case the 'principle of equal autonomy'. However, such a perspective may not be too far removed from the 'classical utilitarian theory of rights', and accordingly, 'to have a right is to be the beneficiary of another's obligation, this obligation being specified by the principle of utility.' [33] However such an analysis removes any prospect of individual choice or control, rendering the essential idea of a 'right' as worthless. As Weale suggests according to such an analysis, 'social and economic rights appear to consist merely in being entitled to receive one's portion of a communal pie'... in essence ... 'social and economic rights are merely passive'.[34]

Similarly Nancy Fraser is extremely sceptical about such analysis which simply uses an abstract interpretation of needs and prefers the term 'discourses about needs'. Her approach focuses upon the 'politics of need interpretation' which brings into view the contextual and contested character of needs claims. She contends: 'I believe that the theories of needs which do not descend into the murky depths of such networks are unable to shed much light on contemporary needs politics'.[35] Furthermore she warns that the networks of welfare state societies contain a plurality of forms, associations, groups, institutions which equally produce a plethora of discourses.[36] She summarises this concern thus:

...in late-capitalist societies, runaway needs which have broken out of domestic or

official-economic enclaves enter that hybrid discursive space that Arendt aptly

88

dubbed the "social". They may then become foci of state intervention geared to crisis management. These needs are thus markers of major social-structural shifts in the boundaries separating what are classified as "political", economic" and "domestic" or "personal" spheres of life'.[37]

Whilst Section Three of the thesis will examine the way in which 'network welfare delivery' within 'late-capitalist societies' has formed a 'plurality of forms', the question of 'runaway needs' and their interpretation into social rights has a long history of opposition. Over time there has been much disagreement amongst political theorists concerning whether economic and social rights can genuinely be regarded as rights. For example Maurice Cranston, a prominent theorist of rights, states:

> The tradition of human rights are political and civil rights such as life, liberty and a
>
> fair trial. What are now being put forward as universal human rights are economic
>
> and social rights, such as the right to unemployment insurance, old age pensions,
>
> medical services and holidays with pay. There is both a philosophical and political
>
> objection to this. The philosophical objection is that the new theory of human
>
> rights does not make sense. The political objection is that the promulgation of a
>
> confused notion of human rights hinders the effective protection of what are
>
> correctly seen as human rights.[38]

However as Raymond Plant contests, 'It could be said that rights protect human dignity and therefore we have to ask what it is about human beings that gives them the kind of dignity which rights are supposed to protect'[39] He further suggests that the Kantian 'foundation' of 'rationality' and 'respect for person' cannot be separated from its moral dimension. Turning to the ideas of Alan Gewirth, Plant maintains that we must also take into account 'moral pluralism' and 'subjectivism' and therefore the only way in which 'moral aims' can be pursued is 'autonomy' and 'well-being' that is, 'action understood as conscious pursuit of a self-posited goal rather than impulsive behaviour;

89

and 'well being is necessary not just for physical survival...but the ability to pursue one's conception of the good in the way required by that conception'.[40]

Thus the social rights of citizens are given irrespective of any character assessment, that is they are unconditional, and based upon citizenship alone. In this respect they are similar to civil and political rights because they are not dependent upon living a virtuous life. Accordingly, social and economic rights may appear not to be expressly different from civil and political rights. However, as we have discussed previously, the assumption that civil and political rights alone could be central to the status of citizenship was challenged by the empirical evidence.[41] Such evidence supported the idea that there should be a right to welfare, a right which was based upon the recognition that such a status for some citizens would be impossible given the inequalities of the market system. For the disabled, feeble minded and many women and children, the remedy was either private charity, or public provision under the Elizabethan Poor Law, or later under the Poor Law Amendment Act 1834.[42] Importantly these provisions were not regarded as being construed in terms of rights and citizenship. Private charity was essentially discretionary, a gift, and the public provision was tied to incentives to work or the punitive regime of the workhouse. Thus the idea that there is a right to welfare presented a fundamental challenge to the idea of citizenship. As Raymond Plant suggests, 'The idea of rights to welfare has also been linked with the idea of social justice'[43]. That is, the inequalities of market outcomes should not be simply accepted, rather our status as a citizen means we have a right to a set of central resources, which can provide economic security, education and health. However the distinguishing feature of a right is the fact that it can be enforced. Many critics argue that many economic and social rights are not enforceable or that they are not connected to 'mechanisms of enforcement',[44] in other words, they cannot be exercised under the legal rules of a particular society. Thus there seems to be considerable tension between the different forms of citizenship rights, particularly the incommensurability of social and civil rights.

It could be argued that such a tension reflects the contradictory nature of citizenship as a system trying to gain equality within capitalism, a system of inequality. This apparent tension led Marshall to declare that 'citizenship and the capitalist class system have been at war'.[45]   Alternatively it could be argued that the granting of the rights of citizenship by the state could be regarded as reflecting the needs of a capitalist-patriarchal system to legitimate itself.   In many respects 'by offering an amelioration against the market place...social citizenship has contributed to the value consensus of late capitalist society'.[46]

As Hay suggests;

> Thus, citizenship and capitalist accumulation are not necessarily at war though they
> embody different and contradictory principles of social justice. When they conflict -
> when for instance, welfare expenditure threatens to precipitate an economic crisis of
> the state - the inegalitarian principles of capitalism are, within a capitalist system,
> necessarily asserted over the egalitarian rhetoric of citizenship.[47]

It is obviously necessary for state interests to be able to redefine the terms of the citizenship contract as the fate of the national domestic economy vacillates. Clearly it would be easy to make a connection between the economic crisis of the 1970s[48] and the New Right retrenchment which recycled Hayek's philosophical case against the welfare state.[49] However, many commentators now suggest that this so called 'crisis' which presented itself as a battle between citizenship and capitalism, was in fact a chance to restructure the 'citizenship contract' in a manner that would not subordinate the needs of capitalist accumulation. In other words capitalism required a weakening of working class organisation and a retreat from some of the 'rights' which had been gained during the immediate post war period. Thus we have an evolving definition of citizenship which appears to be fixed by what can be legitimately expected of the state in terms of intervention into civil society in order to alleviate the problems generated by market outcomes.[50]

In many ways such a view encapsulates the ambivalence of Marshall's work towards challenging the deeply entrenched structures of inequality. Moreover during the post war period the extension of citizenship, particularly the inclusion of social rights, presented 'a structure of inequality fairly apportioned to unequal abilities'.[51] However, his correspondence between 'equality of status' and 'equality of opportunity', in many ways simply reflects the post war societal view of legitimate inequality. Such a perception has been challenged by a substantial body of evidence, suggesting that the welfare state itself contributes greatly to the maintenance and reproduction of inequality, that is of class, ethnicity and gender.[52]

One of the main critiques of Marshall's account of citizenship within mainstream theory was that of Richard Titmuss. His observation that 'equal opportunity of access by right of citizenship to education, medical care and social insurance is not the same thing as equality of outcome'[53] has provided a vast amount of research covering the extent of the inegalitarian consequences in such areas as housing, pensions, education and the health service.[54] Thus the redistributive effects of the welfare state celebrated by Marshall are competently questioned by Le Grand's suggestion that 'almost all public expenditure on the social services in Britain benefits the better off to a greater extent than the poor.'[55] His research found that in housing provision, owner-occupiers received far more in tax concessions than private or public tenants, also the children from better off homes benefit the most from the heavily funded education system.[56] Furthermore Marshall fails to fully comprehend the tensions between the differing forms of citizenship rights. Such contradictions and tensions were successfully exposed by the New Right with their reassertion of civil rights over social rights. Thus their 'rolling back of the state', was really concerned with rolling back the 'role' of the welfare state, whilst at the same time, maintaining legitimation by a more authoritarian role in quelling unrest[57] and a rhetoric of justifying hardship[58]. Such examples show the incompatibility of civil and social rights and that they are founded upon fundamentally opposed principles of social justice, that is the concepts of individuality, liberty and freedom on the one hand and

community, collectivity and civic virtue on the other. Such an important consideration is central to the discussion in Chapter Eight.

To conclude; citizenship is one of the oldest terms within political discourse and hence has been developed in an appropriately broad way. Within this chapter the discussion has kept within the narrow confines of citizenship's application to welfare and the relationship and relevance of need and social rights, particularly as a theory of need implies a range of equal citizenship welfare rights. The post war consensus seemed to guarantee these most effectively and there is a clear debt to T.H Marshall in line with the tradition of New Liberalism,[59] and their view that social rights might strengthen a general feeling of national community, which regarded state action as representative of a 'common good'. In other words the state could legitimately intervene to produce and create the resources for autonomy, which was regarded as being the prerequisite of citizenship. However many current theorists now argue that the welfare state cannot carry all the burden of society's responsibility for social welfare and that in reality the generic form of government policy has been one of 'muddling through'.[60]

Others maintain that there is a need for both institutional reform and a continuing presence of the state in a context of the 'politicization' of welfare'.[61] Given that women have not been served well in their capacity to become citizens of the welfare state, perhaps a process can be formulated which will provide an effective means of constitutional challenge to political arrangements which will benefit them more? However given the entrenched nature of the political process as 'a state of grace reserved for men',[62] Albert Weale concurs;

> A system in which ordinary citizens within a variety of local, national and supra-national contexts will be able to make effective and informed decisions about at least the broad outline of economic, social and political policy, without becoming "new men and women" in a society of total mobilisation ... is neither easy nor readily avoidable.[63]

Endnotes:

1   Albert Weale, Political Theory and Social Policy, 1983, p135.
2   Raymond Plant, (1991), *Modern Political Thought*, Oxford, Basil Blackwell, p365.
3   Michel Foucault, 'Discipline and Punish' 1977, Lois McNay, 1992, *Foucault and Feminism*, Cambridge, Polity, p106.
4   TH Marshall's definition in Ch Six.
5   Dawn Oliver 'Active Citizenship in the 1990s', *Parliamentary Affairs*, Vol 44, no 2 April 1991.
6   T.H.Marshall, 'Citizenship and Social Class', 1950, David Held, ed., (1983), *States and Societies*, Oxford, Basil Blackwell, p255.
7   Participation and democracy has continued and further developed by Rousseau(1762), G.D. Cole(1920), C.Pateman, (1988), N.Barry (1990).
8   Peter Taylor Gooby connects Locke (1693) with developing the view that the role of government is defined around the defence of a limited number of rights, and any attempt to move beyond this is regarded as ultra vires; (1991) *Social Change, Social Welfare and Social Science*, Hemel Hemstead, Harvester Wheatsheaf, p191.
9   Robert Nozick, 'Anarchy, State and Utopia', 1974, David Held, ed., (1983), *States and Societies*, Oxford, Basil Blackwell, p573.
10   See Chapter Six, p11.
11   Gillian Pascall, 'Citizenship: A Feminist Analysis', G. Drover and P. Kerans (1993), *New Approaches to Welfare Theory*, Aldershot, Edward Elgar, p125.
12   Peter Taylor-Gooby,(1991) *Social change, Social Welfare and Social Science*, Hemel Hemstead, Harvester Wheatsheaf, p194.
13   T.H.Marshall,1975, *Social Policy in the Twentieth Century*, 4th Ed, London, Hutchinson, p201.
14   Full discussion in Section Three concerning political apathy and the observation that the value of the vote is far less for the supporters of some parties than others and in some constituencies than in others. This is particularly true for the smaller parties of the centre, Liberal democrats, Labour supporters in the south, (although the 1997 election has contested that supposition) and Conservative supporters in the north.
15   For a decade or more governments have tried to suppress media comment, criticism and reporting in cases such as Spycatcher, Ponting, Tinsdall; the Public Order Act 1986 and the judicial decision regarding the miner's strike 1984-5; The Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984, Criminal Justice and Public Order Bill 1994.
16   'Thirty, thirty, forty society'; see Will Hutton, (1996) *The State We're In*, London, Vintage, p105.
17   Widespread belief that some of the restrictions on civil and political rights have been largely due to the government's desire to avoid criticism and political embarrassment and to suppress dissent; see G. Robertson, (1989) *Freedom, The Individual and the Law*, 1989.
18   Plethora of comment; see N. Deakin,(1994); M.Loney et al., (1992); C.Pierson,(1994); P. Taylor-Gooby, (1991).
19   Anna Coote, ed.,(1992), *The Welfare of Citizens: Developing New Social Rights*, London, IPPR/Rivers Oram, p1.
20   Full discussion in later chapters, particularly Section Three; An example of concern was the publication of *Encouraging Citizenship: Report of the Commission on Citizenship*, (1990), London, HMSO.
21   Raymond Plant, 'Citizenship, Rights and Welfare', Anna Coote, ed., (1992), *The Welfare of Citizens: Developing New Social Rights*, London, IPPR/Rivers Oram,
22   Principle market actors includes both capital and organised labour
23   David Harris,(1987), *Justifying State Welfare*, Oxford, Blackwell, p46.
24   Ibid., p47.
25   Kate Soper,(1981) *On Human Need*, Harvester Press, p1.
26   'Kant's famous injuction to treat men always as ends in themselves and not as means only', 1797, in Norman Barry, (1989), *Modern Political Theory*, Basingstoke, Macmillan, p140.

94

27   R.M. Titmuss,1968, (1981) *Commitment to Welfare*, London, Allen and Unwin.
28   Raymond Plant, 'Citizenship, Rights and Welfare', Anna Coote, ed., (1992), *The Welfare of Citizens: Developing New Social Rights*, London, IPPR/Rivers Oram,
29   Anna Coote, ed., (1992), *The Welfare of Citizens: Developing New Social Rights*, London, IPPR/Rivers Oram
30   Peter Taylor Gooby, (1991) *Social Change, Social Welfare and Social Science*, Hemel Hemstead, Harvester Wheatsheaf, p187.
31   Jurgen Habermas, Knowledge and Human Interests, 1973,(postscript) in M. Waters, (1994), *Modern Sociological Theory*, London, Sage.
32   Peter Taylor-Gooby,(1991), *Social Change, Social Welfare and Social Science*, Hemel Hemstead, Harvester Wheatsheaf, p187.
33   Henry Sidgewick,1891,in Albert Weale,(1983), *Political Theory and Social Policy*, London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, p135.
34   Albert Weale, (1983), *Political Theory and Social Policy*, London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, p136.
35   Nancy Fraser "Talking about Needs" in C.R.Sunstein(Ed) Feminism and Political Theory 1990 p160.
36   Ibid p 163 but more detailed discussion about such concerns in Ch8.
37   Ibid p170.
38   Maurice Cranston, (1973), *What are Human Rights?* London, The Bodley Head, p65.
39   Raymond Plant,(1991), *Modern Political Thought*, Oxford, Basil Blackwell, p259.
40   Ibid., 266.
41   Charles Booth surveyed poverty in East London and then London as a whole between 1886 and 1902, similarly Seebohm Rowntree carried out a study of York in 1899: a summary of the results in Pat Thane, (1982), *The Foundations of the Welfare State*, Harlow, Longman pp 4-7.
42   Full discussion see Pat Thane, (1982), *The Foundations of the Welfare State*, Harlow, Longman pp 12.
43   Raymond Plant, 'Citizenship, Rights and Welfare', Anna Coote, ed., (1992), *The Welfare of Citizens: Developing New Social Rights*, London, IPPR/Rivers Oram p16.
44   Ibid., p17.
45   T.H.Marshall, (1963), 'Citizenship and Social Class', 1950, in *Sociology at the Crossroads*, London, Heinnemann, p18.
46   Mary Dietz , 'Context is all', in C.Mouffe, ed.,(1992), Dimensions of Radical Democracy, 1992.
47   Colin Hay, (1996), *Re-Stating Social and Political Change*, Buckingham, Open University, p71.
48   the 'crisis' concerns the view that the golden age of post war capitalism was beginning to experience economic difficulties, thus by the early 1970's decisions like the five fold increase in oil prices which OPEC was able to impose(1973), precipitated a severe slump throughout the western world. Other 'shocks' include rapid rise of basic commodity costs(notably basic foods), and the breakdown of international monetary exchange relations.
49   Hayek's thesis, Road To Serfdom, 1944; 'any attempt to control people's natural inclinations to exchange must lead to totalitarianism', economy; N. Barry, 1989) *Modern Political Theory*, Basingstoke, Macmillan, p146. For example, people's freedom is restricted by state intervention thus welfare rights are inconsistent with a market economy.
50   Some commentators suggest that this was a result of a 'coherent hegemonic project', Andrew Gamble, (1988), *The Free Economy and the Strong State*, Basingstoke, Macmillan; which proved so successful that it gave way to 'The great moving right show'-Stuart Hall (1979), reprinted in Hall and Jacques,eds., (1983), *The Politics of Thatchersim*, London, Lawrence and Wishart, pp19-39.
51   T.H.Marshall, (1963), 'Citizenship and Social Class', 1950, in *Sociology at the Crossroads*, London, Heinnemann, p 38.
52   See analysis from feminist theory in Ch Six.
53   Richard Titmuss, 'Goals of today's welfare state', P. Anderson and R. Blackburn, eds., (1964), *Towards Socialism*, London Fontana, p357.
54   Le Grand 1982; Taylor-Gooby 1987; Groves, 1992; Hay, 1992;
55   Julian Le Grand,(1982), *The Strategy of Equality*, London, Unwin Hyman, p3.
56   Ibid., pp 54-106.
57   A good example was provided by the Miner's Strike, 1984

[58] Richard Rose suggests (1978) 'The greater the weight of past commitments, the more restricted and less palatable are the choices of an overloaded government'; This sentiment is clearly echoed in Mrs Thatcher's clarion cry 'if it's not hurting, it's not working'; Hay, (1996), *Re-Stating Social and Political Change*, Buckingham, Open University, p 99. Also discussion in Section Three.

[59] T.H Green, 1882; L.T Hobhouse 1918.

[60] Manfred Schmidt, 'The Welfare State and the Economy in Periods of Economic Crisis', 1983, in Christopher Pierson, (1994), *Beyond The Welfare State?*, Cambridge, Polity, p 219.

[61] Christopher Pierson, (1994), *Beyond The Welfare State?*, Cambridge, Polity, p221.

[62] Gillian Pascall, 'Citizenship: A Feminist Analysis', G. Drover and P. Kerans (1993), *New Approaches to Welfare Theory*, Aldershot, Edward Elgar, p125.

[63] Christopher Pierson, (1994), *Beyond The Welfare State?*, Cambridge, Polity, p220.

Chapter Eight

The Virtuous Citizen:
Community versus Society.

Abstract rights with no community of interest in the active pursuit of the common good soon wither away and are lost to passive citizens ... There is no need to drag their rights away from citizens of this type: they themselves voluntarily let them go. They find it a tiresome inconvenience to exercise political rights which distract them from industry ... Such folk think they are following the doctrine of self interest, but they have a very crude idea thereof, and the better to guard their interests, they neglect the chief of them, that is, to remain their own masters.[1]

It is this solidarity among strangers, this transformation through the division of labour of needs into rights and rights into care that gives us whatever fragile basis we have for saying that we live in a moral community.[2]

In 1978, van Gunsteren stated that 'the concept of citizenship has gone out of fashion among political thinkers'.[3] Certainly this cannot be said of the mid 90s when citizenship seems to have become the 'buzz word' among political theorists across the spectrum.[4] Kymlicka and Norman suggest a number of reasons for this renewed interest, but state that at the 'level of theory' there is an encapsulation of 'a natural evolution in political discourse because the concept of citizenship seems to integrate the demands of justice and community membership', that is the tensions between 'individual entitlement' and 'attachment to a particular community'.[5]

Of course citizenship has also become a focal point in general analysis and discussion because of current political outcomes at both a global and local level. Such examples include the failure of universal environmental policies which relied very much on voluntary citizen cooperation; the growing resurgence of nationalism especially in

97

Eastern Europe and also the tensions within Western Europe of an increasingly multicultural and multi racial population; the long-term welfare dependency argument taking place in USA and also the backlash against the welfare state in the UK; along with escalating voter apathy and growing disillusionment with the institutions of government.

More than ever the stability and well-being of a modern democracy depends not only on the justice administered by its 'basic structure'[6] but also the qualities and attitudes of its citizens. Such citizens are required to possess a broad set of attributes, for example a sense of identity which is aware and can tolerate the growing forms of competing national, regional, ethnic or religious identities, along with an enthusiasm to participate in the political process in order to maintain governmental accountability as well as advance the cause of the 'public good'. Thus throughout this chapter there will be an emphasis upon that concept of citizenship which focuses upon the attributes of civic virtue, such as responsibility, loyalty and roles,[7] rather than a further review of 'citizenship-as-legal-status'.[8]

As discussed in Chapter Seven, this latter 'membership through according people with an increasing number of citizenship rights'[9] has come under sharpening criticism. This has generally fallen into two areas of critique, which Kymlicka and Norman classify under the headings of 'identity and difference'. This includes questions concerning 'common experiences, allegiances and the problem of rectifying exclusion' and was considered under the feminist exploration offered in Chapter Six; also responsibilities and virtues, which includes 'self reliance, political participation and even civility' and will provide some of the focus for the final chapter in this theoretical section.

The initial and most politically effective criticism of post war orthodoxy and in particular the idea of social rights has come from the New Right. Although this criticism has been three fold, that is, they were inconsistent with the demands of freedom, particularly negative freedom[10]; they were economically inefficient and finally they led down 'the road to serfdom',[11] perhaps one of the most effective

arguments from the right came in the form of a direct attack on social citizenship. Marshall's analysis had in fact believed that the granting of social rights to the disadvantaged was an enabling process. However, the New Right say the achievement of social rights, that is through the services and benefits of the welfare state as not helping the status of the disadvantaged, but are, on the contrary, perpetuating the problem by promoting dependency and above all creating a 'culture of passivity.' Furthermore they blame the bureaucratic tutelage of the welfare state for this 'passivity' and its active discouragement of people becoming self-reliant. David Marsland states:

> The Welfare State is not the pinnacle of modern civilisation, as the Hampstead
>
> Catechism and the Gospel According to the *Guardian* would have us believe. On
>
> the contrary, it is outmoded, ineffective and destructive. It is philosophically
>
> incoherent, unnecessary, expensive, inefficient and worst of all it harms rather than
>
> helps its clients by creating welfare dependency and sustaining a self-excluding
>
> underclass.[12]

This is a point very much in line with that of Margaret Thatcher, who stated in 1978, 'the role of the state in Christian society is to encourage virtue not to usurp it.' However many commentators maintain that there is little evidence that such New Right ideas and reforms, which have been formulated to ensure the social and cultural integration of the poor by going "beyond entitlement" and focussing instead on the responsibility to earn a living, have produced a more responsible citizenship. The reforms are described by Geoff Mulgan as aiming at 'extending the scope of markets in people's lives, through freer trade, deregulation, tax cuts, the weakening of trade unions and the tightening of unemployment benefits' and 'inpart in order to teach people the virtues of initiative, self reliance and self sufficiency'.[13] However, this two pronged attack with both an economic and moral agenda far from getting the disadvantaged 'back on their feet' has expanded the underclass, which now includes

categories of working poor as well as the unemployed. Indeed a whole section of the community has been effectively 'disenfranchised', and feels 'excluded from decent living standards and opportunities'.[14] As Ruth Lister argues, such a concept of citizenship has been narrowed by the present governmental policies in a way which stresses consumer values, thus excluding those who cannot afford to take part in civic duties as self-reliant, property-owning consumers.[15] Furthermore, Raymond Plant sees such an alternative version of citizenship as a total contradiction of citizenship principles. He states:

> It would be a very ardent relativist who could deny that there is a consensus that income, health, education and welfare are needs bearing on the capacity for agency, which all citizens have in common in a society like ours.[16]

Although some citizenship commentators still maintain a deep commitment to the view 'that people can be full members and participants in the common life of society only if their basic needs are met' ... 'is as strong now ... as it ever was,'[17] there is a more general acceptance that passivity and dependency have been promoted through the existing institutions of the welfare state, although those solutions, such as 'workfare', which suggest the imposition of obligations as a matter of public policy are still treated with a great deal of suspicion. The question of obligations and responsibilities is similarly high on the agenda of feminist argument,[18] and has supported much of the analysis, which has fed into an acceptance of a "need for change" towards a view which empowers rights with democratic participatory rights. As Pierson states

> ...'self-help' and 'self-organisation' empowers those citizens who were the passive clients of state welfare. Thus empowered, such individuals, groups and communities are able to sense their (collective) strength and identity and lobby more effectively

for what they really want and need, and not for those needs which welfare professionals have attributed to them.[19]

In many ways some regard that the acceptance of 'a need to change' reflects an awareness and fear that due to the multiple economic and social changes within capitalist society at the present time, 'there is a crisis in liberal democratic institutions',[20] and also 'civility and public spiritedness of citizens' within liberal democracies may be in serious decline.[21] There can be little doubt that any attempts to create a fairer society will flounder if citizens are deeply intolerant of difference and are generally lacking in a 'sense of justice'[22] Certainly public policy relies upon responsible personal lifestyle decisions, for example, state health care depends to a large extent upon people acting responsibility, eating an adequate healthy diet, taking exercise, limiting their alcohol and tobacco intake. Similarly the state would find it increasingly difficult to cope with the growing numbers of dependent elderly citizens if the share of the responsibility was not shared with female relatives fulfilling expected caring roles.[23]

However some pessimistic accounts of societal change and the growth of an individualistic society, emphasize that governments need to unobtrusively formulate a system of techniques which will 'seek to govern populations without governing society, governing rather by regulating the individual choices of citizens and families'.[24] Charting the growth of the 'social', as 'a way in which humans thought about and acted upon their collective experiences', Rose saw the development of this 'social governing' as a mechanism aiming at linking 'workers into the social order and establishing a proper relationship between the familial, the social and the economic domains'...thus..'in the name of society'..the state, through the increasing bureaucratic framework 'assumed responsibility for the administration of a whole variety of risks - to individuals, to employers, to the state itself'.[25] Increasingly the institutional and procedural devices which were inbuilt into assuring that liberal democracy would

remain secure, even if individuals pursued their own self interest regardless of any 'common good', are being regarded as inadequate.[26]

Similarly, Giddens contends that the development of citizenship has been linked with the expansion of state sovereignty, although he regards this build up of the state and governmental apparatus as enabling the state to be capable of more efficient 'surveillance'. That is, such a 'build up' means that rather than resorting to force, the increased 'state and governmental' administrative power gives a greater opportunity for so-called 'cooperative forms of social relations.'[27] Rose regards these current initiatives as the emergence of a new system of government, which he terms "advanced liberal"[28] This system builds upon a person's individual 'educated' choice of action, that is, those choices which are made to enable 'self promotion, self protection and the best quality of life'. Such a strategy is developed thus,

> Rather than seeking to bind experts into centrally administered bureaucratic structures of social government, they seek to re-draw the boundaries of the political, and to govern through a range of intermediate, semi-autonomous regulatory bodies, and forms of expertise, imagined according to new logics of competition'.[29]

Thus from such a perspective, the creation of the welfare state provides a central example of the rationale of 'advanced liberalism' and epitomises the changing relationship between government and individuals. The increased use of expert knowledge and the new expectations which went with this, have created in new areas of authority which in effect encourages individuals to increasingly become responsible for their own self government, rather than be dependent.

Furthermore a new territory for the administration of collective existence has also emerged and using the devices of consumption and marketing, individuals are catered for within their chosen groupings. For example the main focus of the White Paper on community care (Department of Health 1989) stressed the responsibility of the local authority to create a market in social care through 'maximising the service

102

delivery role of the voluntary and private sectors'. In a free pluralistic society such an approach is surely welcomed, in other words people can affiliate with whomever they choose, creating a proliferation of life styles, activities and associations. Now, rather than the single locus of unity, known as society and social citizenship, our allegiance is drawn through our personal identity within our own 'particular' community. Moreover,

> Communities are not so much spaces, places or groupings but rather the complex and mobile resultants of the previous era of state welfarism ... something that exists, and therefore has a claim on us, ... to images that are created by the work of activists and manipulation of symbols and identifications, such as advertising and marketing executives.[30]

Perhaps Esping-Anderson is right to argue that the welfare state cannot 'carry the burden of society's responsibility for social welfare and collective provision'.[31] This jettonising of collective political consciousness or vitality was identified more than twenty years ago by Habermas. Even then he saw the development of 'social welfare state mass democracy as a process of 'depoliticization', a system whereby 'the mass of the population and the decline of the public realm as a political institution are components of a system of domination that tends to exclude practical questions from public discussion'.[32] Iris Marion Young regards this 'depoliticization' of capitalist welfare society as 'interest group pluralism',...'consigned to back room deals and autonomous regulatory agencies and groups', which in effect 'fragments both policy and the interests of the individual, making it difficult to assess issues in relation to one another and set priorities'.[33]

If this is indeed the case it is not difficult to see why so many writers are now calling for a renewed public life and commitment to the virtues of citizenship.[34] Certainly the question of virtue has been a contentious problem within political theory from the start. Politics itself is informed by its classical origins, the civic virtue which

was moulded by political participation.[35] Such an ideal of participatory democratic institutions would give citizens the opportunity to develop and exercise capacities of reasoning, discussion and socializing and thus from such raised consciousness they could move from self interested consumerism to an influential concern centred around a sense of community. Thus active concern in the political life of society would become a source of approval and self-identity. As Geoff Mulgan observes;

> Those who were apathetic, usually the vast majority, were regularly berated: the 'hidebound, inert and dormant' masses in Lenin's words, the 'cold indifference of the masses, their willing slavery' in the words of the Chartist George White. But the virtues of participation were shared not only by the transformers but also by moderates for whom it was deemed part of the bonding of a healthy community.[36]

However the obvious incompatibility of notions of community virtue and the necessary attributes of market society continue to present a legacy of contradictions. Where liberal individualism regards the state as a necessary arbitratory instrument, regulating action and mediating conflict, in order that individuals can have freedom to pursue their own ends, the virtuous active participatory individual locates freedom and autonomy in the actual public activities of citizenship. As Iris Marion Young summarises:

> Citizenship is an expression of the universality of human life; it is a realm of rationality and freedom as opposed to the heteronomous realm of particular need, interest and desire.[37]

However, as we have already discussed at length, Young readily contests such a bourgeois masculine understanding of citizenship, that is, an active citizenship which takes place within a 'public realm of manly virtue', extolling the attributes of 'independence, generality and dispassionate reason', a realm which excludes women

because they lack the necessary qualities which are required of 'good citizens'. On the contrary they are contained within a private area of 'particular need, interest and desire'.[38] As the previous chapter explores, the legacy concerning the so-called universality of citizenship and the inherent problems of the 'public/private' split inherent within today's welfare state presents a deep dilemma for women, that is if the state is a core patriarchal institution, then to lobby the state is to confer authority upon it, to subordinate one's demands to its inherent masculinism; yet not to lobby the state is to limit feminist struggle to a few disconnected offensives around the peripheral edge of the patriarchal power within advanced liberal society.[39] Furthermore,

> When women gain access to civil life they do not magically become transformed into examples of 'the' individual citizen. Public laws, policies and practices also work against the development of the social context necessary for democratic citizenship, although this has been less discussed in recent feminist scholarship than the manner in which women's status as wives and mothers works against their involvement in public life.[40]

However perhaps the most useful feminist analysis is that which has examined the ways in which the public and private sphere are interrelated, that is how can we define the political sphere when it is no longer separated from the private sphere? That is not to say that the two spheres are identical, but that the political can no longer be separated from everyday life. As Pateman suggests:

> The political sphere is one dimension of the collective dimension of social life as a whole. It is an arena of social existence in which citizens voluntarily cooperate together and sustain their common life and common undertaking.[41]

This central feminist proposition concerning a definition of 'the political' and which further suggests the political dimensions of life becoming part of everyday being and

thus changing the power relations of the private and public world in such a way that women would participate in the 'political' as both social and political agents is discussed at the beginning of the third section.

However, returning to the problems of passivity, Kymlicka and Norman suggest that although such a response[42] would 'empower' citizens through a system of democratisation, that is via 'dispersing state power through local democratic institutions, regional assemblies and judicable rights', it does not ensure that empowered citizens will participate and use their power in a 'public-spirited, rather than self interested or prejudiced way'.[43] Following Rousseau and J.S.Mill many participatory advocates believe that political participation itself will teach people responsibility and toleration. However as Oldfield comments such a faith in the educative activity of participation is 'overtly optimistic',[44] rather it is in the recognition that political participation has an intrinsic value for the participants themselves. However, his suggestion that such participation is 'the highest form of human living-together that most individuals can aspire to'[45] is equally unrealistic, certainly at odds with most contemporary definitions of citizenship, which regard political activity as an occasional and sometimes burdensome, means to a 'good' private life.[46]Also such a stance portrays a disregard for the pleasures of everyday life and the enjoyment people experience in their private lives.

More pertinently, much of recent communitarian thought has paid a great deal of attention to the acquisition of citizenship virtues through participation within the voluntary organisations of civil society. That is, the belief that the virtues of mutual obligation and personal responsibility are learnt through active participation within, for example, environmental groups, cooperatives, ethnic associations, neighbourhood associations, women's support groups, charities, churches, and families. In fact any voluntary group, within the 'associational networks of civil society',[47] can provide the 'seed bed of civic virtue'.[48] Once again such an approach is somewhat idealistic and no account is made of the fact that the only virtuous lessons learnt by those in very subordinate positions may be those of a submissive kind. Whilst Walzer recognises

106

that not everyone within such associations will be able to enjoy an active and independent role, his solution of 'political correction' may be equally problematic, and opening the door to 'wholesale intervention'.[49] Also it is asking a great deal from voluntary organisations which generally have quite a specific raison d'etre.

Finally much of the criticism concerning the imbalance between a citizenship bent on obtaining individual rights rather than responsible citizenship has been levelled unfairly at liberal theorists. Certainly from the influences of New Liberalism onwards autonomy was the prerequisite of citizenship. From this tradition,

> there could be no true liberty if a man was confined and oppressed by poverty, by excessive hours of labour, by insecurity of livelihood ... To be truly free he must be liberated from these things ... In many cases, it was only the power of law that could effect this. More law might often mean more liberty. [50]

As noted previously, the principle of autonomy remains an overriding imperative to the enhancement of citizenship.[51] Similarly John Rawls' defence[52] of the distribution of social, economic and political principles within a just society remains 'a classic of the individualistic tradition' and has inspired the influential strand defending the entitlements of citizenship.[53] However despite a great deal of criticism,[54] the Rawlsian account of justice provides a useful basis for any theory which is rescinding those claims from the New Right for the most minimal state provision of welfare.

Perhaps some of the most stimulating ideas regarding the role of citizens and the overweening presence of the state has come from a liberal basis. As Kymlicka and Norman suggest;

> some of the most interesting work on the importance of civic virtue is in fact being done by liberals such as Amy Gutmann, Stephen Macedo and William Galston. According to Galston, the virtues required for responsible citizenship can be divided into four groups: (i) general virtues: courage, law-abidingness, loyalty; (ii) social

107

virtues: independence, open-mindedness; (iii) economic virtues: work ethic, capacity to delay self-gratification, adaptability to economic and technological change; (iv) political virtues: capacity to discern and respect the rights of others, willingness to demand only what can be paid for, ability to evaluate the performance of those in office, willingness to engage in public discourse.[55]

It is perhaps within the scope of the last two virtues that the most interesting concerns have been voiced, that is, given the overweening presence of the state[56] - the need on the part of citizens within a representative democracy to question and monitor those who govern in their name, and also to be aware of the limits of state action in relation to civil society. The most relevant comments are those of John Keane, who views the problems of social democracy in Western Europe arising from 'its over reliance upon the state as an instrument of change'. In this process, the state replaces the self activity of citizens with the promise that its many-faceted interventions in social life can ensure commodious and satisfactory living, social peace and real social security. However in order to maintain this assurance, the state is required to intervene ever more intrusively within the construction of increasing bureaucracy in the daily lives of its citizens. Moreover as Keane summarises, 'to encourage the passive consumption of state provision and seriously to undermine the citizens' confidence in their ability to direct their own lives'.[57] Finally the only way forward is through redefining the relationship between the state and a reconstituted civil society. Keane defines civil society thus;

an aggregate of institutions whose members are engaged primarily in a complex of non-state activities - economic and cultural production, household life and voluntary associations - and who in this way preserve and transform their identity by exercising all sorts of pressures or controls upon state institutions.[58]

In other words the actual existing composition of civil societies, dominated as they are by white heterosexual males within private corporations are totally inadequate

108

to undertaking the task of self reform ... thus it is only through returning many welfare functions back to the competence and expertise of individual and social actors that the impasse of social democracy and citizenship can be overcome. Closely related in the theme of revived citizenship and the renewal of civil society is the call for a greater enhancement of the voluntary sector. Whilst acknowledging the doubts voiced earlier, such a vision maintains a 'particular attraction as the repository of social and altruistic impulses, without many of the vices such as compulsion, centralisation and inflexibility'. Such a review of this sector also has broad appeal, not only reviving the 'moral economy of charity', and the greater involvement of the 'active' citizen, but they are also regarded as having greater sensitivity to the needs of community, provide a 'bottom up' approach, especially for those 'passive' individuals, groups and communities in need of '(collective) strength and identity'. However any attempt to 'revitalise civil society' as a 'mechanism for resolving the problems of social democracy' also means that the relationship between the state and civil society must also be redefined.[59]

To conclude this theoretical section and by way of setting out the agenda for the research project which follows in the next section, there is a need to reaffirm the position of feminist analysis within this thesis. Certainly there seems little hope of agreement between those radical feminists who believe that gender divisions are biologically determined and those who continue to believe that 'we will be able to join with men - follow or lead - in the new human politics that must emerge beyond reaction'[60] However with an increasing move away from the centrality of male based theory and a growing identification of the realities of women's lives and endeavours, so there is a recognition of a drawing together of feminist analysis. For example, although liberal feminists may have hoped to change only gender relations and to keep all other social structures intact, in practice their ideas have had, admittedly along with other social and political influences, far-reaching and subversive implications that have led to both conventional family structures and dominant economic thinking being challenged.[61]

There is also a need to establish a basis for political action, that is by analysing the opportunities and problems involved in achieving a more just society. To recognise that key institutions are not neutral, but reflect the interests and priorities of men does not mean that society is totally oppressive or that political action should not be undertaken, rather it acknowledges realistic assessments. It also enables an overall awareness that the needs and interests of all women are equally diverse, for example many liberal feminists believe that the rationality of their demands will be enough to deliver success, or that they may prefer to attain their goals in an independent way. Similarly there should be a recognition that the structures of oppression, for example dominant economic interests, are not synonymous with all individual men as the agents of oppression. Thus there should be an acknowledgement that men too can support feminist demands. In other words there is an overlap of issues interests and intentions. As Valerie Bryson observes:

> Although in principle liberal feminists..do not wish to challenge capitalist or free market assumptions, the logic of some of their recent demands does precisely this. Thus for example equal pay legislation, the elimination of sexism in education and the monitoring of employment practices all involve an increase in state intervention and planning, while it seems unlikely that an economic system based purely upon the pursuit of profit would provide good quality childcare and the kind of flexible working arrangements that would allow men and women to combine full participation in child-rearing with the pursuit of a career.[62]

Another problem area is the liberal concept of a 'private' area of life, which is regarded as being free from power struggles and political interference. Such an arena presents obvious problems for those feminists who consider that all existing social institutions and relationships are part of a patriarchal power structure. However Zillah Eisenstein presents a very relevant perspective, arguing that 'this does not mean that radical feminists are attacking privacy as an ideal or advocating political involvement

110

in personal and family life; rather they are claiming the relations of the family are political and should not be'.[63] Certainly it is far from obvious that the boundaries between the private and the public will clarify, in fact probably on the contrary there will be a growing acknowledgement of individual need for privacy within personal life that includes a claim to time and space.[64]

Finally, whilst women's experience and interests must provide the starting point for a feminist theory of citizenship, it must also be understood that oppression and disadvantage are also due to class and racial issues. Thus any assertion within this thesis of a universalising approach to women's experience has also been rejected, along with simple explanations and easy solutions and even the isolation of gender issues from other structural inequalities. Therefore with the acknowledgement that such inherent problems demand a pluralistic approach, this thesis will explore the possibilities of a more flexible and pluralistic form of political activity, that is the need to combine with other forms of resistance and struggle but in a way that has relevance for the majority of women.

There is a growing belief that citizenship should be enjoyed by all western liberal constitutional states but that is also dependent upon a certain level and quality of citizen virtue. Calls now generate from mainstream politicians of all complexions for citizenship to revive 'cohesive communities - in particular shared moral values and social responsibility - as the social basis for the maintenance of the existing political system'.[65] In other words there is an acceptance particularly in both the USA and the UK that increasing state intervention has produced a complexity of problems.

Certainly the relationship of women to the state has produced much debate,[66] and particularly the question of women's increased dependency on the state as citizens. Furthermore there is now a more general acceptance that the state is no longer able to provide a simple equal legal framework to enable individuals to pursue their own ends. Rather it is regarded in the role of being asked to intervene on behalf of those specific groups which are seen as having particular needs. As we have discussed during this

111

section the basic concepts of needs and rights in the role of citizenship has produced an impasse, and especially for women. As Melanie Phillips suggests,

> To challenge the rights-based culture is seen as forfeiting one's claim to moral virtue' ... and ... 'what is needed is a society of reciprocal rights and duties, with primary responsibility for ourselves and for each other, and with the role of the State redefined as educator and enabler.[67]

However as with all public sphere activity, on the issue of equitable access and non sexist philosophies and structures, there are the obvious problems of sexual power relations. Thus there will be a need throughout the next section to address the problems of institutional structure, political culture and the concrete policies which effect women's status as citizens.

There is little doubt that citizenship is a crucial element in the health and stability of a modern democracy. Yet in many ways the conception of citizenship is eclectical and as Maurice Roche suggests can offer,

> contradictory and paradoxical status - seemingly universal and egalitarian in its conception, yet marginalizing and hierarchical in the relations of domination it sustains .... Citizenship is here understood as a legitimating rhetorical device, a mirage, an illusion. Citizenship is a myth which helps to make present reality appear to be what it too rarely is in reality, namely potentially just, rational and bearable.[68]

The appeal of the political rhetoric cannot be ignored because it does imply a responsibility to the community, which appeals so much to the political right and their concern for 'active' citizenship' and personal responsibility, as well as those on the centre and left who see the benefits of community solidarity. Also it is clear from all of the debate, that when many of the liberal values and principles were extended to

112

women, they presented a certain amount of theoretical confusion. However this does not mean an outright rejection of all such values and principles. Whilst admitting that there is no obvious route out of this paradox, and in particular with respect to citizenship, the dilemma between contemporary feminist political theory and praxis leaves a series of unresolved questions.

Finally, as this thesis has discussed at length, the structuring of the private and public spheres is of critical concern to the position and citizenship status of women,[69] and it has only been via leaving the private sphere of the home that women have been able to gain some aspect of citizenship. To accept this universalistic single notion of citizenship, would suggest that citizenship is open to women provided certain straightforward forms of discrimination are removed. However, if the concept of citizenship is tied to a necessary separation of the public and private arenas, such a division in the 1990s is totally unhelpful. The rapid restructuring in Britain, suggests that the usefulness of such dichotomies as public and private, formal and informal are no longer analytically useful. Furthermore, women should take advantage of the present 'flux' which is prevalent at the 'public and private interface of life' and develop new possibilities. They should also regard power in a positive way and strive collectively to be present as women within public institutions and organizations as one precondition for a transformation of the values, public policies, and institutional structure of the welfare state in ways that make it more responsive to women's need sand interests.[70] Evidence shows that such integration has become one precondition for the empowering of women as mothers, workers and citizens in the sense that it enables women to determine their own destiny and define their own interests.[71] Moreover provide a more just society for all.

> a given society is just if its substantive life is lived in a certain way - that is, faithful
>
> to the shared understandings of its members. When people disagree about the
>
> meaning of social goods, when understandings are controversial, then justice
>
> requires that the society be faithful to the disagreements, providing institutional

113

channels for their expression, adjudicative mechanisms and alternative

distributions.[72]

Endnotes:

[1]   Alexis de Toqueville, 1840, quoted by Bill Jordan, J. Ferris and R. Page, eds., (1994), *Social Policy in Transition*, Aldershot, Avebury, p 124.

[2]   Michael Ignatieff, (1990), *The Needs of Strangers*, London, Hogarth, p10.

[3]   Herman von Gunsteren, 'Notes towards a Theory of Citizenship', F. Dallymayr ed., (1978), *From Contract to Community, Political Theory at the Crossroads*, New York, Dekker, p9.

[4]   Held 1989; Barry & Plant 1990; Habermas 1992; Dietz 1992.

[5]   Will Kymlicka & Wayne Norman "Return of the Citizen: A Survey of Recent Work on Citizenship Theory, in *Ethics* 104, Jan 1994, p352.

[6]   John Rawls maintains that the basic structure of society is the primary subject of a theory of justice, (1973), *Theory of Justice*, Oxford University, p7.

[7]   A large amount of interest has been paid by governments' in recent times in citizenship promotion, e.g. Britain's Commission on *Encouraging Citizenship*, (1990), HMSO, Australia's *Active Citizenship*(1991) ; Canada's *Sharing the Responsibility*, (1993).

[8]   Will Kymlicka and Wayne Norman warn that often the two different concepts are sometimes conflated, that is, the full membership of a community merges with the citizenship-as desirable activity into a quantitative and qualitative measurement of 'ones participation in that community' in *Ethics*, 104, Jan 1994, p353

[9]   T.H Marshall, (1963), 'Citizenship and Social Class', 1950, *Sociology at the Crossroads*, London, Heinemann..

[10]   Isiaih Berlin's discussion concerning negative and positive freedom;(1968), *Four Essays on Liberty*, Oxford University.

[11]   F.von Hayek, (1944), *The Road to Serfdom*, London, Routledge and Sons, Ltd.

[12]   David Marsland, (1996), *Welfare or Welfare State*, Basingstoke, Macmillan, p120.

[13]   Geoff Mulgan, 'Citizenship and Responsibilities', G. Andrews, ed.,(1991), *Citizenship*, London, Lawrence and Wishart, p 43.

[14]   Will Hutton, (1996), *The State We're In, London*, Vintage, p24.

[15]   Ruth Lister, *The Exclusive Society: Citizenship and the Poor*, (1990), London, Child Poverty Action Group, p10.

[16]   Raymond Plant, 'Citizenship, Rights and Welfare', Anna Coote, ed., (1992), *The Welfare of Citizens: Developing New Social Rights*, London, IPPR, Rivers Oram, p23.

[17]   Michael Ignatieff, 'Citizenship and Moral Narcissism', *Political Quarterly* 60. 1989 p66.

[18]   See previous Chapter, also Carol Gilligan 1982; Anne Phillips 1993.

[19]   Christopher Pierson, (1991), *Beyond the Welfare State?* Cambridge, Polity, p201.

[20]   Arthur Lipow and Patrick Seyd, 'The Politics of Anti-Partyism', in *Parliamentary Affairs*, Vol 49, No 2 April 1996, 274

[21]   Michael Walzer, "The Civil Society Argument", Chantal Mouffe, ed., (1992),*Dimensions of Radical Democracy*, London, Verso, p90.

[22]   John Rawls, (1973), *Theory of Justice*, Oxford University, p335.

[23]   This burden falls particularly upon women., See Fiona Williams, 'Women and Community', Bornat et al., eds., *Community Care: A Reader*, Basingstoke, Macmillan, pp33-43.

[24]   Nikolas Rose, 'The Death of the Social', 9th July 1994, *New Times*, London, p6

[25]   Ibid.

[26]   Devices such as the separation of powers, a bicameral legislature and federalism would balance self interest.

[27]   'Giddens Thesis', David Held, 'Citizenship and Autonomy', *Political Theory and the Modern State*, (1989), Cambridge, Polity, p196.

[28]   Nikolas Rose, 'The Death of the Social', 9th July 1994, *New Times*, London, p6.

[29]   Ibid.

[30]   Ibid p7; Such examples were provided during the campaign against Aids and the riskiness of certain forms of conduct, eg the promotion of 'safe sex'.

31   G. Esping-Anderson, Politics against Markets, 1985, quoted in C.Pierson, (1991), *Beyond the Welfare State?* Cambridge, Polity, p218.

32   Jurgen Habermas, (1971), *Towards a Rational Society*, London, Heinemann, p75.

33   Iris Marion Young, 'Polity and Group Difference', in *Ethics* 99 January 1989 p251.

34   Benjamin Barber, (1984), 'Strong Democracy', Berkeley, is representative of new republican theorists who are concerned with the fallibility of human reason, A. Phillips, (1995), *The Politics of Presence*, Oxford, OPT, p28.

35   Iris Marion Young suggests that the idea of the ancient Greek polis often functions in both modern and contemporary discussion as a myth of lost origins, the paradise from which we have fallen and to which we desire to return, 'Polity and Group Difference', *Ethics* Jan 1989, p252.

36   Geoff Mulgan, Politics in an Antipolitical Age, 1994, p25.

37   Iris Marion Young, 'Polity and Group Difference', *Ethics* Jan 1989, p252

38   Ibid., p254

39   Carol Pateman called this the 'Wollstonecraft dilemma','The patriarchal welfare state', *The Disorder of Women*, (1989), Oxford, Polity p195-204.

40   Ibid., p192.

41   Carol Pateman,(1985), *The Problem of Political Obligation*, Cambridge, Polity, p174

42   That is, examples of state legislation which would acknowledge and alleviate the way in which a patriarchal division of labour reflects citizenship; caring and unpaid domestic work are seen as a private rather than a public 'good'.

43   Will Kymlicka and Wayne Norman, 'Return of the Citizen', *Ethics* Jan 1994 p360.

44   Adrian Oldfield, 'Citizenship: An Unnatural Practice?' *Political Quarterly* 61 pp177-87

45   Adrian Oldfield, (1990), *Citizenship and Community*, London, Routledge, p6.

46   There is a great deal of agreement amongst commentators that political debate is no longer meaningful and people lack access to effective participation. See Lipow & Seyd, 'The Politics of Anti-Partyism', *Parliamentary Affairs*, Vol 49, no2 April 1996.

47   Michael Walzer, 'The Civil Society Argument', Chantal Mouffe, ed., (1992), *Dimensions of Radical Democracy*, London, Verso, p104.

48   Mary Glendon 1991, Kymlicka and Norman, 'Return of the Citizen', *Ethics* January 1994 p363.

49   Michael Walzer, 'The Civil Society Argument', Chantal Mouffe, ed., (1992), *Dimensions of Radical Democracy*, London, Verso, p106.

50   Herbert Samuel cited in Andrew Vincent and Raymond Plant, (1984), *Philosophy, Politics and Citizenship*, Oxford, Blackwell, p 73.

51   Albert Weale,(1983), *Political Theory and Social Policy*, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul; Bill Jordan, (1987), *Rethinking Welfare*, Oxford, Blackwell.

52   John Rawls, (1973), *A Theory of Justice*, Oxford University: In brief Rawls employs a hypothetical contract made in an original position under a veil of ignorance in order that the participants can reach political principles that protect liberty and improve inequality... .

53   Anne Phillips, (1993), *Democracy and Difference*,Cambridge, Polity, p41.

54   Communitarianism, see Mulhall and Swift, (1992), *Liberalisms and Communitarianism*, Oxford, Blackwell.

55   William Galston, 'Liberal Purposes', 1991, Kymlicka and Norman, 'Return of the Citizen', *Ethics*, Jan 1994 p365.

56   See earlier discussion within this chapter regarding 'governing community', Nikolas Rose, 'The Death of the Social', 9th July 1994, *New Times*, London.

57   John Keane, (1988), *Democracy and Civil Society*, London, Verso, p4.

58   Ibid., p14.

59   Chris Pierson,(1991), *Beyond the Welfare State?* Cambridge, Polity, p201- 204.

60   Betty Friedan, (1982), *The Second Stage*, London, Michael Joseph, p348.

61   Liberal feminists see child rearing as a potentially fulfilling aspect of life that can be shared with men or professionally trained carers, whilst socialist feminists argue for the importance of domestic work. At a practical level the bearing and raising of children should be made compatible with other activities ... this might involve flexible working practices, collective provision for childcare, shared parenting with men or a combination of all three. See Valerie Bryson,(1992), *Modern Feminist Thought*, New York, Paragon House, p264.

62   Ibid., p265.

63   Zillah Eisenstein, (1984), *Feminism and Sexual Equality: Crisis in Liberal America*, New

York, Monthly Review Press, p215.

64   Anita Allen, 'Women and their privacy' in Bock and James, eds., (1992), *Beyond Equality and Difference*, London, Routledge, pp233/249.

65   Judith Squires, 'Added Values' *Sign of the Times Discussion Paper*, 1994, London, p1.

66   Helga Hernes, 1984 in K. Jones and A Jonasdottir, The political Intersts of Gender, 1988, pp174/5.

67   Melanie Phillips 'The wrongs of standing up for rights', Observer June 1994, in David Marsland, (1996), *Welfare or Welfare State*, Basingstoke, Macmillan, p25.

68   Maurice Roche, (1992), *Rethinking Citizenship*, Cambridge, Polity, p224.

69   Zillah Eisenstein, 1981; Susan Moller Okin, 1989; Carol Pateman 1989.

70   Anna Jonasdottir, 'On the Concept of Interest, Women's Interests and the Limitations of Interest Theory', K. Jones and A. Jonasdottir, eds., (1988), *The Political Interests of Gender*, London, Sage, p57.

71   Birte Siim, 'Towards a Feminist Rethinking of the Welfare State', K. Jones and A. Jonasdottir, eds., (1988), *The Political Interests of Gender*, London, Sage, p 182.

72   M. Walzer,(1983), *Spheres of Justice*, Oxford, Martin Robertson, p313.

Section Three

Theory into Practice.

The Question:

Does the lack of women's influence and involvement in local political parties characterize a challenge to representative democracy?

> The precariousness of the relationship between citizens and the state lies in this essential feature of representation. Representative government inevitably establishes distance between the rulers and the ruled, implying the possibility that this distance may attain such proportions that it would be difficult to continue to speak of democracy. Political processes in democracies therefore can, and must, always confront the question of whether they satisfy democratic criteria. How responsive are these political processes to the demands of citizens, and to what extent can citizens control this responsiveness?[1]

> Feminist demands for representation called into question the compatibility of existing patriarchal institutions with representative democracy.[2]

This final section of the thesis is concerned with Anne Showstack Sasson's view that, '..too much of the debate about citizenship is so abstract that it is millions of miles away from that reality'.[3] Certainly, as already discussed any theoretical or practical considerations of the role of citizenship as a means of providing women with greater fulfilment and participation must involve all aspects of public interests and private concerns. However if the discrimination that women face in many areas of their lives is to be counteracted, and the 'vicious circle' of political, economic and social inequality transcended, they must obtain a presence within the arena of political power, albeit a community which is the most profoundly gendered. As Anne Phillips proposes:

It is not a matter of political equality being inadequate - as if this equality has been won, but should now be extended from the political to the social realm - but that our 'political' status as citizens is premised on arrangements of sexual inequality.[4]

Many factors operate against the presence of women within politics;[5] a lack of economic independence, along with a combination of paid and unpaid work responsibilities, militate against women's participation even in local politics, let alone national government; also Westminster working hours, the lack of childcare facilities and the male 'club' atmosphere,[6] or simply the view that 'politics is not a feminine pursuit but a man's world'.[7] However as anyone who is either concerned or involved with the political sector will know, women are not attracted to such spheres simply by an increase in creche facilities, a reaction which many commentators feel is not isolated within the UK[8] and in fact, follows a more general retreat by 'European citizenry into a mode of private existence'. As Nina Fishman observes;

Circumstance no longer compels citizens to follow and participate in the political process; its cut and thrust feels different- less potent and less genuine. The political process silted up and popular interest in politics waned into 'apathy' and 'indifference'.[9]

With such problems in mind this final section aims to provide a very brief overview of the theoretical context which informs current discussion on liberal democratic representation and to clarify the practical apparatus/mechanisms of party politics; to consider the current gender and politics debate and the ability of the party process to deliver women's interests; and finally provide a case study of local democracy and party politics within South Tyneside. Thus in order to explore the thesis question, which is concerned about the representation of South Tyneside women, the contention that the political process within Britain reflects a liberal

118

pluralist site of competing interests, of which women are a legitimate competing group, must be examined.

Endnotes:

[1]   Dieter Fuchs and Hans-Dieter Klingemann, (1995) *Citizens and the State*, New York, Oxford University, p2.

[2]   Suzanne Franzway, Dianne Court, RW Connell, (1989), *Staking a Claim, Feminism, bureaucracy and the state*, Cambridge, Polity, p151.

[3]   Anne Showstack Sassoon,' Embracing Equality and Difference' an interview by Anne Coddington, Stuart Wilks, ed., (1993), *Talking About Tomorrow a new radical politics*, London, Pluto, p 102.

[4]   Anne Phillips,(1993), *Democracy and Difference*, Cambridge, Polity, p108.

[5]   Full discussion in Chapter Ten.

[6]   Anna Kruthoffer, 'Refreshing the Parts', Smyth, G., ed., (1992), *Electoral Reform and British Politics*, p100.

[7]   Karen Hunt, 'Women and Politics', Bill Jones,ed., (1989), *Political Issues in Britain Today*, Manchester University, p261.

[8]   This is particularly true of young people. Wilkinson, H & Mulgan G., (1995), *Freedom's Children: Work, relationships and politics for 18-34 year olds in Britain today*, London, Demos, p102.

[9]   Nina Fishman, 'Extending the Scope of Representative Democracy', *Political Quarterly*, Vol 60 198, p 446.

Chapter Nine

Representation, Parties and Democracy:

Extending the scope of citizenship?

The political party provides us with the necessary shorthand for making our political choice: we look at the label rather than the person, and hope we will not be let down.

Though it might seem rather grandiose to describe this dominance of party politics as a high-minded 'politics of ideas', the description conveys some at least of what is involved in current notions of representation'[1].

This chapter intends to focus upon those concepts of democracy, representation and the role of political parties and their relationship to the practice of politics. The claim that the political process in Britain reflects a genuine pluralist arena is not only called into question by feminist analysis, which regards the patriarchal nature of the existing institutions as incompatible with representative democracy,[2] but also by an increasing number of both 'practitioners and professional spectators alike', who reflect .. 'an interesting coincidence of views from left, right and centre that our system of representative democracy is no longer 'delivering the goods'.[3]

Although it is not the intention of this section to cover the defining elements of democracies in any detail, it is perhaps necessary to consider the question of how much democracy is desirable or achievable in any given situation and to discuss the 'deeply rooted conflict' between direct and representative forms.[4] Certainly the direct or participatory form, practised in ancient Athens, relied totally on the active involvement of all its citizens in the regulation of public affairs. As we know, many were excluded from the citizenry, but for those included the expectation of active participation was taken most earnestly. From such a model the importance placed upon public duty and civic virtue has continued, that is, as an idealised form of self-

government characterized by citizen's active involvement in decision making. Such ideas were also reinforced by the emergent middle classes during the nineteenth century, as a useful creed by which to challenge the aristocracy and land owners and construct those conditions best suited to the needs of commerce, industry and the growing professions. Thus the vision of 'an association of self-reliant and responsible citizens, cooperating in pursuit of material and moral improvement and progress' challenged the old static hierarchical society at that time. However, many commentators have suggested that the inherent belief in the free market resolving social conflict, and the 'invisible hand' mechanism of the law of supply and demand promoting and accommodating individual life plans, may have been an assumption which had a 'certain plausibility in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, but in the twentieth century such views are highly questionable'.[5] On the contrary, markets have created an inequitable division of wealth, and the control exercised by the large corporations over the supply of goods, services and information has meant that individuals have very little overall influence. Such considerations have supported a growing 'realistic' view which recognises that 'civic virtue was highly fragile', and that 'in practice the market economy has given rise, not to a cooperative society of mutually improving individuals, but to a world of conflicting group interests.' Hence the further argument that such causes and effects have radically altered the nature of liberal democracy, because liberalism and democracy rest on opposed principles of equality; that is the view of liberalism resting 'on a principle of formal equality' that of common humanity, whilst there is a conception that 'democracy, in contrast, rests on a principle of substantive equality'.[6]

A further distinction which should be considered are those of normative and empiricist theories. However, although this section is concerned with a more descriptive meaning rather than any concept of 'the good', such an analysis will include both descriptive appraisal and a more general normative stand-point. Consideration will also be given to the concept of democracy as a certain kind of procedure. Barry argues that 'democratic procedures are special sorts of political procedures which are

designed to involve the people in decision-making and the making of laws, in the way that monarchical or autocratic procedures are obviously not'.[7] Moreover, the 'people' has come to mean the ideal of 'rule by all the people', hence the normative argument that liberal democracy advances the interests of all the members of a politically organised community. Of course empiricists would contest such a claim stating that democratic procedures are often used to advance sectional interests. But as an ideal, democratic legitimacy is a function of laws, along with the product of a majority decision, where the access to that decision-making process is not restricted to some particular group. Thus democracy must attach some commitment to political equality, not as an absolute concept, but in the sense of no group or individual being deprived in an arbitrary way of the opportunity of participating in the political process. Once again both the ideal and practice of equal participation for women is the subject of this section.

When democracy is defined in terms of 'majority rule', that is where the composition of a representative assembly and their decisions are resolved by a majority vote, both normative and descriptive problems are posed. Majority rule procedures may not reflect public choice,[8] even in a reasonable homogenous community. Further even when 'majority voting' is stable and minority interests are protected, the necessary means for actual participation in the political process are not clear and are susceptible to arbitrary elements. For example the decisions made by political leaders are generally a balance between what appeals to significant private groups and the constraints of what the majority of the electorate will accept. Also at a descriptive level the 'majority principle', of the 'first past the post' electoral system in the UK implicitly ensures that most elected governments have a smaller share of the vote than the major opposition party.[9]

In his definition of democracy, Alan Ware (1987) suggests three main elements of 'interest optimalization, the exercise of control and civic orientation'.[10] The first point embodies those aims and objectives which will satisfy the interests of the greatest number of citizens or at least will provide the procedures to meet democratic

requirements, even though the results they produce may be irrelevant; secondly, an opportunity for people to exercise control or choice over certain aspects of an administration or organization even if this is very limited.[11] There is an obvious problem of size when it comes to citizens participating fully in decision making and the solution of decentralising decisions does not always solve the problem, either because both financial and human resources are often of a 'low-level' or specific interests take precedence over more general or macro social issues. Ware suggests that 'representative government has long been regarded as the key to establishing democracy in a modern state'. However whether, in practice, 'representation' is a 'complete substitute' for democratic control or 'a device which must be used in combination with others, to facilitate control by a larger number of people', because in practice there is always the danger that the representatives are in fact simply 'competing elites'[12] presents a fundamental question. This in part, leads onto the third element of democracy, which supports the view that a democratic process should be oriented towards 'shared interests' rather than 'particular interests'[13]. However as noted previously, it is very difficult to facilitate 'direct human interactions in the decision-making process ' in any thing other than 'neighbourhood and decentralised concerns'.

With such disagreement about the nature of democracy, it is not surprising that there is similar debate surrounding the social arrangements compatible with such ideals. However, whether or not the maximisation of control an individual has over his or her own affairs is enhanced through minimal or interventionist measures is not the focus of the debate within this thesis. Rather it is how a post-industrial society, such as the UK, can develop institutional structures supportive of democratic elements, given that 'the people' are not especially interested in politics. This general level of disinterest is reinforced by current research, which shows a more or less random, directionless flux across all sectors of society.[14]

In response many theorists regard pluralist democracy, that is the presence of multiple competing groups and interests in a system in which power is decentralised so

that no one interest can dominate, as a far greater ideal.[15] Such a concept will be developed later. However the main preoccupation of this chapter is with the prevailing problem of reconciling the aim of 'government by the people' with the obvious fact that the political process itself is a minority activity. People generally remain disinterested in 'Politics', being far more concerned with everyday problems, but they also recognise the importance of the political processes and the public policies which follow, because of the effect it may have on their everyday lives. Once again the amount of activity people are willing to give is questionable. As Anne Phillips suggests;

> People are far more willing to sign petitions than participate in defining objectives, even those who have thrown themselves into periods of intensive activity usually retreat into the background when the pressures on their lives become too great.[16]

Against such a background the organisations of political process are both essential and an enigma. Thus as Harmon Zeigler points out, it is in the knowing and doing 'what the people want' that the 'problem of democracy' lies, especially the 'large industrial democracies of today', and hence 'without political organisations, the task of finding out what the people want is beyond reach'.[17] The concept of 'the people' is also deeply problematical; as the preliminary chapters have shown, any view of a heterogeneous 'people' or 'citizens' is incongruous. However, the emotive phrase 'of the people, by the people, for the people' is central to our view of democracy, hence the invention of such a mass is a very important part of the political organisational process. Edmund Morgan states:

> Sober thought may tell us that all governments are of the people, that all profess to be for the people and that none can literally be by the people. But sober thought will tell us also that the sovereignty of the people, however fictional, *has worked*.....Government requires make-believe ... Make believe that the people *have*

124

a voice or make believe that the representatives of the people *are* the people ... The

fiction that replaces the divine right of kings (the people) is our fiction, and it

accordingly seems less fictional to us.[18]

This 'fiction' provides a most useful linkage for political organisations, which Zeigler

clarifies as 'linking people with policy and elites with masses', a link which may be one

of 'policy, personnel or process'.[19] Currently there has been a great deal of concern

for the way parties are regarded within this 'linkage', particularly with regard to 'the

capacity to transmit social demands and the capacity to foster identification, solidarity

and consensus',[20] given that many influential studies are claiming that the balanced

relationship between citizens and the state has undergone a fundamental change in the

last two or three decades. However, there can be little doubt that the role of the major

political parties in modern mass democracies is a significant one and that they are

'victors in a process of political competition, having eliminated minor parties and

cranks as serious contenders for office'.[21]

At this point a further definition could be helpful as often the dividing line

between political parties and other types of political organisation is a difficult one and

perhaps should not even be made. It is certainly more easily made in theory than in

practice. Hence Harmon Zeigler states:

Political Parties in democratic systems are organisations whose primary purpose is

to elect candidates in order to control the personnel and policies of government .

Interest groups are formal organisations that try to accomplish their goals through

influence on public policy. These descriptions are abstract; in practice, the

functions of political parties and interest groups are much less clearly defined.[22]

The formation and diversity of the main political parties in Western Europe are

connected to social, cultural and historical influences and the electoral systems

themselves: between centre and periphery, church and state, industry and agriculture,

and workers and entrepreneurs.[23]   However, the links with traditional cleavages are less clearly defined in today's society, as more complex social organisation means that individuals often find themselves in a wide range of situations requiring allegiance to various different social groups. Furthermore, the ability of parties to mediate on even traditional issues has been weakened by the general trend towards 'catch-all parties' and an increasing blandness. Also such developments runs counter to the emerging trend amongst some citizens of attaching more importance to participation in issue-based rather than ideologically-based politics. The market for participation seems to be more open and varied than ever before, with citizens now having 'an active market-place of participation in which to shop'. As Lipow and Seyd suggest;

> It is also asserted that discerning citizens now make more informed calculations about how to use their time and money, recognise that pressure groups offer greater rewards in achieving political objectives than parties and therefore, channel their activities into a particular group rather than a party.[24]

Whilst critical analysis agrees that there has been a change in the value orientations among citizens, they differ widely on the direction of this change. However Parsons offers a useful formula, in which he typifies these orientations generally falling into three 'universal modes' of evaluation: instrumental, expressive and moralistic. Instrumental and expressive orientations are regarded as individual needs, which are assessed using utilitarian criteria, that is an 'expressive' need involves the expectation of immediate gratification, whereas 'instrumental' orientations are regulated by longer-term cost-benefit calculations. A 'moral' orientation evokes a more collective approach, which is judged against universal notions of those 'goods' which no one should be excluded from using.[25]   For example, according to such criteria, Inglehart's postmaterialist values represent moral orientations, that is they are individualistic concerns for the fundamental risks within modern society, whilst Bell's (1976) and Huntington's (1974) description of the growing importance of hedonistic

values, represents a growing expressive orientation. Using this formula for the analysis by Streeck (1987), Klingemann and Fuchs suggest that an instrumental value orientation increasingly determines the nature of the connection between citizens and the traditional collective actors, and hence such increased individualistic democratic values ultimately means that parties or interest organisations 'cannot count on the unconditional loyalty of specific groups...rather they have to win this loyalty by their performance and efficiency'.[26]   Thus, the problem for the linkage between citizens and the political process, does not lie purely in the emergence of a new awareness or 'issue' demands but in the extent of responsiveness amongst the most important collective actors, that is political parties, and also interest groups. In a representative democracy, these actors articulate the demands of citizens in relation to the political decision-making process and introduce these demands into the system. Thus the lower the level of responsiveness of these actors to the demands of citizens, the weaker the attachment between them is likely to be. Certainly the varying 'new' issues now appearing on the political agenda also play an increasingly important role as a focal point for political participation. For example, the environment, crime, corruption, poverty, immigration, the inefficiency of public services are issues which generate differing attitudes which cut across traditional class and party lines. Klingemann and Fuchs state that the reasons for a changing 'linkage' with political parties are complex,

> firstly, there is a certain inertia on the part of historically rooted political parties and interest groups in the face of new problems and interests produced by social change'.... however....'the very logic of competition among intermediary actors to gain citizen support requires such actors, in the long run, to adapt their platforms to changes in citizen interests.[27]

Moreover, as the issues on the political agenda change, a pragmatic type of linkage with the parties has formed which emphasises their policy role, thus the role of

important actors is seen as having a direct influence on a whole series of issues. Furthermore, they also cite the possibility of 'structural reasons', but argue that;

> The system of representative government, in its current form, can be called into question only when these intermediary actors are insufficiently responsive to new demands. ... However, the critical analysis hardly addresses the question of where the structurally determined limits to responsiveness lie.[28]

The debate concerning a crisis in Western representative democracy reached a climax around the mid-1970s, for example, the legitimation crisis (Habermas 1973) and the 'political overload' or the governability crisis, (Brittan 1975; King 1975; Huntington 1975). However, although the theoretical positions differed greatly amongst these 'crisis hypotheses', their explanations agreed with one essential point:

> the demands made by citizens on democratic governments were increasing, and doing so irreversibly, while, at the same time, the capacity of governments to realize their policy objectives was declining due, among other things, to lower economic growth.[29]

Thus arguing from a neo-Marxist perspective, Habermas believed that the cause of the legitimation crisis lay in a fundamental contradiction within late capitalist societies between societal production and private appropriation.[30] As lower economic growth and the state's increased burden of 'duties' became apparent, the governmental system became increasingly unable to fulfil the growing demands of citizens.

By contrast, the other most prominent approach asserts that there is an 'inherent tendency' within advanced Western democracies 'to become ungovernable', that is, as governments increasingly assume vastly expanding responsibilities, they are also subject to a decrease in the resources needed to satisfy such demands. Using the economic malaise of the 1970s as evidence, the varying explanations saw the increased

state intervention into economic and social life as sanctioning 'ever spiralling societal expectations'.[31] This also encouraged an expanding number of interest and pressure groups actively seeking to influence the state.[32] Hay summarises such explanations thus.

> The result is to create a political *market place* for votes, yet one lacking the disciplining constraints of a formal market. As a consequence, electoral barter and fiscal irresponsibility predominate as competing parties seek to 'buy off ' a sufficient share of the electorate by promising to satisfy the demands of more and more pressure groups. This degenerates into a vicious circle in which the 'price' of a vote spirals, precipitating political overload, ungovernability and fiscal crisis.[33]

There seems to be a consensus with regard to the diagnosis of 'these crisis tendencies', and, notwithstanding minor differences, the solutions to such problems are less united. They all seem to reflect such 'Thatcherite calls' as, 'if it's not hurting it's not working'...and 'we must all tighten our belts', and range from an endorsement of tight monetary control and fiscal austerity to rolling back the frontiers of the state on economic, private and civil fronts.

Evidence of the erosion of any 'legitimacy in representative democracies' has not been upheld since the above mid-70s analysis and, as stated earlier, increasingly the problem was seen as a lack of government responsiveness to certain 'new' demands, either because of the 'tendency of politicians to acquiesce in the demands of electorally important groups, so that the state tends to take over areas of economic life, which it is ill fitted to manage';[34] or as integral to a general overload of governments, is 'a harder-nosed variant, derived from Hayek's rigorous methodological individualism', which 'points to the logical impossibility of a centralised intelligence meeting needs and allocating resources which are divided up among a large number of private individuals.[35] That is, the problem reflects the new demands for greater political participation and influence in decision making, in other words, the realisation of a basic

democratic norm.   According to such analysis this lack of responsiveness is structurally based and a possible reaction is that citizens will become dissatisfied with the whole system of representative democracy itself.[36]

It is true that the western democratic system has been so successfully 'legitimized' that most citizens feel that there is a strong connection between the institutional structures and the corresponding values of democracy. Such a feeling often generates the much-cited 'reservoir of good will', which usually leads citizens to accept performance deficits, at least for a while.   Taking Easton's definition of the structure of a political system as a 'regularized pattern of behaviour and expectations' or more simply as 'the rules of the game'[37], this broad definition not only includes the formal structure of a written constitution, but also takes into account those informal structures constituted in the rules of the game, which have developed from political practice and have become 'a matter of fact' in the interaction between parties and politicians. Furthermore, according to Weil (1989), it is these informal rules of the game, and their consequences which represent the most important components of Western democratic legitimacy ideology.

Paul Hirst believes that the doctrines of popular sovereignty and representative government are deeply problematical and seem at variance with the political practice of rule by the professional politicians and government officials over the people. Also they contain several contradictions.   He states:

> The first of these contradictions ... is that it identifies a decision-procedure for
>
> selecting political personnel with one for selecting policies or laws ... The electors
>
> choose some of the personnel involved in making the governmental decisions, but
>
> they cannot directly choose the decisions.
>
> ... The second contradiction stems from the idea that laws are general rules and
>
> because they are universally applicable they cannot infringe individual rights ... the
>
> legitimating use of the notion of the rule of law supposes laws to have received
>
> genuine democratic assent ... in practice ... far from being a servitor of the

130

legislature, government is the initiator of legislation ... and this is carried through

by means of party discipline ...

Finally, ... representation is a circular process; there is no way of judging how

representative of the people one particular scheme is without comparing one to

another. There is no pure form of representation, only definite packages of political

mechanisms: voting systems, means of determining constituencies, degrees of

suffrage, types of assembly, governing parties, etc.[38]

There are also many other factors influencing the processes which lead to government policies and which affect the implementation of these policies. As Geriant Parry *et al.*, points out:

Political leaders, in particular, are not merely a part of a transmission belt turning

the wishes of the citizens into a programme of action. They possess an initiative of

their own. Moreover, some policies appear to be the outcome of domestic and

international forces over which neither citizens nor leaders have much control.[39]

Thus, in practice citizens play a limited role and the business of democracy is organised via a set of political mechanisms which ensure the benefits of party competition, public scrutiny or public influence. Democracy is distinguished by the competition between groups of political leaders, who seek support from the rest of the population, and which is sanctioned at periodical elections. In Britain the victorious, 'first-past the post', group receives authority to govern for a term of up to 5 years, and between elections citizens have little part to play other than criticising. As Parry and Moyser suggest citizens must 'respect a division of labour' and in Schumpeter's phrase, refrain from back-seat driving', in other words 'they are controllers rather than participants'.[40]

Thus we return to the primary debate concerning 'direct' or 'participatory' democracy versus the 'realist' or 'representative' model. However such a distinction is

unnecessarily narrow and unhelpful, given that there are obvious problems with mass involvement, that is from a fear of less commitment to democratic values[41] and the subsequent rise in authoritarianism; also there is an manifest need to produce a stable system with a necessary check on leaders and mechanisms for the effective interchange of ideas. Given that periodical elections provide a reasonable 'check' on political leaders, as well as a high participation rate,[42] it is useful to examine the amount of participation any citizen *can* have. Most acts of public political participation are directed towards those who are in authority and able to influence decisions. Therefore the response of such 'elites', is crucial to both the success of related ventures and also to the citizens' satisfaction with the system. However the responsiveness of political elites is affected by a number of factors. For example, some political leaders may be unsympathetic to some forms of political action, regardless of the aims and objectives of the actors involved, with approaches via established formal channels receiving a better response than forms of direct pressure like boycotts and demonstrations. Similarly, it is important to know to what extent leaders are biased by their affinity to certain groups, that is does the political agenda 'concur' with the priorities of the mass of population or those of certain social sectors. Does the ordinary woman[43] in the street get her voice heard or is there little prospect of a response from those in authority? Thus the 'right to participate' does not necessarily promise tangible benefits.

It is also important to recognise that by their very status as leaders, political elites can influence the attitudes of citizens. As active agents, they generally regard themselves as major determinants of what should be regarded as political issues and interests.[44] Alan Ware sets out some of the justifications for such direct guidance. They include:

> The construction of public policy requires technical expertise which most party
>
> members lack ...

132

Party members have a tendency to want specific commitments on policies, but in many cases the viability of particular proposals can only be ascertained once a party is in government ...

The direct involvement of all members in setting policy objectives may result in a set of incompatible objectives being agreed upon ...

Party members are more extreme in their policy preferences than ordinary voters, so that extensive member participation in the setting of a party's policy is more likely to produce a programme which is unacceptable to the party's voters ...

Issue-orientated members are more prepared to take the risk of losing an election with an *'extreme'* candidate or policy than are other kinds of participant in a party...

With party memberships generally in decline, it is far easier for parties to be 'infiltrated' by groups which have little in common with the mainstream tradition of these parties.[45]

Thus, although parties have the potential for a great deal of participation, in reality involvement within the internal affairs is very limited. Using Ware's points as a framework, the practice within contemporary British political parties shows that parties, even those in government, do not make specific policy proposals because they believe that the electorate do not want detail or they may be difficult to fulfil. The problem of how party members' opinions are fully taken into account requires a well-ordered co-ordinating agency to ensure that sub-unit decisions are not ignored and this is rarely a priority. Further, the argument concerning worries about extremism infiltrating a party has a long history and the example of the Labour party in 1983 is often cited in support of this. Finally, it could be argued that the electoral system in the UK encourages 'extreme' groups to join political parties, rather than fighting elections under their own banners. Also there is no 'limit' on membership within the mass parties.

As a result there continues to be a great deal of scepticism concerning the feasibility of democracy within parties. Such arguments have been mainly supported

by those social theorists who believe that democracy of any type is impossible because of the inevitability of 'elite rule'. That is, not simply an observation concerning the difficulties of a minority governing on behalf of the majority, but rather the more pernicious view that elite rule is necessarily arbitrary, because elites are not accountable to the people and that alternative choices are impossible. In other words, a political formula is invented and designed to deceive the masses into thinking that they can have some affect over those in influential positions. Such theories were formulated earlier this century by the Italian writers Pareto and Mosca,[46] along with the anti-democratic thought of Robert Michels.[47] Michels' ideas were based upon his extensive research into the 'new' bureaucratically organised German Social Democratic Party, which brought him to the conclusion that all organisations feature an 'iron law of oligarchy', that is as most people are not prepared to devote as much of their time to the public world of 'participatory democracy' as that concept requires, they become dominated by those minorities, who have the time and the energy to devote to such organizations.[48]

Critics of this stance have produced some compelling objections to his failure to indicate precisely what he means by oligarchy, and similarly some of his points relate to psychological laws and others to the logic of organisations. However the main criticism is that Michels had an inappropriate notion of the conditions necessary for party democracy and that looking at democracy within a party organisation does not necessarily represent democracy as a whole, certainly not the competitive democratic systems with which we are familiar today.[49] Thus one of the central elements in democratic theory is that of party competition. Such a situation was recognised by Schumpeter's 'realistic' model, which turned traditional democratic theory upside down, arguing that a democratic system was not characterised by the translation of the 'people's will into government policy, but by competing parties offering alternative programmes to the electorate. He believed that citizens had little direct influence over the content of such programmes and were in fact limited to choosing between what was placed on offer. However, this necessitated fundamental

134

freedoms for competing parties, such as the freedom to form associations and propagate ideas. Thus, democracy was about party competition and this situation provides a degree of accountability. Drawing a direct analogy between political and market behaviour, Schumpeter defined democracy as

> that institutional arrangement for arriving at political decisions in which individuals acquire the power to decide by means of a competitive struggle for the people's vote. [50]

Alan Ware also regards competition as 'relevant to all three elements of democracy', as a mechanism for aggregating interests, constraining and controlling government and party agendas, and also providing political education for citizens[51]. However, Sam Brittan believes that party competition serves to inflame demands and expectations, leading parties to make more and more unrealistic promises about what can be achieved, thus the electorate correspondingly demands and expects more and more of government. Such 'back-seat driving' could describe the model of party competition in the UK between 1950 and 1975, with parties regularly being voted out of office and opposition parties claiming to be able to meet a wide range of objectives that the present government were alleged to have failed to pursue or met. Furthermore, Brittan also saw the party elites as being pushed by party activists and other structures into attempting and promising too much. He certainly did not see the party structure as a device for constraining party leaders in the competitive bids arena.[52]

One of the major problems in examining any such organisation is in trying to understand how the 'overt objectives' of the organisation itself and the 'private objectives' of those who are influential conflict, or at least cause tensions, which, in turn, generally affects the behaviour of the organisation as a whole. As a result there appears to be a great deal of disagreement amongst those who have tried to develop a formal theory of party interaction with regard to both party and party elite objectives.

For the most part, parties within liberal democracies have remained as 'private' organizations with respect to their 'external' control and this has generally resulted from fears concerning how state control or state resources might affect competition between parties. Historically state intervention has been only in response to a crisis, either the widespread corruption in nineteenth century parties in America or the collapse of the liberal democratic systems during the war and inter-war years. Once again the way parties are seen to operate or interact in a party system is regarded as sacrosanct and it is widely believed that to intervene may encourage a state-party relationship which is incompatible with the practice of representative democracy. There are obvious problems with such a crisis-led response and the more there are increasing costs involved in maintaining 'externalities' and electoral competition,[53] the more parties are likely to develop links and obligations to other organised interests. However the problems of party regulation are not the subject of discussion here;[54] rather it is the conduct of intra-party relations within the UK, that the final part of this chapter is concerned.

Although the authors of the Federalist Papers (1787), together with many other like-minded political theorists and practitioners[55] were concerned about the prospects of faction and tried to devise institutional structures which would impede it, parties have emerged as essentially private gathering of individuals. Any British person, or group of people can call herself or themselves a party and contest an election if they so choose without having to register or comply with any special regulations relating to its internal structure. As a result there is a variety of bodies calling themselves political parties, ranging from those with mass appeal to one-person shows such as Screaming Lord Sutch's Monster Raving Loony Party. However, once again such a picture is misleading because in practice the UK is often cited as the leading example of a two-party system. Furthermore, this describes only one aspect of British national party politics and that is of electoral competition.

Indeed parties characterise a whole 'bundle of roles, individuals and institutions' but for the purpose of clarity it will be useful to adopt Richard Rose's distinction

between parties as electoral institutions and as policy institutions.[56] Parties function irregularly as electoral institutions, and much of the long-term work of attending to election business is delegated to the bureaucrats within the party organisation. Both major parties have stable, hierarchical, institutions which deploy full-time bureaucrats at all levels from constituencies to national headquarters in a 'day to day' 'controversy free' way. Also electoral considerations are viewed in the 'middle distance', whilst in the short-term, parties, especially the governing party, are far more concerned with national issues and the policy decisions which go with them. Thus the shaping of public policy is by far the most significant role of the party and not one in which public opinion plays a very great part. As Rose point out:

> Elitist traditions in the political culture emphasize the duty of governors to be
> unpopular in the short run, if they think they are right, and most party leaders are
> sophisticated enough to appreciate that temporarily unpopular policies may produce
> popular consequences by the date which the governing party chooses for the general
> election.[57]

Those politicians who have both party and government roles now find that there is often a conflict between the extra-parliamentary party and the administrative duties now required of them, between previous party policy and the policies expedient for government. Behind the facade of unity, Rose maintains that:

> M.P.s can differ with each other. Conflicts in personalties or in personal ambitions
> can stimulate or intensify differences arising either from conflicts on party
> principles or conflicts based on contrasting departmental concerns.[58]

The party in opposition, although organised very differently, is similarly wrought with tension, although this is generally surrounding the ways and means to victory in the next general election. It is also important to remember that parties are

137

also a channel of pressure groups, a means of 'men' seeking power and status and agencies involved in local government and local life. It is not surprising that divisions appear within the electoral parties, and there is much contemporary evidence from both national and local arenas. Generally such groupings do not seek absolute control, rather they aim at predominance.

Rose identifies three elements within these groupings but suggests that they are not exclusive. He defines a political faction as a group of individuals based on representatives in Parliament *(or elected office),*[59] who seek to further a broad range of policies through consciously-organised political activity. They may be distinguished from exponents of a political tendency because factions are self-consciously organised as a body. Identification with a faction usually increases an individual's commitment to a programme, as well as creating the expectation that the politician will consistently take the same side in quarrels within an electoral party. Finally, to abandon a faction is to risk appearing publicly as a renegade, as well as causing tension in the personal relations of the defector with his political associates.

By contrast a political tendency relates to a stable set of attitudes rather than a stable group of politicians. Such attitudes are held together by a more or less coherent political ideology, although individuals may be attached to conflicting tendencies depending upon the issue. There are also groups who maintain a non-alignment position. These may be generated from an active concern with the aggregate differences between parties, from a passive attitude towards policy issues or from a calculated desire to avoid identification with particular tendencies or factionism in order to gain popularity within the whole electoral party, for example particularly during leadership contests. Ideology and an adherence to shared political values and principles obviously plays an important role in motivating politicians to act together, and 'can be used particularly by factions to justify activities which may be judges to harm the party electorally.[60] Rose believed that such divisions provided a dynamic party system, competition and sometimes even consensus across partylines, but above

all it provided a restraint upon the power of a party leader and the British party system[61].

To conclude, the legacy of the representative system developed within the procedures of open, public proceedings, in which freedom of speech, freedom of the press, freedom of assembly and parliamentary immunities meant freedom of opinion, and any corruption would be counteracted by the mechanisms involving the division of labour and balance of powers. Hence to ensure that no group or individual had an incentive to make laws tailored to their particular ends and interests, such architects of liberal democracy as Madison[62] refined 'government by representatives', with a separation of state and society and a development of mechanisms to check the power of the state. This gave rise to the contention that liberal democracy serves to moderate possible intolerant and unstable characteristics. Representative government also resolved the vexed problem of 'the majority', thus allowing fast growing nations to develop systems which embodied both direct accountability and political feasibility.

In accordance with pluralist analysis, politics is not only a process of subjugating conflict between groups but also a decision-making process, both via the voting system and the negotiation and bargaining that takes place between the political organisations at the stage of policy making. Nevertheless, such political mechanisms of liberal democracy were considered by Carl Schmitt as 'parliamentarist rather than democratic', legitimated for liberals in a general idealised belief in 'competition and criticism', out of which a 'process of confrontation of differences and opinions' emerged...with a 'real political will' resulting[63]. There is no doubt that despite the establishment of the principle of representation, discussion continues around the practical issues of how many people can be represented by one person, especially in view of the inevitable and obvious diversity of political preferences and values held amongst the electorate of any particular constituency. In other words it represents very specific group interests.

Much contemporary criticism of Liberal democracy follows the response by Nina Fishman, who calls for 'the re-emergence of a more resilient political process...to

transform the gaggle of conflicting interests which they arouse into a genuine national consensus'.[64]   However as Judith Squires observes,

> this has happened at a time in which nearly every existing liberal democratic polity is in such a profound state of crisis that both left and right now accept that the political has become disengaged from society and that we are now witnessing the grim manifestations of post liberalism.[65]

Many commentators are less pessimistic and believe that although the electorate within the UK are becoming increasingly apartisan[66], yet at the same time there is a need to 'think deeply and critically about the nature of these trends'....and..to try 'to understand how it is possible to keep the values which remain good and valid in the liberal-democratic system' ... and to this end ... 'party, properly understood, is an essential building block in this task'.[67]

Alan Ware suggests that as there are so few parties in western liberal democracy, it is not surprising that so few attempts have been made to democratize them. There has also been only 'limited success for those reforms which have been instituted', mainly due to the 'problems of internal power struggles'. However this does not mean that failure is inevitable or that there is a definite 'iron law' and he suggests 'a need for balance' with more 'party research'. Also resources for more participation, perhaps from the newly orientated middle classes[68] and a restriction on the opportunities for leadership patronage. Although Ware believes that parties have contributed to the extension of popular control in liberal democracies, the extent to which this could be called democratic is still rather limited. Thus, greater democracy cannot be attained by parties alone, particularly as there are many aspects of people's lives over which there is no possibility of exercising party control as they are not active in these arenas. He concludes: 'Parties are most likely to be effective as democratizing agents when there are other arenas to which democratic procedures are also extended but in which parties are not involved directly'.[69]

Thus, in listing the criteria of fair representation, the following questions must be asked. Does the legislature reflect the electorate in terms of gender, race ethnicity, class, age or other important political characteristics, and also do the options placed before the electorate reflect the full range of their political concerns? In a modern pluralistic society, it is more probable to suggest that voters would like to express their affiliation to a plurality of overlapping groups based on party, locality, gender, single issues or other considerations. However, as Iris Marion Young warns:

> The processes and often the outcomes of interest group bargaining, moreover, take place largely in private; they are neither revealed nor discussed in a forum that genuinely involves all those potentially affected by decision ... 'the paradox of democracy', by which social power makes some citizens more equal than others, and equality of citizenship makes some people more powerful citizens. That solution lies at least in part in providing institutionalised means for the explicit recognition and representation of oppressed groups.[70]

Which electoral system best satisfies such criteria remains an open question, and is certainly not the focus of this thesis. However there is a pressing need to develop a process of fair representation which takes account of citizens' multiple political concerns, and is receptive to gender, ethnicity etc., rather than a system where such concerns are excluded. At present political parties are only concerned with party support, or controlling political agendas which falls far short of J.S. Mill's electoral system which -

> secures a representation, in proportion to numbers, of every division of the electoral body: not two parties alone, with perhaps a few sectional minorities in particular places, but every minority in the whole nation, consisting of a sufficiently large number to be, on principles of equal justice, entitled to be a representative.[71]

Endnotes:

1   Anne Phillips, (1995), *The Politics of Presence*, Oxford, Clarendon, p1.
2   Suzanne Franzway, Dianne Court and R.W. Connell, (1989), *Staking a Claim*,Cambridge, Polity, p 151.
3   Nina Fishman, 'Extending the Scope of Representative Democracy', *Political Quarterly*, Vol 60 No 4, (1989), p 442.
4   David Held, (1993), *Prospects for Democracy*, Cambridge, Polity, p15.
5   Carl Schmitt, (1930;1932) *The Crisis of Parliamentary Democracy*, Trans. E. Kennedy,(1985), Richard Bellamy and Peter Baehr, 'Carl Schmitt and the contradictions of liberal democracy', *European Journal of Political Research*, (1993) p167.
6   Ibid; p169.
7   Norman Barry, (1989), *Modern Political Theory*, Basingstoke, Macmillan, p260.
8   A much debated concept and more than Muellar's (1979) definition of 'nonmarket decision making, or simply the application of economics to political science', p10.
9   In three of the last nine general elections, 1964, February 1974 and October 1974, the winning party did not have a majority sufficient to last for a full Parliament.
10   Alan Ware, (1987) *Citizens, Parties and the State*, Cambridge, Polity, p7.
11   Joseph Schumpeter (1943), *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy*; Giovanni Sartori (1965), *Democratic Theory*; both suggests that even the threat of being removed is controlling.
12   Classic elite theory: Mosca(1896) *Elements of Political Science*; Pareto(1911),*Mind and Society*; Michels(1915), *Political Parties*.
13   The developmental function of participation from J.J. Rousseau, (1762), *Social Contract*.
14   Current research shows a particular reluctance for young people to join a political organisation or vote; Mori, *State of the Nation*, May 1995:   Helen Wilkinson and Geoff Mulgan, (1995) *Freedom's Children: Work, relationships and politics for 18-34 year olds in Britain today*, London, Demos.
15   R. Dahl,(1971), *Polyarchy, Participation and Opposition*, New Haven, Yale.
16   Anne Phillips, (1995) *The Politics of Presence*,Oxford, Clarendon, p188.
17   Harmon Zeigler, (1993) *Political Parties in Industrial Democracies*, USA, Peacock, p2.
18   Edmund Morgan (1990), Harmon Zeigler, (1993) *Political Parties in Industrial Democracies*, USA, Peacock, p 30.
19   Ibid.
20   Roberto Biorcio and Renato Mannheimer, 'Relationships between Citizens and Political Parties', Klingemann and Fuchs,eds., (1995) *Citizens and the State*, New York, Oxford University, p207.
21   Paul Hirst,(1990) *Representative Democracy and its Limits*, Cambridge, Polity, p4.
22   Harmon Zeigler, (1993) Political Parties in Industrial Democracies, USA, Peacock, p1.
23   R. Inglehart,(1977) *The Silent Revolution: Changing Values and Political Styles among Western Publics*, New Jersey, Princeton.
24   Arthur Lipow and Patrick Seyd, 'The Politics of Anti-Partyism', in *Parliamentary Affairs*, Vol 49 No2, (1996) p 277. ... They also state that there is no firm evidence to confirm whether or not group membership has grown relative to party membership.
25   Talcot Parsons, (1951) *The Social System*, New York, Free Press.
26   Cited in Hans-Dieter Klingemann and Dieter Fuchs, (1995) *Citizens and the State*, New York, Oxford University, p15.
27   Ibid., p13.
28   Ibid, p14.
29   Ibid., p5.
30   At the core of Habermas' theory is the distinction that he draws between 'system crisis' and identity crisis': that is, 'system crisis' refers to a breakdown of the structural system integration; alternatively 'identity crisis' is defined as a breakdown of social integration when people perceive that the 'system' is not working. J. Habermas, (1975), *Legitimation Crisis*, London, Heinemann.
31   Sam Brittan, 1975 'The economic contradictions of democracy', *British Journal of Political Science*, 5 (2) 129-159; Anthony King (1975) 'Overload: Problems of governing in the 1970s', *Political Studies*, 23 (2/3), 284-296.

32   Sam Brittan, (1979), *Participation Without Politics*, London, IEA.

33   Colin Hay, (1996) *Re-stating Social and Political Change*, Buckingham, Open University, p99.

34   P. Dunleavy and B. O'Leary, (1987), *Theories of the State*, London, Macmillan, pp326-327.

35   F. Hayek, *Individualism and Economic Order*, 1948, Peter Taylor-Gooby, (1991), *Social Change, Social Welfare and Social Science*, London, Harvester Wheatsheaf, p139.   Further discussion P. Taylor-Gooby and J.Dale., (1981), *Social Theory and Social Welfare*, London, Edward Arnold, Chapter 3.

36   R.A. Dahl, (1989) *Democracy and its Critics*, New Haven.

37   D. Easton, (1965) *A Systems Analysis of Political Life* New York, Wiley, p 266.

38   Paul Hirst, (1990), *Representative Democracy and its Limits*, Cambridge, Polity, p26/7.

39   Geriant Parry, Neil Day and George Moyser, (1992) *Political Participation and Democracy in Britain*, Cambridge University, p4.

40   Joseph Schumpeter, (1943) *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy*, Geriant Parry, Neil Day and George Moyser, (1992) *Political Participation and Democracy in Britain*, Cambridge University, p5.

41   H. McClosky,(1964) Consensus and Ideology in American Politics', *American Political Science Review*, 58, pp361-382, Geriant Parry, Neil Day and George Moyser, (1992) *Political Participation and Democracy in Britain*, Cambridge University, p5.

42   Geriant Parry, Neil Day and George Moyser, (1992) *Political Participation and Democracy in Britain*, Cambridge University, pp39-63.

43   Albeit that I have argued elsewhere that such a unitary subject is problematical.

44   Alan Ware, (1987) *Citizens, Parties and the State*, Cambridge, Polity, p141.

45   Ibid., pp142-146.

46   G.Mosca, (1896) *Elements of Political Science*, his explanation used a socio-historical basis; V. Pareto (tr.1935) *Mind and Society*, his explanation used a more scientific-psychological argument.

47   Robert Michels, (1911; tr.1915) *Political Parties*.

48   As I have already indicated a great deal of evidence suggests that there is substantial 'anti party sentiment' in the UK. See Paul Webb ,"Apartisanship and anti-party sentiment in the United Kingdom: Correlates and constraints", *European Journal of Political Research*, 29, (1996), pp365-382.

49   Gordon Hands, 'Roberto Michels and the Study of Political Parties', the *British Journal of Political Science*, 1, (1971) p171.

50   J. Schumpeter,(1954) *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy*, N.P.Barry, (1989) *Modern Political Theory*, Basingstoke, Macmillan, p267.

51   Alan Ware, (1987), *Citizens, Parties and the State, Cambridge*, Polity p50.

52   Samuel Brittan, 'The Economic Contradictions of Democracy', in *British Journal of Political Science*, 5,(1975) p147.

53   C.J. Pattie and R.J.Johnston, 'Paying their Way', *Political Studies* XLIV, (1996) pp912-935.

54   For further discussion Alan Ware, (1987) *Citizens, Parties and the State*, Cambridge, Polity pp86-118.

55   The debate on sovereign authority runs throughout political theory, from Hobbes,(1951); Bentham, (1789); Austin,(1954); Hart,(1961), (1963).

56   Richard Rose, 'Britain', *Political Studies*, Vol XII, No 1,(1964) pp33-46.

57   Ibid., p34.

58   Ibid.

59   Ibid., p37 with my own addition, which I will expand upon in Chapter Eleven.

60   Ibid., p39.

61   Ibid., p46.

62   Madison, Hamilton, & Jay, *The Federalist*, 1787.   The separation of the executive, legislativeand judicial branches of government supposedly preserves the impartiality and universality of law.

63   Carl Schmitt, (trans.1985), 'Carl Schmitt and the contradictions of liberal democracy', Richard Bellamy and Peter Baehr, *European Journal of Political Research*, (1993), p166.

64   Nina Fishman, (1989) 'Extending the Scope of Representative Democracy', *Political Quarterly*, Vol 60 No 4, p 454.

65   Judith Squires,(1994), 'Added Values', *Signs of the Times Discussion paper*, London, p4.

66   Paul Webb, (1996), 'Apartisanship and anti-party sentiment in the United Kingdom',

European Journal of Political Research, 29, pp365-382.

67   Arthur Lipow and Patrick Seyd, (1996) 'The Politics of Anti-Partyism', *Parliamentary Affairs,* Vol 49, No2 p284.

68   Although Fuchs and Klingemann's (1995) research found that there is an increase in 'non-institutional forms of participation' ... there was also no evidence for dissatisfaction with 'conventional forms of action', *Citizens and the State,* New York, Oxford University, p 432.

69   Alan Ware, (1987)*Citizens, Parties and the State,* Cambridge, Polity p242.

70   I. M. Young,(1989) 'Polity and Group Difference', *Ethics* 99, pp257/9.

71   J.S. Mill, 'Representative Government', J. Gray ed., (1991), *On Liberty and Other Essays,* p 310.

Chapter Ten

Women and Political Parties:

Equal opportunities within the Parliamentary process?

In June 1989, a Fabian Research Report concluded that 'If Labour is to appeal more successfully to women, then the Party must change. It must become and be seen to become much less male-dominated, much more open to women and representative of them'.[1]   By November 1991, this had been transferred into a directive from the NEC advising Constituency Labour Parties of the series of rule changes which would have to be introduced and implemented for January 1992, for quotas for women at all levels of the Labour Party . The rationale behind this was as follows:

> These changes have been introduced to ensure the fair representation of women
>
> within the Labour Party. Women represent 41% of Labour Party members, yet are
>
> poorly represented in our structures'.[2]

Similarly, in June 1992, the Employment Secretary Gillian Shephard announced a new Government strategy for developing and co-ordinating policies of concern to women. A key factor in this was the transfer of responsibility for all women's issues from the Home Office to the Employment Department, along with the establishment of a working group to advise Shephard on a wide range of concerns such as childcare, public appointments for women, training and education.[3]

Certainly when first wave feminism in Britain endeavoured to obtain women's suffrage at the end of the last century, they thought that the vote would become a means of bringing women's concerns to the political agenda, along with the election of more women representatives and the eventual change of political custom and practice. In reality the constitutional changes won by the suffragists brought 'little tangible advantage for women'[4] and for many years feminist theory remained highly sceptical

that any advantages could be gained from such sexist, hierarchical and traditionalist political institutions. However, whilst there still remains a great deal of caution concerning such a participation, given 'the reality', according to Judith Squires, which 'is revealed as a politics involving parliamentary parties that have become disengaged and obsolescent',[5] ... with 'more people belonging to Greenpeace than to the Labour Party, ... and... more to the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds than to the Tory Party'.[6] Many feminist activists[7] are now returning to the political sphere and such areas as parliamentary mechanisms, intent upon increasing the presence of women in the political elite and addressing the question of how women can obtain an increase in political power. Thus it is with such concerns as the formal mechanisms of representation that this section now explores the magnitude of the problems women face within the UK political forum.

Women have been active in British political parties since the 1880s. Nearly half of the Conservatives' Primrose League were women, the Women's Liberal Federation was established in 1887 and Labour followed in 1906 with the Women's Labour League; also women ratepayers were present in local politics, albeit in a limited way, since the Municipal Franchise Act of 1869, whilst many were elected to other organisations, such as those governing education and welfare bodies[8]. The proportion of women in local government still remains higher than at national level, however their progression into national politics has not been a straightforward transition, as much of the discussion within this chapter conveys. Furthermore those women who often did secure political office were often not particularly involved in the struggle for women's citizenship[9].

Nevertheless, the importance of an increased presence of women within national politics cannot be dismissed and even if we concede that parliamentary politics is the preserve of a small professional political elite, women need to be active in this significant legislative capacity in order that the lives of all women can be improved. Also an increased level of participation on such a level, encourages women with aspirations across the whole spectrum of political activity and may eventually produce

a more collective woman's approach rather than the individualistic method encouraged within the party political system. Unfortunately, the majority of women continue to feel that there is a huge distance between themselves and the world of formal politics, a world in which they are not only unrepresented[10] but which does little to help the vast majority of women. Thus, it is useful to bear in mind that the substantial exchange between feminist theory and practice, of which there is a long and significant tradition within liberal feminism, and the interventions which attempt to influence the political institutions within contemporary British politics are conditioned by both the necessities of the relevant political arena and by feminist interpretations regarding 'appropriate style and action'.[11] It will therefore be useful to examine some of the specific analysis into the existing arrangements for women's representation within British politics at the national level.

The path towards women's increased presence has been slow, although it is clear that in the past years the number of women who have both stood for Parliament and have actually been successful have increased. The first woman MP in Britain was elected in 1918, when women over the age of 30 were allowed to vote, but as a Sinn Fein member, Constance Markievicz never took up her seat. The first to do so was Nancy Astor in 1919. Certainly giving women the vote has had little impact upon the number of women elected to the House of Common, despite the fact that from 1928, when women were given the vote on an equal basis with men, they have formed the majority of the electorate.[12] Also although women became the majority of voters in 1987 and in fact elected an all time high of 44 women in the 1987 general election, such a result could not be regarded as part of a continuous trend from 1928. For example, there have been exceptions, with the most inexplicable anomaly to this being the general election of 1979, when Britain's first female Prime Minister was returned, that is, Margaret Thatcher for the Conservative party, yet the lowest number of female MPs were returned since 1951.[13] It is also significant that Mrs Thatcher did little to enhance the position of women throughout her 12 years of office, and most notably, at the apex of the representational hierarchy her Cabinet did not include one woman.

Nevertheless the number of women has increased slowly since 1979, although they are still very much in a minority, amounting to only 9.2%, only 60, of the 651 MPs following the 1992 General Election.[14]

Many explanations have been put forward in order to explain the continuing differentiation between the number of female and male representatives within national politics. For example, analysis into the educational experience of men and women is one particular area discussed. However there seems to be little agreement. Whereas Culley strongly believes that the grounding for an interest, and therefore possible career in politics, can frequently take place whilst a child is at school and asserts the importance of political socialisation, suggesting that even at a young age boys are more interested and knowledgeable about politics than their female class mates, Eileen Wormald contests such a view. Her interviews involving a number of school children, found little difference in levels of either political knowledge or an interest in political issues between boys and girls.[15] Perhaps where further education is concerned, differences in gender with regard to political ambitions are more prevalent. It is accepted by many commentators that a level of formal education will assist anyone with political ambitions and even today, women are slightly less in evidence within higher education and in particular women at university do not typically study in the more political faculties and therefore frequently miss out on being active within the student political arena, often regarded as a good training ground for future MPs[16].

Another important explanation for the lack of female presence in the House of Commons is that of womens' often restraining circumstances. Marriage, motherhood and daughterhood remain crucially important areas for women in contemporary society, given the structures of kinship and marriage. Also the financial pressures are such that most women will try to engage in paid employment.[17] However the 'work' deemed either 'suitable' or practical' is part-time employment, which is also notoriously low paid.[18]

Often a role within employment is seen as a positive political attribute, leading to increased skills, such as political awareness and increased communication skills, but

148

the predominantly non-professional employment generally undertaken by women are not those on the list of noteworthy professions. Rather, the majority of MPs appear to be taken from the more professional sectors and if successfully elected to Parliament, their new political responsibilities are often combined with their professional career, for example lawyers and company directors usually have flexible working arrangements to fit in with Parliamentary duties. Such 'professional' areas of employment remain very much dominated by men and employment is greatly stratified along gender lines with only 1 in 10 women working in a managerial capacity compared to 1 in 5 men.[19] Furthermore even women working in full time occupations still spend on average 46 hours per week undertaking 'home-making' duties, including cleaning, shopping and childcare, compared to male contemporaries, who only participate in 26 hours per week of such tasks.[20]

Also, the role of motherhood has an immense impact upon a woman's involvement in national politics, a fact borne out my the evidence of so few women MPs with young children. Of the 27 women MPs elected in October 1974, only two had children under ten years old, and in the election of 1983, when 23 women MPs were returned, there were only two with children under ten.[21] Frequently women entering Parliament have to choose between a political career or a family. As Harriet Harman states:

> It is recognised in the world of work outside Westminster that women who have babies need maternity leave and that arrangements must be made accordingly. Similarly, there should be maternity leave of some kind in Parliament; at present it is left to the woman herself to negotiate with her constituency and the Whips.[22]

Kelly and Boutlier believe that in fact a mother's reluctance to enter the political race is due to the fear of social disapproval, that is of others accusing her of neglecting her children for the sake of political ambition.[23] Such a view is supported by Linda Siegle who asserts;

149

What annoys me most of all is that in other people's perception, the message comes

across to me that I am not allowed to be a good mother and a good politician, I have

to choose. But men are allowed to be, in other people's eyes. at least a good father

and a good politician.[24]

Thus the problems of combining the mothering of young children and a political career within Parliament does mean that a lot of women with political aspirations defer their entry into politics until their children are older. However a more mature woman entering the political race to sit in Parliament, will frequently lack the relevant political experience necessary to launch an effective election campaign, and even when elected will often lack the backbench experience of male colleagues, thus further hampering any ambitions for promotion within the house.

Much of the analysis which has been conducted in this area has concluded that marriage, and to a greater extent, children, will always hinder a politically minded woman. However, this does not always match the view of candidates themselves, as the 300 Group, which aims at increasing the representation of women in both public and political life, found when interviewing aspiring women politicians to make a list of everything they saw as an asset and what they saw as a liability to a career in politics. Husbands appeared equally on both lists with 50% terming their husbands as supportive and a further 50% seeing their husbands as constituting a block upon their political ambitions. For example Teresa Gorman stressed that her husband has always been a great support to her political career and asserts that he was 'the only one encouraging me along. He helps me tremendously'. However this situation is not mirrored in other relationships. Polly Toynbee, whose husband was a political correspondent and therefore in a 'sensitive position', found the decision to stand without his support very difficult. She states that 'I thought about it very hard and decided in the end I really did want to do it and he would just have to live with it'.[25] Obviously no matter what the difficulties are, both men and women with political

ambition will pursue their goal. However whilst husbands either hamper of enhance their wives political career, children are invariably the greatest restraint upon a woman's political career. An active role in politics is difficult, if nigh impossible, when combined with the responsibilities a mother has to her children, and a mother of young children only stands a real chance of combining the two roles if her family is willing, and able to support her. As Harriet Harman points out, political parties have, as yet, not addressed the issues affecting political mothers and although many women within the House of Commons are in fact pushing for the establishment of a creche, as yet nothing has come of this.

Thus any woman with political ambitions to enter Parliament may well face a whole catalogue of difficulties that male contemporaries will not encounter. Of course, many of these hurdles are not confined to parliamentary ambitions, but represent the situational constraints or male organisational biases that could be encountered by women attempting to enter any professional sector.[26] However the House of Commons presents some additional hurdles. For example, any woman with children would find the unsociable late sittings difficult, also the London base could well deter mothers representing constituencies further afield.[27] However it is also important to consider the influence of the party system, given that British politics is above all party politics.

When making claims for increased representation and enhanced career opportunities the strategies followed by women are bound to be effected by the kind of party they are trying to influence and all parties have their own complex decision-making procedures dependent upon the overall ideals and aims. Such differences has meant that demands for greater representation has been approached and responded to differently. Within the Labour Party in the 1980s the aim of increasing the number of women within party positions became a mobilising issue. However within the Conservative party this was not on the agenda until the late 1980s. Women within the Labour party have used the modernisation process to press for affirmative action,[28] whilst change within the Conservative party has been much slower and low key.[29]

151

Women have always been regarded as an important asset of the Conservative Party mechanism, with the stereotypical 'middle-aged housewife and her voluntary/community networking' as forming the backbone of the party. Their work as loyal volunteers for any constituency work, such as canvassing, fund-raising, organising social events, addressing and delivering envelopes, newsletters etc as well as presenting the all important face of the 'party faithful' at the annual party conference. As Norris and Lovenduski conclude: 'Party activity is often seen as a natural extension of women's social networks and voluntary labour in the community'.[30] Such a picture was supported by the British Candidate Survey (1992) which found that although 50% of members of the Conservative Party were women and a similar percentage were Branch Officers, particularly in local wards, in the higher echelons of the party women were less well represented, with only 20% members of the National Union and 6% as MPs.

As mentioned earlier the Labour Party have made a considerable effort to attract more women into the party. Certainly until recently, it was 'received political wisdom' that women were more conservative that men, with Conservatives generally doing better amongst women than men. This was also enhanced by the Labour Party image of a male-based dominated membership founded in heavy industry, with a reputation for blocking the inclusion of women at any level within the party.[31] Even in 1970 this was highly visible as a survey of the annual party conference confirmed with 86% of the delegates being men. Such a picture has been supported by much of the recent research, with found that women made up 40% of individual membership and that they also remained generally passive.[32] At higher levels of party activity, men constitute 75% of branch Chairs, 66% of constituency general committee members and 66% of constituency council members. Whilst of the 29 seats on the National Executive Committee, 5 have been radically reserved for women, but by 1992 there were only 37 women MPs in the House of Commons, a mere 14% of the total number.[33] Certainly the decline of the heavy industrial base and the rise the white collar service sector union membership, increased women's participation in organised

labour and thus their representation within the party organisation. However, the ways in which parties respond to change is far from self evident[34] but it is unlikely that the modernisation policies introduced by the Labour leader Neil Kinnock would not have been taken seriously without the organisation of women.[35]

Lovenduski asserts that when a party looks at strategies to increase the proportion of women in decision-making positions, three distinct strategies emerge.[36] The first strategy may be encapsulated in a rhetorical approach, with claims for greater representation being accepted within the campaign platform and leading members of the party speaking of the importance of increasing the number of women within political office. However if such statements are seen as purely pious leadership rhetoric, those women with political ambitions will also seek more positive or affirmative action, such as special training, or the increased search for women to contest seats. The second strategy followed, but by far the least common one, is the policy of positive discrimination. The most controversial implementation of this has been with regard to mandatory quotas for women within political parties, as such a move is frequently seen as a reverse discrimination and is therefore often opposed on ideological grounds. Finally, other positive discriminatory moves are such mechanisms as reserved paces specifically for women on decision-making bodies, either within the party itself or special women's committees.[37]

As stated previously, and certainly with the increased consequences of centralisation within the UK political process and the significance of the party mechanism, the importance of increasing the number of women MPs cannot be overstated. Between 1945 and 1970 the number of women selected by local constituency parties as candidates for Parliament did remain fairly stable with about 5% prospective Parliamentary candidates for both the Labour and Conservative Party being women. By 1992 this had improved to 18.3% of all candidates, with the most successful being within the oppositional parties because there were fewer incumbents.[38]

Although the position of women standing as prospective candidates has improved their success in actually being elected has lagged behind. During 1945 and 1983 an average of 4% of MPs were women and this increased to 11.2% in 1987 and following the General Election in 1992, this rose to 16.3%. However, despite there being a higher proportion of women MPs by 1992, still only 1 in 6 female candidates standing were actually successful in winning their seat. The electoral process meant that the oppositional parties fared particularly badly, especially the Liberals who, although they had the highest number of women candidates, also had low numbers of incumbency turnover, which meant a lack of open seats and the fact that few open seats adopted women as their prospective parliamentary candidates. In fact women have experienced great difficulty getting selected for safe seats even by the two major parties.[39]

The selection process of political parties is bound to have an effect upon whether or not women are allowed to contest parliamentary seats and whether or not these seats are winnable. Also although the adoption of a parliamentary candidate remains the prerogative of the particular local constituency party, national party organisations are part of the proceedings. For example, Conservative Central Office hold a list of approved candidates, while Labour candidates are 'endorsed' at the end of the process by the NEC. Thus the first stage of being elected to fight for a Conservative party parliamentary seat is to apply to be on the party's Approved List. Such steps are often not taken by women, despite the use of 'high flyer' conferences to educate and prepare women for taking part in electoral activity, with the result that fewer women are then interviewed by the local constituency as prospective candidates and finally selected. Women form a major part of the party organisation, the majority of its members and a substantial part of its electoral support. However any 'radical' feminist tendency is difficult to identify. Any form of positive discrimination has, on the whole, been merely rhetorical by the Conservative Party, that is, speaking of the need to increase the numbers of women MPs but not considering any types of quotas for women at any stage of the parliamentary selection process. The reasoning behind

this is that quotas may favour 'inferior' women being elected over their more 'qualified' counterparts.[40] There is also the fear that the electorate may not be as willing to vote for a female candidate as they would a male. However, it could be argued that this latter point may be ill founded, as a slightly greater percentage of the electorate are female and may welcome the chance to vote for a woman. To date the Conservative Party seems to be 'dithering' and any attempt to feminise their parliamentary wing has not received serious attention, although once again local constituency parties play an important part in any selection. This can go both ways, of course, because women are especially strong at the constituency level.[41] However generally the 'stereotypical' model candidate prevails, as one thwarted former Conservative candidate, Harriet Crawley, complained, 'women are judged unseen from their CV's'.[42] Furthermore this was also backed by a former longstanding MP, Emma Nicholson, who said of Conservative Central Office, that they needed to send a message to the constituencies saying 'we want more women in Parliament', adding 'I have begged it but it never comes'.[43] Generally the Conservative tradition of loyalty and unity normally obscures any internal divisions, but a growing number of Conservative women with 'frustrated' political ambitions were active in the 300 Group, an all-party group established to get at least 300 women into Parliament. Within the Party any visible organisational efforts were focused on policy issues, rather than the equal representation of men and women, although after the 1992 election the then new Party Chairman, Norman Fowler, vowed that he wanted at least 100 women candidates by the time of the next general election. Also there have been a number of 'conspicuous appointments of women to prominent positions'.[44]

In contrast, the Labour party selection process is more complex and starts from a recognition that women are not starting out with the same advantages as their male colleagues. In 1990 the Party agreed an aim of 40% women on its national organisations within 10 years and quotas were also introduced for elections to the shadow cabinet. The present selection procedures have come about through a very hard struggle, chiefly an alliance between the party modernisers and women activists,

in which women supported the one-man-one-vote (OMOV) resolutions on condition that the resolution to implement quotas were also supported.[45] Although the decision to implement all women shortlists in half of the winnable seats and half of the safe seats where MPs were retiring, was in fact over-ruled,[46] it came at a time when much of the arrangements and negotiations for all women candidates had already been completed with a number of local constituencies.[47] There is a possibility that at the forthcoming election, Labour will increase the number of women members. As Janet Anderson, Labour MP for Rossendale and Darwen asserts,

We face the impending General Election in the knowledge that, depending on the swing, between 80 - 100 Labour women will be elected to the House of Commons...By contrast, the Tories will be lucky to muster as many as 20: some estimates put the number of Tory women as low as 12 compared with 18 now.[48]

Along the same lines of a policy of mandatory short listing, the Liberal Democrats had also ensured a larger number of women candidates at the 1992 General Election. However, due to the First Past the Post system, oppositional parties such as the Liberal Democrats can, in reality, win far fewer seats than the two main parties and thus it flows that far fewer female MPs are elected.[49] A position they feel would be remedied if a system of proportional representation was adopted.[50]

No matter what strategies a political party undertakes to enhance the role and position of women within the political field there will always be criticism and the claim that more could be done. The British Candidate Study of 1992 found that when questioning party activists of all levels, the majority felt that the present numbers of women MPs were inadequate and that certain proposals should be enacted to encourage women to come forward.[51] Clearly the Conservative Party are less committed than Labour. However it is also important to remember that such moves have been a top-down process, dictated by the party leadership for instrumental reasons.

Finally, this chapter will briefly assess those arguments concerning the increased representation of women in the House of Commons and whether or not such an increase will make any noticeable difference to the character of parliament and the political agenda? Pippa Norris and Joni Lovenduski, who have conducted a great deal of research in this area put forward two main arguments in favour of women's increased representation.[52] Primarily they state that reform is justified due to the disproportionate number of women in Parliament alone, and should not be linked to the fact that the population may or may not have a 50-50 gender split. This 'symbolic' argument contends that women should represent approximately 50% of the 651 seats in Parliament regardless of whether they will actually perform any differently to male MP's. Such a view reflects the belief that the lack of a sizeable number of women in the House of Commons undermines its democratic legitimacy and also represents a disparity with the need for equity and justice. This symbolic argument is also linked to J.S. Mill's belief that Parliament should embody as much talent as possible if it is to be effective.[53] This 'utilitarian' stance also supports a more substantive argument which asserts that a greater number of women within the House of Commons would actually make a 'real difference' to what happens within Parliament. As Norris and Lovenduski suggest, this school of thought claims that the election of more women to Parliament would ensure the representation of women's values, attitudes and needs and thus would have an impact on legislative behaviour as a whole. Thus equally talented men and women could complement one another. However, central to such a notion is the question concerning gender differences and whether in fact such distinctions translate into political differences.

As much of the theoretical section has shown, there is a great deal of support for the view that women do actually speak in a different 'political voice';[54] also their role in the family and society, e.g. as carers, often marginalises them within paid employment and disadvantages them with regard to the amount of 'political' capital or experience they can gain for a career in politics.[55] There is also a suggestion that women have a specific perspective on political issues, with health care and nursery

157

high on the agenda.[56] However there is enough empirical evidence to suggest that women differ greatly not only on what they deem as important political issues but also on the sort of counteraction they regard as suitable.

Vicky Randall's substantial international research in 1987[57] did recognise that women politicians were not a homogeneous group and there was a need to differentiate between them in terms of personal and political backgrounds. Also, although the majority of women enter the national political arena later in life, due to responsibilities of home making and child-caring, there is also a new 'breed' of female politician who enters politics at a younger age, not only with a professional employment background, but a determination not to let home responsibilities get in the way of their parliamentary aspirations. Thus the idea of a united women's opinion is very difficult to sustain and such differences of background and age may result in some differing views and objectives. However other influential factors are the ways in which the process of recruitment within British politics is selective and a dominant form of political socialisation plays a great part in ensuring that women entering the political elite hold very similar views to their male colleagues.

Vallance drew similar conclusions in 1979,[58] claiming that in the House of Commons the majority of women feel that their loyalty lies with their specific political party rather than with either other women politicians or women as a whole. This could be connected to the minority status held by women in Parliament, which ensures that they keep within mainstream politics and the views of their party. Obviously when women are seeking candidate selection, political office or any form of greater role in politics, they make their decision to do so for a variety of reasons. In much the same way as a man decides to enter the political race. Perhaps personal ambition, a desire to serve others through the constituency relationship or strong feelings on particular issues may provide the impetus to make such a decision.

The view that few women enter Parliament with the aim of representing womens' interests is also supported by Pippa Norris's (1996) research, in which she states that politicians, whether male or female respond strategically to those

opportunities around them in much the same way as most employees in other institutions. For any individual members who enter politics driven by different goals, the institutional constraints on how far they can challenge the dominant policy agenda or parliamentary procedure are strong and the result is generally marginalisation. There is little room for independence and party discipline is stringent. For example, if a woman member wanted to place a specific 'woman's interest' on the legislative agenda, it would have to go through the Private Member's Bill and once again such a move may be detrimental to political ambition. Furthermore supporting the 'critical mass' theory, which suggests that 'political behaviour is shaped by its structural context', Norris asserts that only when women cease to be a minority within Parliament, will there be any chance of women's political behaviour changing. Without equal standing within the House of Commons, it seems highly unlikely that women will risk breaking with their party to act 'for women', or to be in anyway 'distinctly different' from their male colleagues.[59] However, citing Dahlerup's research into the experience of Scandinavian Parliaments, once the numbers are comparable the situation may be transformed.[60]

To support the view that political parties are a very powerful indicator of political attitudes across a wide range of major political issues, Norris examined in detail the gender differentials to some of the questions posed within the British Candidate Study (1992).[61] She similarly examined policy priorities and differences in legislative styles and roles. Her conclusions are summarised thus:

> The results of this study suggest that gender influences policy attitudes, priorities
> and legislative roles. Women tended to give stronger support for issues of women's
> rights, they expressed greater concern about social policy issues, and they give
> higher priority to constituency casework. This gender difference should not be
> exaggerated, since, as might be expected in British politics, party proved the
> strongest divider among politicians. The gender gap among politicians was often
> modest.[62]

Clearly the arguments considering the relevance of male and female MPs holding differing views will continue and even those who consider such differences as irrelevant, will further argue that as a matter of equity and justice, the absence of such a major section of society undermines 'democratic legitimacy and public confidence' in the political decision making process. If however the argument is suggesting that there is a specific male and female political voice and that women will bring an important new outlook to political life as well as a new agenda, the whole question concerning women's underrepresentation becomes critical.

This section has examined much of the current research into the relationship between women and national politics. It has relayed the underrepresentation and the importance of party politics, also reinforced much of the analysis throughout the thesis regarding the difficulties and disadvantages faced by women in the 'public' arena, along with the very important question of whether or not women's presence within the UK Parliament would make any 'real' difference. Clearly the political parties play a crucial role at a national level but the rhetoric of non-discrimination by all the main parties is not matched by the results.[63] Over the past few years the number of women chosen to contest Parliamentary seats, as well as the number who successfully gained a seat, has increased, although the success rate lags behind those initially chosen and those who gained a seat. This is explained by the fact that fewer women are chosen to fight 'safe' seats, whilst in the main they contest seats, which their party stand no real chance of winning. Thus the party can be judged as enhancing the position of women, through selecting more candidates, but ultimately doing nothing to enhance the numbers of women within the House of Commons.

Positive discrimination has proved a reasonable way forward in lessening the gender inequalities. For example the Labour Party's women-only shortlists, before they were judged illegal, will safeguard between 80 and 100 more women entering Parliament at the next election in May 1997. Clearly without the organisation of women, those shaping 'New Labour' would not have taken the gender issues seriously.

160

Likewise, women had to adapt their strategies to fit in with the modernisation project.[64] However such strategies are not without pockets of resistance, particularly in the traditional male based, old industrial areas.[65] The arguments against positive discrimination are voiced cross party, and are particularly persuasive by those who believe that the number of women within Parliament is irrelevant as female MPs, like their male counterparts, generally follow party lines on policies. There is certainly a great deal of evidence for such conclusions.[66] Nevertheless there may be other possibilities, for example although the resistance to affirmative action remains strong within the Conservative Party, women play a very important part in the shaping of its form in their role as voters, members and local activists. The fact that older local women are very influential at constituency level and are thus part of any selection procedure, could provide opportunities for those 'qualified' women who were encouraged to stand. As Norris and Lovenduski reflect;

> Although there are fewer Conservative women candidates and MPs, this is because fewer women apply. Those who do are relatively more successful. Thus a strategy to encourage women informally is appropriate to the circumstances of the party and women have no need to press for more radical methods.[67]

To suggest that the House of Commons will only rethink the position of women, that is with affirmative action, when a substantial number of MPs believe that women in Parliament will actually make a substantive difference to the policies emerging from the legislature is politically naive. More pertinent is the view that a party's sympathy to women is influenced by its political fortunes and the need to appeal to the voters.[68] Of course the issues of justice and equality of opportunity for women are important, as are those arguments which suggest that as more women enter parliamentary politics they may make a difference to policy attitudes and political procedures. However, as Judith Squires suggests:

The arguments from representation on the other hand, raise issues unique to the parliamentary system, notably how might a party attempt truly to reflect the communities it seeks to represent; what constitutes fair representation and what mechanisms might guarantee its realisation?[69]

Endnotes:

1   Patricia Hewitt and Deborah Mattinson, 'Women's Votes: the key to winning', *Fabian Research Series* 353,(1989), London, Fabian Society, p 18.

2   'Introducing Quotas for Women in the Labour Party', NEC Action/Advice Note, London, *Labour Party*, November 1991.

3   'Government launches new strategies for women', *Equal Opportunities Review*, No 44 July/August 1992, London.

4   J. Lovenduski, 'Sex, Gender and British Politics', *Parliamentary Affairs*, Vol 49, 1996, p1.

5   Judith Squires, 'Added Values', *New Times Discussion Paper*, 1994, London, p4.

6   Ibid., p2

7   Useful here is the definition of feminism, ' those ideologies, activities and policies whose goal it is to remove discrimination against women and to break down male domination of society', D.Dahlerup, (1986), *The New Women's Movement: Feminism and Political Power in Europe and the USA*, London, Sage, p6.

8   Martin Pugh, (1988), *The Evolution of the British Electoral System*, London, Historical Association.

9   Sylvia Pankhurst said of Margaret Bondfield on of the early women MPs, that it was 'a curious fact that the women who secured political office when the citizenship of women was achieved had none of them taken a prominent part in the struggle for the vote', cited by Anna Kruthoffer, 'Voters, Quotas and Women in the House', Gareth Smyth, ed., (1992), *Refreshing the Parts, London*, Lawrence and Wishart, p 102.

10   As Anne Phillips suggests, 'establishing an empirical under-representation of certain groups does not in itself add up to a normative case for their equal or proportionate presence', (1995), *The Politics of Presence*, Oxford, Clarendon, p 39.

11   Lovenduski and Randall, (1993),*Contemporary Femininst Politics*, Oxford University, p173.

12   1929 the additional six million female voters contributed to the election of fourteen women, Brooks, Eagle, Short, 'Quotas now: women in the Labour Party, *Fabian Tract* 541, London, Fabian Society, September 1990.

13   In fact the Conservatives returned one more female MP than in October 1974, but Labour returned 7 fewer', P. Norris & J. Lovenduski, eds., (1993), *Gender and Politics*, London, Sage, p46.

14   Ibid.

15   L.Culley, 'Women and Politics', *Teaching Politics*, Vol 13 (1984), p399.

16   This is still a relevant view from V. Randall,(1987), *Women and Politics: An International Perspective*, London, Macmillan, p128, although there is a marked difference locally between the 'old' and 'new' Universities, For example, female students are greatly outnumbered in the Politics Department of Sunderland University, but at Durham University it is 50/50, May 1997.

17   1981, 18% of mothers with children under five worked part time and 6% worked full time. 1992 43% of mothers of pre-school children now work, 13% of them full time; 59% of mothers with dependent children under 18years are now employed; *General Household Survey* (1992.)

18   L.Culley, 'Women and Politics', *Teaching Politics*, Vol 13. 1984, p402.

19   Sylvia Walby, (1990), *Theorizing Patriarchy*, Oxford, Basil Blackwell, pp25-61.

20   J. Lovenduski, 'Sex, Gender and British Politics', *Parliamentary Affairs*, Vol 49, 1996, p9.

21   L. Culley, 'Women and Politics', *Teaching Politics*, Vol 13. 1984, p403.

22   Harriet Harman, (1993), *The Century Gap*, London, Vermilion, p165.

23   R.M Kelley and M. Boutlier, The Making of Political Woman: A Study of Socialisation and Role Conflict, Chicago, Nelson Hall, 1978, cited in V. Randall, (1987), *Women and Politics: An International Perspective*, London, Macmillan, p123.

24   L. Siegle,unsuccessful Alliance candidate for Devises, Wiltshire, 1987 cited in L. Abdela, 1989, *Women with X Appeal*, London, Optima, p169.

25   The 300 Group, L. Abdela, 1989, *Women with X Appeal*, London, Optima, p 165; This group is campaigning for women to occupy 300 of the 651 Parliamentary seats.

26   'The Equality Challenge', *Equal Opportunities Commission Annual Report*, 1991..

27   Lovenduski, J and Hills, J., eds., (1981), *The Politics of the Second Electorate: Women and Public Participation*, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, p11.

28   Brooks, Eagle and Short, 'Quotas now: women in the Labour Party', *Fabian Tract* 541, London, Fabian Society, September 1990.

29   Conservative Central Office state that they have now organised a Younger Women's Conference and also the 'High Flyers Course', March 1997. However, as Doreen Millar states: 'there is a deep basic feeling within the Party that a woman should be at home and bring up a family, full stop. But if women do that ... the chances are they can't be under 45 and so all of a sudden there's this extra barrier of ageism', L. Abdela, (1989), *Women with X Appeal*, London, Macdonald Optima, p142.

30   Pippa Norris & Joni Lovenduski, (1993), *Gender and Party Politics*, London, sage, p40.

31   Pamela Graves, (1994) *Labour Women: Women in British Working- Class Politics*, Cambridge University, provides a rich history of such struggles.

32   Labour Party Membership 1989; see Brooks, Eagle and Short, 'Quotas now: women in the Labour Party', *Fabian Tract* 541, London, September 1990.

33   Information from the British Candidate Survey, 1992 was obtained from Lovenduski and Norris, eds., (1993), *Gender and Party Politics*, London, Sage: see p 58.

34   Further discussion; see E. Shaw (1994) *The Labour Party since 1979*, Routledge; P. Panebianco (1988) *Political Parties: Organisation and Power*, Cambridge University.

35   Sarah Perrigo, 'Women and Change in the Labour Party 1979-1995, *Parliamentary Affairs*, Vol 49 1996, p123.

36   Pippa Norris and Joni Lovenduski, (1993) *Gender and Party Politics*, London, Sage, p8.

37   An excellent example is the study by Julia Edwards, (1995) *Local Government Women's Committees*, Aldershot, Avebury.

38   See Appendices; Women candidates in British General Elections 1979 -1992.

163

[39] See Appendices; Women elected in British General Elections 1979-1992.

[40] This outlines one of the criticisms which sees such moves as giving women 'special treatment' over male colleagues. It is a focus on an equality of opportunity/equality of outcome, rather than the representative one.

[41] See Chapter Eleven.

[42] David Butler and David Kavanagh, (1992) *The British General Election of* 1992, London, Macmillan, p219.

[43] Ibid.

[44] V. Randall and J. Lovenduski, (1993) *Contemporary Feminist Politics*, Oxford University, p164.

[45] Sarah Perrigo, 'Women and change in the Labour Party 1979 -1995' in *Parliamentary Affairs*, Vol 49, (1996), p 127.

[46] Peter Jepson's legal action before an Industrial Tribunal to claim sex discrimination because he was not allowed to stand for selection in two seats, Leeds January 1996.

[47] Clare Short, chairman of the National Executive Women's Committee has strongly demanded a fresh quotas system stating the 'Every country that has made progress on this issue has used some kind of quota system...As women are pushing forward in work places...the House of Commons looks odder and odder, with rows and rows of men in suits' *Daily Telegraph* October 2nd 1996; Meg Russell, Women's Section Labour Party Walworth Road, London also confirmed that the procedures would be further reviewed after the 1997 election.

[48] *Tribune*, January 17th 1997. This turned out to be a very good prediction. On May 1st 1997, 120 women MPs were returned to Westminster. This was chiefly due to Labour's policy, albeit short lived, which resulted in one quarter (101) of the Parliamentary Labour Party being women.

[49] David Butler and David Kavanagh, eds., (1992), *The British General Election of 1992*, London, Macmillan, p 219.

[50] Not the subject of discussion here. See Charter 88 in conjuction with the Fawcett Society: a report 'The Best Man for the Job? The Selection of Women Parliamentary Candidates', February 1997.

[51] See Appendices: British Candidate Survey of 1992.

[52] P. Norris and J. Lovenduski. 'Women Candidates for Parliament: Transforming the Agenda' in *British Journal of Political Science*, (1989) Vol 19, p107.

[53] J.S. Mill was suitably vague with respect to women and representation in Parliament, although in the *Subjection of Women* he allowed older women a more 'public' role and in *Considerations on Representative Government* the principle of 'Personal Representation, (Chapter 7), that is, participation and competence was endorsed.

[54] Gilligan/Kohlberg debate; see Chapter Five.

[55] Ruth Lister, 'Women, economic dependency and citizenship', Walby, Is Citizenship Gendered? *Sociology*, Vol 28, No 2,May 1994: see Chapter Six.

[56] Karen Offen, 'Defining Feminism': G.Bock and S.James, eds., (1992), *Beyond Equality and Difference*, London, Routledge; see Chapter Four.

[57] Vicky Randall, (1987), *Women and Politics*, 2nd Ed., Basingstoke, Macmillan Education.

[58] E. Vallance, (1979) *Women in the House*, London, Athlone, p197.

[59] Pippa Norris, 'Women Politicians: Transforming Westminster' in *Parliamentary Affairs* Vol 46, (1996), p 92.

[60] D. Dahlerup, 'From a Small to a Large Majority: Women in Scandinavian Politics', *Scandinavian Political Studies*, 11(4)., Pippa Norris, 'Women Politicians: Transforming Westminster', *Parliamentary Affairs* Vol 46, (1996), p 92.

61   Attitudes to Women's Rights; Economic Issues; Social Issues; Foreign Policy Issues, The British Candidate Survey 1992...see appendices.

62   Pippa Norris, 'Women Politicians: Transforming Westminster?' *Parliamentary Affairs*, Vol 46, (1996), p101/2.

63   1992 General Election: women members only 9.2%.

64   The initial moves by women within the Labour Party were those activists on the left, who remain suspicious of the 'top-down process' of modernisation and the commitment to women's demands. See Sarah Perrigo, 'Women and Change in the Labour Party 1979 -1995', *Parliamentary Affairs* Vol 46, (1996), p128.

65   Chapter Thirteen: the case study of South Tyneside reflects such a resistance.

66   Pippa Norris and Joni Lovenduski, (1995), *Political Recruitment,: Gender, Race and Class in the British Parliament*, Cambridge University, pp209-237.

67   Pippa Norris and Joni Lovenduski, (1993) *Gender and Party Politics*, London, Sage, p57.

68   There is evidence that women are more likely to turn out to vote if the candidate is female. This formed the basis of the Fabian Society pamphlet 353 'Women's Votes: the key to winning', June 1989.

69   Judith Squires, 'Quotas for Women: Fair Representation', *Parliamentary Affairs* (1996) Vol 46 p76.

Chapter Eleven

Local Politics: A Changing Arena.
Concern for local democracy and the decision making process.

Local government in the United Kingdom is currently undergoing a profound shift
in the way it organises its activities and the way it relates to the public it serves.
The changes of the 1980s and the 1990s have catapulted local government from
relative obscurity into a highly visible role at the centre of national political
debates.[1]

In 1974 Lord Redcliffe-Maud forecast that centralism would increase 'unless
and until public opinion begins to support local government more vehemently in its
claims for freedom'.[2] Certainly for the last twenty years 'local democracy' has been the
rallying call by local government against increasing centralisation and loss of powers.
Without doubt, central government has reduced local government's taxing and
spending powers to a minimum, either centralised or redistributed powers to other
bodies and created statutory tendering and other organisational bodies to regulate the
arrangements of those which remain. Thus the 'problem' of local democracy has
generally been regarded as central government's gradual undermining of local
autonomy. However it is also relevant that there has not been a great deal of
opposition to such changes. Even given the limitations of 'first-past-the-post' general
elections and the acknowledgement that such changes were not driven by public
opinion, the preservation of the local democratic process does not appear to have been
a priority of the electorate. As David Cairns observes, such a view

is of a more fundamental problem than unnecessary centralism - that the public has
not valued local government as a democratic institution sufficiently to deter

government from dismantling it. Local democracy has not engendered sufficient popular support to sustain itself.[3]

It would follow from such an analysis that if local government is to develop as a democratic process, it is not questions relating to central government ideology which are paramount but a change of practice in local government itself.

For well over one hundred years the principle of representative local democracy has been widely accepted as a fundamental feature of the British political system. However the nineteenth-century legacy of local government procedures was one which significantly endorsed legal and financial integrity, along with strong links to the traditional middle class professions. For example, generally the leading officers were treasurers and town clerks, legitimated by their private practice professions of accountancy and law, and acting in accordance with such professions, as either prudent book-keepers or maintaining a check on statutory matters. The response to the growth in the organisation of local functions, which evolved as an answer to the expansion of welfare state activities from 1918, and certainly from 1945 onwards, was kept within the same parameters with the gradual growth of specialist departments responsible for the differing aspects of provision. According to Keith-Lucas and Richards:

> The local authorities still demanded the accepted professional qualifications...solicitors held a practical monopoly of the town clerkships; other departments were headed by professional men - architects, doctors etc. There was no place for the general administrator, nor ladder for the university graduate unless he had a professional qualification.[4]

Thus the council's work continued to be focused within individual specialist committees, but which progressively began to betray a rather fragmented set up and a lack of any mechanism which could formulate overall responsibility. Not surprisingly,

167

such an aggregation received a great deal of criticism even during the inter-war period[5]. Contrast was frequently made between the administrative grade of the civil service, which recruited university graduates and was based upon ideas of generalist administration, rather than the much narrower focus of local government headed by a small professional directorate and large body of poorly qualified clerical and administrative staff. As Cochrane observes, even with the expansion of local government after 1945 as the main local expression of a growing welfare state, the existing divisions were retained and 'even expanded'. The increased responsibility for key aspects of welfare provision, such as education, children's and individual welfare services and low-cost rental housing, far outweighed the loss of old responsibilities for aspects of health, gas, water and electricity. Quoting the example of Coventry in the mid-1960s, Cochrane states, that it was;

> if anything less fragmented than many other urban authorities yet it had twenty full
>
> council committees at that time, without taking into account all the sub-committees
>
> and joint committees. The committees were responsible for overseeing the work of a
>
> total of twenty-three separate departments ranging in size from 14 to 7735
>
> employees.[6]

The growth of welfare provision also had an impact upon the formation of a category of welfare professionals who in turn also helped to shape the way in which the local state operated. The new emphasis upon professional expertise resulted in a growing band of professional employees within the departments identifying their positions with those of the older professions. However there remained a very effective difference between them, that is the traditional professionals were able to define their position by their independence or autonomy and thus were able to maintain a distance from direct state influence, whilst the 'new' professionals were very much dependent upon the rising public sector 'bureaux'. As Reade observed:

they generally welcomed the extension of state power, for it is the only source of such power as they themselves possess; indeed these occupational groups owe their very existence to the extension of the power of the state.[7]

Another important factor which underlined the uneasy status of the new professionals was that many of these were women, particularly from within education, and the children's and welfare departments, whilst the dominant image of the traditional 'legitimated' professionals was substantially male. Also the senior members within these new 'officials' still tended to be men. So an uneasy co-existance was maintained within a culture of 'jealously guarded' departmentalism throughout the twenty years or so after 1945.[8] In practice the professional approaches associated with the 'programmes of the new professionals' which maintained an emphasis on 'needs-led (or demand-led) initiatives', tended to take the lead in local policy making.[9]

However, during the 1960s and early 1970s criticism of departmental power and professional prejudice began to gain momentum, particularly those arguments calling for a need to construct long term 'programme-based initiatives capable of mobilizing contributions from across a range of departments'.[10] Such views were further supported by attempted extensive state-backed economic and social modernisation, first instigated by the Wilson governments of 1964-70 and then followed by the Heath government of 1970-74. It was a time of growth, reflected in the 1969 Royal Commission on Local Government in England, which talked optimistically about the 'general tendency' ... towards the expansion of existing local government services and 'the steady rise in local government's share of public sector expenditure'.[11] The economic and political significance of local government was further endorsed by the Conservative government in the early 1970s, along with a respect for local autonomy, or at least 'to minimize detailed intervention by central departments'.[12] Local government boundaries were redrawn and new councils created, first in England and Wales and later in Scotland. Northern Ireland had already had its local government boundaries replaced by regional agencies. Thus it was widely

169

believed that the old structures of the nineteenth century were not adequate for the mid-twentieth century and in a general endorsement of the benefits of local government and an acceptance of its enhanced role, a consensus developed between party leaders and academics. As Barron et al., suggests;

> This consensus, while never clearly expressed, saw the system of local government as offering a number of advantages. The local authority, being independently accountable to local voters, was an alternative focus of political allegiance and a check on the centralised power of the state. Additionally, it offered voters a form of local participation which was readily accessible and which called for only a limited commitment.[13]

The enthusiastic endorsement of the Baines Report,(1972) emphasised such sentiments, arguing that local government was 'not limited to the provision of services', but was concerned with the overall economic, cultural and physical well-being of the community'.[14]

In response many councils commissioned management consultants to advise them on reorganisation,[15] many developed corporate planning and attempted to set up 'interlocking sets of cross-departmental sub-groups', whilst perhaps 'the clearest explicit expression of the new regime was the way in which the post of chief executive - rather than town clerk -became an almost universal feature of organisational life'.[16] In practice the continuing domination of the specialist service delivery departments and their location within the more extensive broader based policy networks meant that 'most chief officers' groups operated as forums within which negotiation could take place between senior managers', rather than as 'sources of managerial - corporate-direction'.[17] The decisions taken within the various departments were now placed on a wider agenda, open for discussion by senior officers and particularly the chief executive. However just as local organisational improvements seemed a possibility, the increasing 'service-led' policy claims served to exacerbate a situation in which the

British economy was facing major problems and efforts were being made to restrict public spending, particularly that of local government. Unfortunately, evidence suggests that the new 'enforced' spending restrictions did not serve to create any new opportunities with regard to either a more focussed analysis of budgets or in facilitating 'structures or procedures' to review expenditure; rather any medium or long-term planning was replaced by 'a more short-term focus on the demands of the immediate situation, which tended to be interpreted through a set of cash indicators'. Furthermore, the maintenance of departmentalism continued, supported within the wider political and financial framework of the professional policy networks.[18]

However one central role which increased was that of finance, with the change from traditionally competitively-organised budget proposals made by the different service departments, to a gradual acceptance of a resource led budgetary style. As Elcock et al., observed much of the decision making was now heavily influenced by the outcomes of central government's annual grant-setting exercise and the ability to predict in advance what global budgets were likely to be.[19] In response to such pressures centralised 'star chambers' were often formed in which senior officers and councillors spent a great deal of time scrutinising proposals for both service and spending reductions. Also the once dominant role of the chief executive was now subordinated to that of a 'value for money' financial control. Such was the potency of this 'accountancy ideology' that objectives were now clearly rationalised in terms of efficiency and contained within a language which emphasized the bland and technical over the political, even when the outcomes had potential political significance. These procedures were supported by the setting up of the Audit Commission during this period, which focussed upon monitoring and advising local government in terms of 'the economy, efficiency and effectiveness'.[20] Furthermore, it was at this time too that proposals were first being voiced concerning a move away from elected local government to forms of community trust which would be able to deliver specified services and would be accountable to customers for their efficiency.[21] In response to such an intransigent budget led prescription, many senior council managers, above all

finance officers, were encouraged to formulate a process of 'creative accountancy' in order to take full advantage of the available financial resources. However as Cochrane suggests, these centralised structures of financial management,

> ... could also be (and were) developed in ways which sought to maximise grant by the manipulation of financial information - shifting spending from one budget head to another or from one financial year to another - or sought new sources of funding which lay outside the grant limits, for example by intervening in the financial markets or by a whole range of schemes involving deferred purchase or the translation of current into capital spending.[22]

Contrary to the imposition of a new rationality from above, that is through the development of increasingly complex financial guide-line via central government departments, the changes experienced within local government during the 1980s suggest a piecemeal, 'ad hoc' response. Also spending by local authorities rose across the decade[23], thus highlighting a general recognition that such a dominant approach to financial control within local authorities offered severe limitations. The inability to deliver what was expected or needed was a result of the existing structures of delivery, and this was still determined by the professional input.

However, the status and influence of local government professionals had certainly been challenged by 'value for money' ideology and the centralised financial scrutiny. As Laffin and Young suggest;

> The advent of the new politics has led to a retreat by professionals as political agendas have been advanced, encompassing new issues that no longer fit well with professional agendas.[24]

The response from the auditors was to try moving beyond this seemingly static situation and by producing reports suggesting far more fundamental organisational

changes.[25]   These suggestions also reflected the developing interpretations of welfare delivery 'crisis', along with the wider role of local government, and a need to introduce less centralised and hierarchical systems.   There was a growing recognition that the structure of British welfare had always been characterised by a multiple and scattered organisational system,[26] and that this was equally true of local provision, which simply reflected the national scene.   Once again, although local departments managed their own sets of interest groups, this usually meant local policy elites who were linked to specialised regional and national policy networks, and who would often produce conflicting outcomes. Even local political parties were rarely able to produce their own programmes or manifestos, rather they tended to be little more than an accumulation of individual department-based plans.   Thus although local authorities tended to be defined as 'unitary multi-functional agencies, the closer one moved to the practice of individual departments the less appropriate such a construction appeared'.[27]

This need to move away from the hierarchical model which dominated local government organisation became a priority during the 1980s, and tended to be closely related to the national changes in welfare state provision. The language of 'markets', 'customers' and 'citizens' were similarly used to produce a fragmentation of local responsibilities between public, private and voluntary agencies, or a mixture of partnerships, by using legislative changes and tight financial controls; also growing decentralisation has been encouraged through 'privatisation and contracting out' and the creation of a whole new set of private and quasi-private organisations;[28] along with an increasing recognition of the necessity of working across organisations and through policy networks.[29] Thus throughout the country 'visions and missions' extol the virtues of sound 'business-like' formulae, which will not only reform the traditional organizational cultures by producing a more fluid working relationship between public and private agencies, but 'promises a transformed culture to fit a changed world'.[30]

Arguments for the development of such a culture has often been followed by the view that an effective leadership within local government is needed if such 'visions

and missions' are to be more than simply rhetoric. In practice this often results in the formation of an internal elite, including both elected as well as appointed officers, which some commentators have endorsed as representing a most efficient management form. As Metcalf and Richards assert;

> Management is not just an executive process separate from policy making: effective public management requires strong links between policy-making and implementation. In the real world, there is no clear division between management and politics.[31]

However such views characterize a very different notion of local government, that is rather than representing a traditional form of democratic accountability via regular elections, such new agendas regard accountability as measured through monitoring and regulation via the language of contracts and charters. David Cairns suggests that as the 'democratic capacity' of local government has always been in tension with the 'practice' of local government, such a distinction should be explored by looking carefully at its purpose and to this effect he makes the distinction between two related but distinct dimensions, that is of 'functional and democratic' local government. He asserts;

> Its functional purpose lies in the duties and powers conferred on it by statute, principally for the administration of public services. As such, functional purpose is clearly defined (and constantly redefined) by statute. There is no constitutional definition of local government's democratic purpose beyond its election under popular suffrage to determine how those statutory duties and powers are to be exercised. However, it is generally held to have two broader virtues - encouraging interest and participation in local affairs and contributing diversity to national democratic life, some argue specifically as a counterweight to central government.[32]

The extent to which local government can be said to realise either of these virtues in practice had been examined by the Widdicombe Report[33] in 1986, which in turn had considered the claim of the Redcliffe-Maud Report[34] that 'Local Government is more than the sum of the particular services provided. It is an essential part of English democratic government'. Widdicombe's formula summarises three valuable attributes from which this value stems:

* Pluralism, through which it contributes to the national political system;

* participation, through which it contributes to local democracy;

* responsiveness, through which it contributes to the provision of local needs through the delivery of services.[35]

Thus the principle distinctive feature is the political role, that is members of the council are directly elected by the local electorate. Furthermore, although the council's formal authority is given by Parliament, the councillors' collective capability to exercise these powers stem from their direct election. However as Cairns observes, in practice the ability to command popular support is dependent upon the 'groundrules dictated by central government', as well as 'the way in which local authorities practise local democracy within those groundrules'. Moreover there has been little popular support for any resistance to the last twenty years of central government's demarcation of local government activity.[36]

As this chapter has already outlined, by way of contrast, enormous effort has gone into meeting legislative and demand-led requirements to improve functional performance, in other words the fault of political process was regarded as being obscured by poor organisation. However, despite this, electoral turnout remains low and, averaging around 40%, falling far behind the 70% achieved at national elections.[37] In many ways the level of public participation in the electoral process is an insufficient means of measuring public support and attitudes towards local government as a democratic institution. In response to such concerns, many

developments have been introduced in recent years with the stated aim of giving greater voice and power to local citizens. Examples include: the reorganisation of local government in England through the work of the Local Government Commission for England; the work of the Commission for Local Democracy; and the Labour Party document, *Renewing democracy, rebuilding communities.*

The example of the Local Commission for England was first established in 1992, and generally inherited the functions and duties of the former Local Government Boundary Commission but with the additional responsibility for reviewing the structures of the local English shires. However for the first time the Commission was charged by the Local Government Act of 1992 to endorse any structural, boundary or electoral changes as seem to be ....'desirable having regard to the need to reflect the identities and interests of local communities' ... also ... 'to secure effective and convenient local government'.[38] Thus along with questions regarding efficiency and effectiveness in service delivery, the identity and interests of local communities were to be also considered. Using a framework of greater accountability and accessibility, the Commission supported much of the rhetoric which had been voiced in the preceding reviews of local government by Maud, Baines and the Audit Commission, such as establishing and meeting local needs, representing individuals as well as communities and 'creating an atmosphere which encourages....involvement in local initiatives'.[39] Also on the agenda was the ratio of councillors to residents, which is currently around 1 in 10,000 on county councils and 1 in 2,300 on district councils, with a recommendation for the newly formed unitary authorities as around 1 in 4,000. However although obviously concerned with numbers and adequate representation, there was little evidence of debate concerning how councillors may be helped in performing their representative roles and responsibilities more effectively.

A further example of another commission concerned with the issue of local representation in England and Wales was the Commission for Local Democracy, which was launched at the end of 1993 with financial support from the public sector trades union NALGO, and later by its successor UNISON, the Unity Bank and the 'Municipal

Journal'. The members of the Commission were drawn from academia and the private sector as well as each of the political parties and overall they produced 16 research reports over a two year period. In their final report, 'Taking charge: the rebirth of local democracy', published in June 1995, views and representations were included from other interested and relevant parties. Taking as their starting point the view that during the post war period the British political scene has portrayed a peculiarly centralising trait, the recommendations for change focussed on the relationship between the centre and the localities, the internal organisation of local government and the situation of local citizenship. With regard to the ratio of councillors to electors, in contrast to the 'Shires' report,[40] they recommended a reduction in line with the European average of smaller constituencies and more elected members.[41] Furthermore, they linked this proposal with the introduction of the position of a directly elected Mayor or Leader, whose main obligation would be one of representation.

Perhaps the most interesting recommendation is that all local authorities have a duty to prepare an annual 'democracy plan' setting out the range of procedures needed to promote more democratic government in their locality.[42] Thus in much the same way as local government is now obliged to prepare budget and service plans, they would also have to consider ways in which public involvement and education into decision making could be increased. However, as Burton and Duncan note,

> The importance of educating the public about the whole range of local (as well as National) governance issues as part of any programme of democratisation has long been recognised, for example the Speaker's Commission on Citizenship in 1990. It is also worth noting the corollary that public ignorance about the processes, institutions and issues of government is likely to limit the inclination and ability of the public to engage effectively in all but the more symbolic elements of political life.[43]

The contentious nature of recent community development and representation within the context of local politics requires brief discussion. Certainly the growth of QUANGOs, Extra Governmental Organisations and other non-democratic bodies has generally been included in those critiques concerning the power of central government and the creation of 'agencies', 'bypassing local government' and 'using special purpose bodies to deliver services' and encourage 'public-private partnerships'.[44] Consequently a great deal of concern has been generated with regard to encouraging local citizens to take a more active part in decision making. Such a position underpins the recent Labour Party policy discussion document, 'Renewing democracy, rebuilding communities'(1995),[45] with suggestions such as the introduction of 'local performance programmes'[46] and the provision of 'community forums', which could facilitate the assessment by local citizens of local council performance and the setting of standards for the future. It is worth noting at this point that the assumption that 'communities' have a perceptible, wholehearted and congruous interest in participating has been challenged by both theoretical and empirical evidence, and certainly when considering the implications for women and citizenship such debates are of central importance.[47] Once again the rhetoric and the practice seem incompatible. Whilst the encouragement of a much greater breadth of 'the people' to become and remain councillors has been very much part of the agenda during recent years,[48] such concerns were also addressed within the Labour party's policy document. With regard to the 'broadening' of any relationship between decisions of elected councillors and those made by 'others', the document did not address in 'any detail'. In other words, the Labour Party found it as difficult as everyone else to reconcile a commitment to the primacy of elected representatives who 'remain the bedrock of local democracy'[49] with a desire to involve a wider range of local residents in decisions which effect their lives.

Another important factor of influence upon local political representatives is the locality itself. As Burns, Hambleton and Hoggett suggest,

> Different countries, regions and cities have different regimes of governance
> reflecting different histories and cultures. The space for local political initiative will
> therefore vary from place to place, although it has to be said that central
> governments play a crucial role in shaping and delimiting that space. It is also the
> case that local governments can choose to ignore the space that may be available to
> them.[50]

Thus whilst some theorists had previously argued that the influential forces within 'industrial modernity', such as the powerful mechanism of national party politics and the mass media, had produced a more homogeneous society and that any differences were viewed as 'distinct variations in a wider political culture', there has been a growing realisation that some localities have 'specific class, social and gender relations which create virtually autonomous social systems with their own political cultures'.[51]

The final contention that this section will consider is that there has been a distinct trend towards the politicisation of local government. That is the view that before 1980, local government politics was relatively non-ideological in form. However as a reaction to the radical 'new right' at national level, many on the left, particularly the 'new urban left' saw this as an opportunity for developing new forms of local 'participative' socialism.[52] Thus a new breed of councillors from all political parties emerged, along with the view that the local political arena could provide a fertile ground for imaginative political innovation. Not only did this represent a challenge and changing relationship between party politics and local government, but also variations in the politics of local communities. As the following chapter will explore a new generation of young, left-wing activists, including many women drawn from their involvement with the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament and the Greenham Common peace camps, were intent on transforming the style and content of local Labour Party politics and in spite of the difficulties of a competitive and hierarchical system, many feminist 'voices' were heard. As the party processes began to be more openly discussed, the possibility of policy influence became an important development

and even working class women active in community politics felt that they could affect change. Thus in many ways until central government initiatives took precedence local politics were becoming more politicised, but in a way that reflected the trends of a socially and economically polarised and more assertive society.[53]

This chapter has explored the contention that local government in Britain is being transformed. It has examined the historical context to the current moves towards decentralisation and how in the 1970s there was a transition towards enlarged local authorities with larger boundaries, larger budgets and larger departments. However, the reactive reorganisation of chief officer management teams and central committees of councillors, which initiated area management and community development and public participation, whilst offering new work patterns and opportunities, made little impact on the large bureaucratic decision making process. During the 1980s central government tried very hard to curtail these large elected local authorities, particularly in the urban areas, with the result that local government financial support from the centre was greatly decreased, local government became highly politicised, community activism increased and the 'managerial culture' proliferated. Yet the new emphasis on 'caring for the customer' can only be a partial expedient in the empowering of citizens and the distinction made by Cairns regarding the subordination of democratic to functional needs in local government is a useful analytical tool. However perhaps the main issue within this process is why the local electorate appears largely content with this and the further possibility that in the future they may be quite happy to leave the implementation at local level to paid officials, provided that there is some measure of accountability. Thus it would seem that the position of local politicians and party politics is in question, hence the varying commissions,[54] which in turn have paid attention to the exploration of how local government can provide greater opportunities for participation in the political forum, particularly for women and ethnic minorities.

Thus to maintain the focus of this final section of the thesis, the case study will provide an empirical example of the 'locality' of South Tyneside and a reflection of the

changes on those people, and in particular women, who consider themselves to be and are seen by others as having certain expertise within the organisation of representative politics during the period 1992-97. Furthermore it will explore the extent to which a 'new conception of local government' has been initiated, and 'bureaucratic paternalism' has been 'challenged by, on the one hand , the extension of the markets and, on the other, the extension of democracy'.[55]

Endnotes:

1   Danny Burns, Robin Hambleton and Paul Hoggett, (1994) *The Politics of Decentralisation*, Basingstoke, Macmillan p3.
2   Redcliffe-Maud and Wood, (1974) quoted in David Cairns, (1997) 'Rediscovering Democratic Purpose in British Local Government', *Policy and Politics*, Vol 24 no 1, p25.
3   Ibid., p17.
4   B. Keith-Lucas and P. Richard, (1978) *A History of Local Government in the Twentieth Century*, London, Allen & Unwin, p105.
5   The Hadow Committee (1934) was concerned that the qualifications, recruitment, training and promotion of local government officers should be headed by a town clerk who was an administrator and co-ordinator, rather than a lawyer. (para 98, quoted in Cochrane (1994) *Managing Social Policy*, London Sage, p 143).
6   Allan Cochrane et al, eds., (1994) *Managing Social Policy*, London Sage, p143.
7   E. Reade, (1987) *British Town and Country Planning*, Milton Keynes, Open University Press, p 126.
8   R. Rhodes, (1988) *Beyond Westminster and Whitehall: Sub-Central Governments of Britain*, London Unwin Hyman.
9   Rodney Lowe, (1993) *The Welfare State in Britain since 1945*, Basingstoke, Macmillan.
10   Allan Cochrane et al., eds., (1994) *Managing Social Policy*, London, Sage, p 145.
11   *Royal Commission on Local Government in England* 1969 Vol 1 p56.
12   Department of Environment (1971) White Paper: *Local Government in England, government Proposals for Reorganisation*, London HMSO p1.
13   Jacqueline Barron, Gerald Crawley and Tony Wood, (1991) *Councillors in Crisis, The Public and Private Worlds of Local Councillors*, Basingstoke, Macmillan, p4.
14   Baines Report (1972) *The New Local Authorities; Management and Structure , Report of the Study Group on Local Authority Management Structures*, London, HMSO p122.
15   Cynthia Cockburn, (1977) *The Local State. The Management of Cities and People*, London, Pluto pp21-24.
16   Allan Cochrane et al., eds., (1994) *Managing Social Policy*, London Sage, p146.
17   Ibid., p147.
18   Ibid.
19   H. Elcock, G. Jordan, A Midwinter, G. Boyne, (1989) *Budgeting in Local Government: Managing the Margins*, Harlow, Longman pp13-14.
20   Audit Commission, (1984) *The Impact on Local Authorities' Economy, Efficiency and Effectiveness of the Block Grant Distribution System*, London HMSO.
21 Adam Smith Institute, (1989) *Wiser Counsels. The Reform of Local Government*, London ASI.
22   Allan Cochrane etal., eds., (1994) *Managing Social Policy*, London Sage p149.

23   C. Humphrey and R. Scapens, (1992) 'Whatever happened to the lion-tamers? An examination of accounting change in the public sector', *Local Government Studies*, 18(3) pp141-7.

24   Martin Laffin and Ken Young, (1990) *Professionalism in Local Government*, Harlow, Longman, p33.

25   Audit Commission (1988) *The Competitive Council*, Management Paper No1 London HMSO.

26   David Marsland, (1996) *Welfare or Welfare State*, Basingstoke, Macmillan provides an excellent example of the continuing framework of such ideas.

27   Allan Cochrane et al., eds., (1994) *Managing Social Policy*, London Sage, p151.

28   New institutions such as Training and Enterprise Councils, 'new' universities are no longer under local government control ... plethora of discussion from Tony Butcher, (1995), *Delivering Welfare: The Governance of the Social Services in the 1990s*, Buckingham, Open University Press; David G. Green, (1996) *Community Without Politics: A Market Approach to Welfare Reform*, Bury St. Edmunds, IEA.

29   Taking the failure of the old managerial styles associated with major corporations as a template, many commentators have concluded that central, hierarchical systems do not work as well as small dynamic organisations, R. Moss-Kanter (1984), C.Handy (1989).

30   Allan Cochrane et al., eds., (1994) *,Managing Social Policy*, London Sage, p154.

31   L.Metcalfe and S. Richards, (1990) *Improving Public Management*, London Sage, p216-17.

32   David Cairns, (1997) Rediscovering Democratic Purpose in British Local Government, *Policy and Politics* Vol 24 no1 p 18.

33   *The Conduct of Local Authority Business*,(1986) London, HMSO

34   *The Royal Commission on Local Government, 1966-1969*. London HMSO

35   Ibid., Vol 1, p47, para. 3.1.

36   David Cairns, (1997) Rediscovering democratic purpose in British Local Government, *Policy and Politics*, Vol 24 no1 p 18.

37   The Commission for Local Democracy: C. Rallings et al., (1994) *Community identity and participation in local democracy: CLD Research Report No 1*, London.

38   Local Government Commission for England, (1995) *Renewing local government in the English Shires: a report on the 1992-5 Structural Review*, London, HMSO, p25.

39   Ibid., p74.

40   Ibid.

41   Commission for Local Democracy (1995) *Taking charge: the rebirth of local democracy*, London Municipal Journal, p 20.

42   Ibid., p33.

43   Paul Burton and Sue Duncan, (1997) Democracy and accountability in public bodies, *Policy and Politics* Vol 24 No 1 p 9.

44   R.A.W. Rhodes, (1996) The New Governance: Governing without Government, *Political Studies* Vol 44 No4 p 658.

45   Labour Party, (1995) *Renewing democracy, rebuilding communities*, London, Labour Party.

46   Ibid., p4.

47   Chapter 9 included a theoretical discussion regarding the desirability of greater participation in democratic decision making processes; empirical evidence will be considered in Chapter 14.

48   Some examples include: Alice Bloch, (1992) *The Turnover of Local Councillors*, Joseph Rowntree, York; Michael Clarke & John Stewart (General eds.), (1988, 1989, 1990) *Managing Local Government*, Harlow, Longman in association with the Local Government Training Board.

49   *Labour Party Research paper*, 'Renewing democracy, rebuilding communities', (1995), p 16.

50   Danny Burns, Robin Hambleton, Paul Hoggett, (1994) *The Politics of Decentralisation*, Basingstoke, Macmillan p 11/12.

51   Ibid., p12.

52   J. Gyford, (1985), *The Politics of Local Socialism*, London, Allen and Unwin.

53   Strong influences here of the feminist struggles of the 1970s, which transferred into an interest in new forms of democracy during the 1980s and finally to the challenge of the 1990s and the strengthening of the voice of local citizens. However, this was influenced by class, race and locality. Full discussion in Chapter Twelve.

54   *The Speaker' Commission on Citizenship*, (1990); the *Commission for Local Democracy* reported in June 1995 after a two-year programme of investigations into the state of local democracy in Britain; based on analysis of submissions made to *Local Government Commission for England*

during the 1992-95 structure review; *Labour Party Research paper,* 'Renewing democracy, rebuilding communities', (1995).

55   Danny Burns Robin Hambleton, Paul Hoggett, (1994) *The Politics of Decentralisation, Macmillan,* Basingstoke, p 29.

Chapter Twelve

The Context: Women councillors and South Tyneside. Theoretical application to a changing environment.

> A central point to consider is whether and to what extent present political structures
> enable women to build, maintain, and control their presence in politics as women.
> Women's participation is desirable and acceptable in the traditional political system
> in so far as it is not founded on gender-based interests. The question is, under what
> conditions can women as women develop a controlling presence in situations of
> choice in general and in authoritative decision making?[1]

The quotation from Jonasdottir(1988) represents the view that women acting politically on behalf of their gender are in constant tension with the political processes. It is also representative of much of the theoretical discussion within Section One and Two of the thesis. Thus it is the intention of this final chapter, before the Case Study, to explore the practice of this theoretical material by examining how women councillors in South Tyneside view their role in local politics. Further it is necessary to explain why the study of women within local politics is regarded as particularly relevant and also why the area of South Tyneside is considered as an appropriate locality. Whilst the detail concerning the case study methodology and the resulting views of those interviewed are set out in Chapter Thirteen, in order to maintain the overall theoretical continuity of the thesis, this chapter clarifies the conceptual framework used within the case study.

The framework of this thesis evolved into three interrelated parts; the first used the theoretical analysis which lies at the heart of the dichotomy experienced by women, that is the discourse of political theory which identifies the feminine with the 'private sphere', whilst 'public life' and political authority are defined as male. Such theoretical

assumptions describe a specific 'political culture', which has implications for women participating in politics and society as a whole, because it suggests that women embody 'negative' ideals of passivity, dependence on men and lack of self-confidence, which disadvantage them in the competitive world of practical politics, whilst at the same time they possess 'positive' values, such as caring, empathy and interdependence, which gives them an advantage when representing and communicating with constituents. Thus for the purpose of the thesis, *women's identity* was placed within the political context of neither being entirely controlled by such values and attributes or without power to challenge them, but held within a constant 'assembled set of values, interpretations and causal connections that are effective for women but difficult to understand or invisible for men'.[2] The second part of the framework used in the study was to ascertain the particular interests local women councillors were representing within a specific *political culture*, that is whether they regarded themselves as individuals, representing common human interests, or whether they regarded themselves as representing specific women's interests and to what extent the party process influenced this identity.[3] By acknowledging the variability of the subject, - the contradictory nature of the political culture, - the final part of the analysis used an application of objectives outlined in an ideal form of *feminist political practice*, thus providing a theoretical contingency suitable to explore the question set out at the beginning of Section Three.[4]

It was clear from the beginning of the case study that South Tyneside had not set up any specific guidelines with regard to positive action for women, or even the promotion of women's *de facto* equality, the interviews disclosed the poor extent to which the women members and the council as a whole had encapsulated strategies both for empowering women and changing the attitudes and organisation of policy-making. A useful starting point was provided by the criteria set out by Julia Edwards[5] in her survey of local government women's committees, she also notes that according to the 1991 Directory of the National Association of Local Government Women's Committees, less than 12% of local authorities in mainland Britain have set

185

up women's committees. It also represented an ideal form of feminist political theory set within the boundary of existing political practice. As Edwards suggests; 'Located within governmental institutions, Local Government Women's Committees hold a unique position in theories of equal opportunities because they work at the democratic interface between the governing and the governed'.[6]

The local political arena was believed to be particularly pertinent, not simply because of the considerable interest it has attracted has been shown throughout the 1990s by both national politicians and the media,[7] but that little has been written on the role of women as local representatives,[8] a surprising fact given that local provision is of such importance for women and has been an area of politics where they have been represented in relatively high numbers, that is in comparison with national government.[9] Furthermore, much of the analysis of local government had shown a great deal of interest in providing a basis for more radical approaches to democracy, particularly those which emphasis the significance and reality of group affinities and the exploration of those processes which will improve democracy within existing arrangements.[10]

An important factor which influenced the choice of which local constituency would be examined, was the belief that to study local political councillors, their structure and network of relationships, along with those local issues with which they were concerned, required an intimate knowledge of the community itself. In other words there is a very close connection between local politicians, their power structures and the issues with which they deal and the context of the local community. As Clifford Geertz's suggests 'field research into the study of local community elites can benefit ... from heightened sensitivity to and dense exploration of the communal context of elites', or in other words, I believed that I had the necessary 'thick description of local knowledge' to be able to 'penetrate to the more exclusive backstage'.[11]

Furthermore, the constituency of South Tyneside represented an area which had undergone a great deal of socio-economic change, due to the loss of male

employment opportunities. Consequently there was a possibility that since the mid 1980s, the 'Andy Capp image of lives in the north east' was 'no longer accurate, not at least as regards households where livelihoods are determined by women who continue employment when their husbands are no longer working in the labour market'.[12] Undoubtedly economic change has called traditional gender divisions in work into question, that is the tradition that was reinforced by the welfare state after the Second World War.[13] As discussed in Chapter Six, citizenship was built upon the model of a man going out to work and being the breadwinner, whilst his wife remained at home and shouldered the unpaid work burdens. In reality even in 1945 as many as 42 per cent of women were active in the labour market and now the figure is closer to three-quarters (71 per cent) with the greatest increase among married women. Of course, such an increase does not represent a challenge to traditional work stereotypes as women's work is concentrated mainly in low paid 'caring' roles, such as teaching, health care, and cleaning. However there has been a threat to the traditional earning roles of men, which have in some cases almost disappeared. In fact, in Britain from 1979 to 1992, men's participation in the labour market fell from 91 per cent to 86 per cent, resulting from early retirement, delayed entry into the workforce, and sickness.[14]

South Tyneside, with its population of 156,340, is highly representative of an area of high male unemployment[15] and at the time of the initial case study in 1994 was suffering from the shock of the last local coal mine, Westoe Colliery, closing during May 1993.[16] During the period of Tory success at national level from 1979 to 1997, Tyneside has been reduced to a level of recession not unlike that of the 1930s. Whilst, many of the governments policies such as the enforced sale of council houses were faced with equanimity, the size of the discounts and the fact that local councils were no longer allowed to provide replacements caused much anger. Housing had always been a priority within the borough and raised a reasonable rate of revenue. In 1977 the South Tyneside Borough Council seemed on target to resolve the housing problem in the area, but by 1992, the housing stock had been reduced due to council tenant sales

and 6,000 people in South Shields were still on council waiting lists with no likelihood of new council houses being built.

Also during the same period unemployment levels reached historic high levels. Once again, Government implementation of its privatisation policy targeted the ship-building industry and in reality this resulted in the closure of the shipyards. Despite a brief flurry of activity during the aftermath of the Falklands War, by 1994 thousands of river related jobs were irredeemably lost. Even the Plessey factory in South Shields heralded as being at the forefront of micro-technology and the epitome of the so-called bright future of North East industry closed despite a heroic struggle by the local party. As noted earlier, the final blow came when the modern, multi-million ton a year pit at Westoe closed. Such a loss of jobs not only has severe social and economic consequences, but their political debate has provided a central force within local politics for many years.

There can also be little doubt that the dramatic economic upheaval within heavy industry in the north-east has greatly affected the traditional strong division of labour between men and women and also, in turn created enforced male unemployment, fragmentary self-employment and a general feminisation of the workplace. That is, with the shedding of the male work force comes an increase of women's employment within consumer-based light industry and the expanding service sector. However whilst these developments grant the possibility for a changing power relationship between men and women, research into this possibility suggests that although a renegotiation of the domestic division of labour is not ruled out, there are powerful social forces at work which are antagonistic to this. For example, the pressures of 'role conformity' are such that a man is reluctant to take up anything that is culturally defined as 'women's work', and furthermore will endeavour to reaffirm his identity through 'accepted' male roles.[17] Also the extent to which such changes can be regarded as creating any lasting transformation can best be judged against the level of 'real' changes within personal roles, for example, with some men playing a greater part in home life, and a greater opportunity for women to participate in a more public

way.[18]   As Beck observes, although 'epochal changes have occured'...'they contrast, on the other hand, with a constancy in behaviour and conditions of men and women'. Furthermore, he suggests that,

> This historically created mixture of new consciousness and old conditions is explosive in a double sense. Through more equal educational opportunities and an increased awareness of their position, young women have built up expectations of more equality and partnership in professional and family life which encounter contrary developments in the labour market and in male behaviour. Conversely, men have practiced a rhetoric of equality, without matching their words with deeds. On both sides the ice of illusion has grown thin;.[19]

Certainly parallels can be drawn between the above view, the false rhetoric of citizenship because of the continuing second-class nature of many women's experience of it, and the influence of feminism and new democracy movements, particularly within the process of local politics. Thus it is the intention of this final chapter to examine these central issues by considering the influence of women upon the procedures of local political decision making in general and then with a focus upon South Tyneside.

In comparison to the very poor representation of women in national politics, there has been an increasing interest among women in local government. However, it is important to remember that women are a minority on Britain's Town Halls both as elected members and as senior ranking employees. Obviously participation in local politics is not so disruptive to domestic responsibilities and family commitments as parliamentary politics certainly is;[20] also the agenda of local government is often concerned with questions of housing, welfare and education at a local level where links between women's experience within their community are much stronger.

Clearly women have sought to influence public policy and the distribution of resources for many years, particularly when the issues were local and of immediate concern for women and their families.[21] Even before the enfranchisement, women had

189

established a small but significant presence in local government and between 1870 and 1914, three thousand women were elected to serve on vestries, on school and poor-law boards, and on councils. Those attracted to such work within local government were generally from the philanthropic tradition of the conservative middle class, whose work on poor-law boards and school boards was simply an extension of their tireless voluntary work, and those who believed they had a right to exert political power, for example those from the suffrage movement, who hoped that work at the local level, could help prepare them for national political participation. As local government responsibilities grew, particularly for the sick, the old, the poor and dispossessed, women entered with an enthusiastic belief that they had an important role to play. Many argued that within such areas of concern, women were the experts, that is their domestic duties and caring skills provided women with an important different approach. In fact such an argument which stressed the importance of women's separate spheres along with special needs and interests, was first used to placate those men whose viewpoint remained hostile to women's presence within local government. However as Patricia Hollis states,

> The language of separate spheres has had a bad press. It seems at first sight irredeemably conservative, validating a male stereotype of women's nature (feeling rather than thinking, being rather than doing) which was used to confine women to the private and domestic realm ... Yet in a world where few middle class women had salaried work, and where few men in public life had experience of caring or parenting work, women knew that they did indeed possess different attributes and skills from men. To have sought access to local government mainly as surrogate men would have seemed to them to be not only absurd, but morally and socially wasteful.[22]

The achievements of women in early local politics were very impressive, and it was certainly within those areas of concern that challenged male priorities, that the most

impact was made. For example, such work as 'investigating infant mortality to introducing free school meals, from the improvement of sewage systems to slum clearance, from provision of play spaces and allotments to fighting for good and caring practices in workhouses and orphanages, hospitals and asylums'[23]

Thus many women were drawn to local government rather than the national arena not only because it was far easier to maintain family life, but also because they 'felt that it could make a difference, that an individual's contribution counted' Also there was relatively little competition for seats, and for any ambitious young man, especially one set on a career in politics, the countless meetings and endless mundane casework were regarded as neither 'glamorous or glorious'. However, as far as selection committees were concerned, prejudice still remained prevalent with 'research suggesting that women tended to be chosen more often for marginal or unwinnable seats... Similarly, parties with little chance of electoral success have shown a greater willingness to select women as candidates.' [24]   In fact, during these early years, many women found it difficult to remain or support a political party, and as Hollis suggests,

'They kept free of bad faith by standing as independents, and the local party often acquiesced by not running an official candidate against them. A few, like Margaret Ashton of Manchester or Kate Ryley of Southport, resolved the tension by holding fast to liberalism but not to the Liberal Party. They stood as independents, not primarily to keep out of local government, but because they chose the women's constituency over party loyalty'.[25]

In recent times nearly all would-be councillors who have stood as representatives of a political party, as potential candidates in the national political system, need to be approved by the local party association, and if more than one name is put forward, a selection committee or ward meeting choses between them. It is a system which undeniably favours those candidates known to the most influential group, those who have an existing political track record in politics and or are part of the local

political network. Whilst Coote and Pattullo observe that it was more 'likely for women to find their way through this obstacle if they were middle class'; however, 'in all parties it was more difficult for women to win recognition'. Certainly, 'Politics has little time for the diffident or the unsure'[26]

Other factors inhibiting women's involvement within the local political process are those which are peculiar to local government, and as examined in the preceding Chapter[27] many of these processes have undergone a great deal of upheaval during recent years. Thus, whilst a handbook published by The Local Government Management Board in 1991, states categorically the importance of a local councillors role, that is, 'Britain's locally elected councils - from small parishes to imposing metropolitan authorities - are the invaluable base of the country's political pyramid. A counterpoise to Whitehall ...'. Yet, this same handbook also points out that such a role is also greatly undervalued, that is, both in view of the general public's perception of those who fulfil such commitments and the fact that, although the responsibilities involved may be equivalent to those of managers within a major industry, the remuneration involved for such endeavours is negligible.[28] With such a minimal financial reward, many councillors have to try and fit council work around full-time employment, unless they have an independent income, retirement pension or are financially supported by a spouse or partner. For many women the possibility of immersing oneself within council duties would simply present them with an intolerable triple burden of children or caring roles, the constraint of paid employment and the demands of council obligations.

Obviously the reasons behind an individual councillor's motivation for volunteering for such a position varies greatly and may include just one or a multiple of the following: for example, it may be regarded as a stepping stone to Westminster, a chance to achieve status and power, part of a long familial tradition, a means of putting ideology into practice, to bring about some autonomy within local change, or simply a way of serving the community. Yet, more often than not, it is the composition of the job which determines the configuration of those who are able to practice it. As stated

above, ideally those able to participate most easily fall within the very narrow band of people with independent means, or those who are at least well cushioned by a retirement pension. However, the reality of those serving on a majority of councils reflects an air of dependency rather than independence; that is, people with inflexible jobs find it very difficult to attend meetings scheduled during the 'normal working day', and those with the common option of unemployment often find that a council seat serves as a barrier to prospective employers. Similarly, those with large dependent families find that the demands of service are both hostile and unsympathetic. Evidence also shows that whilst some councillors put their 'jobs on hold for the duration, letting promotion pass them by', many others simply chose to give up their jobs altogether and live on council expenses. For example, councillor Valda James took early retirement when she was asked to be Islington's mayor, rather than preceding her mayoral duties every morning by getting up at 5.30am to work as a cleaning supervisor.[29] Similarly, an Oxfordshire Lib-Dem county councillor warns that; 'The strain on your social life shouldn't be underestimated....and the strain on your partner is quite considerable': a statement which was apparently confirmed across the country with reportings of 'strings of broken marriages and relationships'.[30]

Such comments, in fact support a survey conducted by researchers at Bristol Polytechnic in 1988, which had explored the links between council work demands and the personal lives of county councillors.[31] Once again they had found that it was not only the long hours demanded, on an average 37.6 hours a week, which made council obligations so difficult but also *when* those hours were scheduled. For example important meetings were often scheduled during the daytime and if you were a committee chair this daytime attendance would be required often.[32]

Finally, as already examined, the centralisation of statutory and bureaucratic power has not always been accompanied by the 'competence and effectiveness' intended. Barron et al. suggests that this 'fragmented and inconsistent approach by the government is illustrated by recent legislation', in which some decisions even 'appear to be an expression of a new-found confidence in local government'.[33] Also despite the

measures of control, many local councillors feel that the scope of their responsibility has not been diminished, due to the fact that it still remains the role of the local council to interpret, devise and modify strict government directives in accordance with local conditions. Clearly during the 1980s and early 90s the traditional profile of local government has been eradicated with government legislation on education, health and housing having removed most, if not all, of the old powers from local authorities. Furthermore, as outlined earlier, this is particularly evident with the 'new' emphasis of local government in the role of 'enablers' rather than 'providers', which has resulted in a dramatic change in the relational dynamics within the administering of services[34]. However, as Barron et al conclude,

> The prolonged battle over 'charge-capping' in the spring and summer of 1990 encapsulated the Janus-like character of the government's approach to local authorities. In one breath, the community charge was presented as the prime instrument to bring about effective accountability to local voters. In the next, many local authorities were described as profligate with public money and some were made subject to statutory capping of their charges even where voters had endorsed council's spending plans...Only one year later, a further set of far-reaching measures began to affect councils...'[35]

In other words, the inundating of councils with the need to pass reforming measures has determined the political composition of council committees. Furthermore, the pressures and frustrations encountered in trying to achieve a reasonably progressive working ethos in which 'unpopular' decisions can be made, despite the deeply contrary context of long and deeply held antagonistic convictions, provides just another problem encountered by those who enter 'public life' at the local level. There is little question that the demands upon the role of a councillor is both a complex and time-consuming one, and certainly women do not feature as much within this male

dominated ethos as they should, and similarly neither do young people or members of ethnic minorities.[36]

During the 1980s there had been considerable progress to counteract such imbalances of power. According to Coote and Pattullo,

> The first tentative steps were taken by Lewisham Council in South London, which set up a women's rights working party in 1978. The only precedent it had to follow was its race relations working party, formed in 1974 in conjunction with the local community relations council. This had been an instructive experience for the Labour-controlled council and it formed a model, both for maximising the usefulness of the council to particular groups in the community, and for winning the hearts and minds of councillors and officers for anti-discrimination policies.[37]

This was quickly followed by the setting up of a new women's rights working party, which was composed of six representatives,[38] and which initiated a women's unit with an officer and administrative assistant to not only service the working party, but also to start collecting information concerning the level of women's needs throughout the borough. Not unexpectedly, such pioneering initiatives encountered some all too familiar problems, for example, 'shortage of funds, hostility from the local press, resistance from some councillors, including some older Labour men, stonewalling by unsympathetic council staff, difficult decisions about how best to organise the women's unit'.[39] However, it provided a practical starting point and the creation of some very valuable knowledge, which proved helpful to other local authorities who, in turn took up the challenge of women's representation.

A further opportunity had been created when Labour gained control of the Greater London Council in 1981. Fuelled by the objective to give greater empowerment to the marginalised sectors of London's population, the nine women councillors set out to put the demands of women into political practice and the

195

creation of the first fully fledged Women's Committee took place in May 1982. According to Coote and Pattullo, it was 'a wholehearted attempt to fill an enormous void';

> The GLC Women's Committee hoped to change women's lives on two fronts: both within the council, in terms of employment practices, and outside it by identifying and meeting the needs of women who lived in the Greater London area. It wanted to empower women by helping them to take control of their own lives and by offering them a unique chance to participate in the decision-making process. It also sought to shift the emphasis of its work in favour of women seen to suffer most from discrimination - especially working-class and black women who, in the past, had been largely excluded from the aspirations of the white, middle-class women's movement.[40]

Obviously the abolition of the GLC had a devastating effect upon the various projects set up and in fact many closed down altogether, but the 'consciousness-raising' effect stimulated many other local authorities to follow their example, albeit despite some very real obstacles.[41] Julia Edwards suggests that in many ways the formation of Local Government Women's Committees offered a 'model for feminist political practice'...with a... 'twofold objective of bringing autonomous women's perspectives to local policy-making and thereby changing the way that their local authorities work'. Furthermore Edwards' proposes that the intention of LGWCs are manifold. They 'expose the democratic deficit inherent in the patriarchal principles which guide intergovernmental relations in Britain' along with the exploitation of 'the limited scope, within local government, for creative opposition to centrally-controlled public policy-making'. Also the 'inefficiency of such a top-down approach, particularly for the achievement of de facto equality for women'. Thus such a 'model' provides an excellent framework for analysing far wider issues 'of alliance building between diverse groups and for judging the normative more democratic forms of government'.[42] As

196

observed in the preceding chapter 'the public has not valued local government as a democratic institution',[43] a view also supported by the various commissions who then concluded that local authorities should set out a range of procedures in order to promote more democratic government in their locality.[44]   As Danny Burns et al. summarises,

> Empowerment - what it means and how to develop it - remains a key theme for
>
> local government in the 1990s.   Indeed a recent paper circulated to all local
>
> authorities by the Local Government Management Board argues that empowerment
>
> is a 'major theme of our times' and urges every authority to develop strategies which
>
> increase public influence and control over the activities of the council.[45]

A note of caution is also made by the authors who in assessing the likelihood of this being successful conclude that 'citizen control can only be achieved once the citizen can get *behind the scenes*. Present political arrangements keep the citizen in front of the stage and offer only a passive role.'[46] The Review of the Commission for Local Democracy was similarly pessimistic, accepting that there had been 'little support for radical change' ... further they concluded that 'most councillors are conservative in attitude'.[47]   However, Ruth Henig's case study of Lancashire County Council where women councillors comprised 27 per cent of the council in 1993, maintains that women have been able to influence the political agenda.   She cites 'cross-party cooperation' and 'considerable scope for individual local representatives to make a decisive imput into decisions affecting their own areas' along with practical help such as a creche/nursery facility near County Hall in the mid 1980s, as reasons for this success.[48]

Throughout the final section of the thesis the difficulties of enhancing local government democracy with an increased representation of women have been outlined. Also that this problem is central to women's inability to influence political parties. Whilst in opposition the Labour Party worked extremely hard to address some of these

problems, and had, as a result of the modernisers-feminist-alliance, provided much 'top-down' material for local constituency parties.[49]   The activities of Local Government Women's Committees offers much that is on the democratisation agenda, such as the decentralisation of power and the empowerment of disadvantaged groups. However as already outlined, it is evident that there is a lack of tangible support for any form of evolutionary transformation within local political processes. Similarly the obstacles encountered by Local Government Women's Committees uncover the 'complex web of oppositions' inherent within political bureaucracy and institutions, hierarchical organisations and competitive party politics.[50]

In order to examine the apparent lack of women's influence and involvement within the current local political scene in South Tyneside and the way in which this characterised a challenge to women's representation and thus -citizenship, the framework of analysis set out at the beginning of this chapter, that is of a variable *women's identity*, set within an often contradictory local *political culture*, and using criteria of *feminist political practice* has provided the basis of the following case study of South Tyneside.   Once again the choice of such an area seemed pertinent, particularly as it provided an example of local Labour party political dominance[51] and because there had always been a strong legacy of women's involvement, as Pamela Graves states,

> In these early years, women were sometimes in a majority in the local parties and
> their willingness to take on what Ellen Wilkinson[52] described as the 'slogging work'
> for the party, especially in raising money, was much appreciated by local labour
> organisations struggling to establish constituency parties. There is no evidence that
> local parties ever tried to exclude women as co-operative societies had done before
> the war.[53]

As the above quotation suggests, women have always occupied a significant role within the political life of the North East of England, being particularly concentrated in

Jarrow and South Shields Labour parties. In a region that was at one time dominated by heavy industry, there had developed a legacy whereby the men were active in their unions and it was often the women who in essence ran the local parties. Unlike in certain other areas of the country, women in the North East endorsed a division of labour and did not undertake paid work outside the home. This was particularly relevant in the male dominated jobs within the mining areas, because the women were so overloaded with the vital domestic work of providing continuous support for their working families. However although this gender division of labour did not reflect true equality, it sustained a very deep, if rough and ready working partnership. During the inter-war period, large numbers of married couples were attracted to the Labour Party, and 'wives commonly attended the women's sections in the afternoons and constituency party meetings with their husbands in the evenings whenever they could'.[54] Due to the culture of collectivism within these neighbourhoods, it was a most natural step for women in these areas to join the women's section of the Labour party. Furthermore,

In County Durham alone in the 1920s there were over 150 women's sections and a further 80 in Northumberland. Indeed in South Shields there were 5 at one time; Central, East, South, West and Harton.[55]

It is evident that there was a tremendous support for labour politics during this period and for women's political activism within that context. Pamela Graves confirms such a view quoting a young woman, Lily Watson from North Shields who regarded the Labour Party as the 'only progressive party in the country'. Furthermore she regarded that it was the 'only one of the political parties that had always advocated the equality of the sexes'.[56] In line with this heavy support for the County Durham women's movement and the inspiration gleaned from the regular weekend schools, it is not surprising that the area was able to boast the election of Labour's first woman member of Parliament, Ellen Wilkinson, who still remains an inspiration for many of the older serving Jarrow councillors and also the election of the first woman local

199

councillor, Mrs E Thorpe, who won a seat representing the Tyne Dock ward in 1927. In fact many women followed in her footsteps. In South Shields alone there have been some of the most prominent and effective figures throughout the years. Examples include, Cllr Margaret Sutton, who fought constantly for better housing during the late 1920s and early 1930s, Cllr Elizabeth Diamond, who championed education during the 1970s, and Cllr Lilian Jordison, who as Chair of Leisure for most of the 1980s continued the fight for all the people of South Shields, despite a very adverse political climate.

It is also important to consider those stalwart women who worked tirelessly for both the Party and to get other women elected, whilst never putting themselves forward for elected public office. For example Liz Diamond's mother, Jane Byrne worked incessantly during the 1920s and 30s for the values of socialism. Married to a miner and encouraging her two children to enter the professions, she, and those like her, became the backbone of the Labour movement. David Clark concludes that 'Jane Byrne was the archetypal women upon whom the Labour Party in the North East of England was founded'.[57] However his observation that the women's section in South Tyneside appears to be 'still alive and kicking in 1992' with 'many members' and an 'active role in both the political and social life of the local party', will be reviewed in the following Chapter, where the views of those women who were politically active between 1994 and 1997 are examined in more detail.

To conclude, certainly the world has changed since the heightened activity of the interwar and post-war years and this is particularly true of the towns of South Shields and Jarrow. The devastating changes in male employment within the area has not only produced social and economic 'costs', but has also had an impact upon the political arena which was formulated on a basis of union involvement and heavy industry. In line with the strict division of labour which such traditional work patterns produce, women within local politics have provided both pragmatic and supportive roles. However evidence suggests that there is a constant tension between 'epochal changes' and a 'constancy in behaviour and conditions',[58] which in reality locks women

200

into the parameters of a 'double day'. Such a view certainly portrays a pessimistic outlook with regard to more participation within the local political arena.

At national level there have been a number of initiatives aimed at increasing the numbers of women members of parliament. In Chapter Ten, detailed reference was made to the quota scheme adopted by the Labour party's national executive, before it was deemed illegal, the 300 club, sponsored by women of all parties, and which aims to secure the election of 300 women members of parliament, also Emily' List, an idea imported from the United States with the purpose of giving financial help and practical assistance to women candidates. Certainly Labour's quota system, albeit short lived, which ensured that one third of all seats, including safe seats had a woman candidate, helped the entry of 120 (101 for the Labour Party) women at the 1997 election. In many areas of the country women are also making an impact in local government, generally because they find the local political structures so much more accessible than national ones, but more importantly because they have been able to play an active role in the political processes, influencing the political agenda and giving priority to issues of concern to women.[59] Lovenduski and Randall believe that this became apparent when women began to get involved within the labour movement and 'feminist institutions developed in the form of local authority women's committees'.[60]

South Tyneside is particularly representative of an area where there has been dramatic 'macro' transformation, but possibly little 'micro' change. Such a situation may reflect the local political process, which has similarly undergone substantial structural change, yet maintains a very paternalistic approach by its political elites.

Hence with reference to this background, a number of women elected to represent wards within the area of South Tyneside[61] were interviewed extensively during June and September 1994 and again during March and April 1997 with the intention of determining whether 'the composition of those holding council seats has continued to be much narrower than the people it represents'.[62]

Endnotes:

1   Anna Jonasdottir quoted in Kathleen Jones and Anna Jonasdottir, (1988) *The Political Interests of Gender*, London Sage, p80.

2   As, Berit, (1976: 96) in Erik Gronset, Family and gender roles. Work-breadwinning-equality, quoted in Kathleen Jones and Anna Jonasdottir, (1988) *The Political Interests of Gender*, London, Sage p 82.

3   This dichotomy was explored within Chapter Four: Equality or Difference, but will also be considered with regard to the local political legacy.

4   Question: Does the lack of women's influence and involvement in local political parties characterize a challenge to representative democracy and thus - citizenship?

5   Julia Edwards, (1995) *Local Government Women's Committees*, Aldershot, Avebury p7; Her criteria sets out what constitutes a "women's committee", that is:-

(a)   they are primarily concerned with the promotion of de facto equality for ALL women in their localities (not just women council employees);

(b)   their guiding principle is a proactive one of positive action for women and not simply non-discrimination;

(c)   their own policies and practices are grounded in a thorough analysis (achieved through direct involvement/consultation with local women - not political elites) of the obstacles to women's equality;

(d)   they seek to change the policies and practices of their local authorities and other relevant local agencies to meet women's identified needs; and

(e)   they aim to shift public resource allocations towards local women which would not otherwise be achieved by the customary functions and practices of such public agencies.

6   Ibid., p6.

7   the subject matter of Chapter Eleven and also supported by G.Stoker, (1991) *The Politics of Local Government*, Basingstoke, Macmillan.

8   Jim Barry, (1991) *The Women's Movement and Local Politics*, Aldershot, Avebury, p 2. However such a statement preceded the considerable analysis of Julia Edwards, (1995) *Local Government Women's Committees*, Aldershot, Avebury.

9   A 1985 survey of all local authorities in Britain showed that only 19.4% of elected members were women, however they were generally absent form leadership roles; only 5.4% of personnell committees, 2.1% of policy and resources committees, 5.7% of finance committees were chaired by women. A1986 survey showed that only 3.5% of authorities in England and Wales had a woman leading the council, and only 3 had a woman chief executive, cited by A. Coote and P.Pattullo, *Power and Prejudice*,(1990), London, Weidenfeld & Nicholson, p216. Alice Bloch also suggested that there was a steady increase in female councillors over the last 25years, rising from 10% in 1964 to 19% in 1985, (with 26% featured in a survey of ex-councillors in 1991), A. Bloch, *The Turnover of Local Councillors*, York, Joseph Rowntree, p6.

10   This is reflected in Chapter Eleven and also within the summary of 'women's committees' included later in this chapter.

11   Clifford Geertz, (1983)' Local Knowledge', cited in Albert Hunter, *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, Vol 22 No1 April 1993, p37.

12   Susan Baines and Jane Wheelock, (1995) in R. Humphrey, ed. *Families behind the Headlines*, Newcastle, British Asociation of Sociology and Social Policy Section, p32.

13   The benefit provisions of the Beveridge welfare state assumed that wives would be home-makers, staying out of the labour market and caring for their children, husbands and dependent relatives. (Fiona Williams 1989:123)

14   Social Trends, (1994) London HMSO quoted in Baines and Wheelock, (1995) *Families behind the Headlines*, Humphreys, ed. Newcastle BASSPS p 30.

15   Male unemployment currently stands at 17.6%, Development Services, South Tyneside Metropolitan Borough Council, April 1997.

16   Westoe colliery, was regarded as a modern go-ahead colliery, with many coal seams still untouched. It ceased production on the 7th May 1993, with the loss of 1,200 jobs.

17   Lydia Morris, (1990) The Workings of the Household, Oxford, Polity.

18   Lydia Morris,(1990) *The Workings of the Household*, Oxford: Polity.

19   Ulrich Beck, (1992) *Risk Society: Towards a New Modernity*, London, Sage p 104.

20   A sample survey of local councillors in England in the mid-seventies found that 91% of women councillors were housewives, retired or employed part time: also the age of women councillors is older than tat of the population as a whole, with a ration of almost 2:1 in the 55-69 age group. cited in B. Jones, ed. (1989), *Political Issues in Britain Today*, Manchester University, p267.

21   Women were prominent in seventeenth, eighteenth and early nineteenth -century food riots, the anti-Poor Law demonstration in 1837, Repeal the Contagious Diseases Act, access to education and the professions, for the vote and for equal pay.

22   Patricia Hollis, (1987) *Ladies Elect: Women in English Local Government 1865-1914*, Oxford, Clarendon p 471.

23   Anna Coote and Polly Pattullo, (1990), *Power and Prejudice*, London Weidenfeld & Nicolson, p 218.

24   Ibid., p 218-219.

25   Patricia Hollis, "Women in Council", in Jane Rendall,ed., (1989), *Equal or Different*, Oxford, Basil Blackwell , p 212.

26   Anna Coote and Polly Pattullo(1990), Power and Prejudice, London, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, pp 219-220.

27   Chapter 11: Local Politics: A Changing Arena.

28   John Torode and Naseem Khan, (1991) *Why Bother? A study of the frustration, the failings and the future of our elected councillors*, London LGMB, p7.

29   Ibid., p9.

30   Ibid., p8.

31   J.Barron et al., (1988) 'Married to the Council? The Private Costs of Public Service,' Report to the Leverhulme Trust, Department of Economics and Social Science, Bristol Polytechnic.

32   Ibid.; This factor also proved a problem for many South Tyneside councillors.

33   Jacqueline Barron, Gerald Crawley, Tony Wood, (1991), *Councillors in Crisis, The Public and Private Worlds of Local Councillors*, Basingstoke, Macmillan, p20.

34   Chapter 11.

35   Jacqueline Barron, et al. (1991) *Councillors in Crisis*, Basingstoke, Macmillan p20.

36   Alice Bloch, (1992) *The Turnover of Local Councillors*, York, Joseph Rowntree Foundation; also See Endnote 6.

37   Anna Coote and Polly Pattullo, (1990) *Power and Prejudice*, London, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, p230.

38   Ibid., Not all were women. It was chaired by the conservative Andy Hawkins.

39   Ibid., p231.

40   Ibid., p232.

41   Local Authority Equal Opportunities Policies: Report of a Survey by the Equal Opportunities Commission, EOC 1988 states that only 225 authorities out of 514 had any sort of equal opportunity policy covering sex equality. Of these, 82 authorities - predominantly the metropolitan districts, London boroughs and English county councils - had an equal opportunities committee or working party and 59 authorities employed an officer.

42   Julia Edwards, (1995), *Local Government Women's Committees*, Aldershot, Avebury, pp6-7.

43   David Cairns,(1997) 'Rediscovering Democratic purpose in British Local Government', *Policy and Politics*, Vol 24, no1 p17.

44   Paul Burton and Sue Duncan, (1997) 'Democracy and accountability in public bodies', *Policy and Politics*, Vol 24 No1 p9.

45   Danny Burns, Robin Hambleton and Paul Hogget, (1994) *The Politics of Decentralisation*, Macmillan, p154.

46   Ibid., p156.

47   Review of Commission for Local Democracy (1995) *Taking charge: the rebirth of local democracy*, London Municipal Journal 23-29 June No25.

48   Ruth Henig, (1996) "Women and political power in the 1990s" in Tess Cosslett et al., eds., *Women, Power and Resistance*, Buckingham, Open university, pp264-5.

49   Chapters Nine, Ten, and Eleven set out many of the theoretical and practical moves to increase both local democracy and women's representation.

50   Full explanation of 'Obstacles for LGWCs'; Julia Edwards, (1995) *Local Government Women's Committees*, Aldershot, Avebury, pp67-94.

51   There are 60 wards in South Tyneside Council; In 1996-97; 52 are Labour; 2 are Progressive; 6 are Liberal Democrat.

52   Helen Wilkinson was MP for Middlesborough East from 1924 to 1931 and then Jarrow from 1935 to 1947; Kenneth Morgan, (1987) *Labour People*, Oxford, states; 'that she was arguable Britain's most important woman politician', p 101.

53   Pamela Graves, (1994) *Labour Women: Women in British Working-class Politics 1918-1939*, Cambridge University, p35.

54   Ibid. p36.

55   David Clark, (1992) *We Do Not Want the Earth*, Tyne & Wear, Bewick, p37.

56   Pamela Graves, (1995) *Labour Women*, Cambridge, p36.

57   David Clark, (1992) *We Do Not Want the Earth*, p30.

58   Ulrich Beck, (1992) *Risk Society: Towards a New Modernity*, London, Sage p 104.

59   Ruth Henig, (1996) "Women and political power in the 1990s" in Tess Cosslett et al eds., *Women, Power amd Resistance*, Buckingham, Open University, p265.

60   Joni Lovenduski and Vicky Randall, (1993) *Contemporary Feminist Politics*, Oxford, p136.

61   South Tyneside includes the towns of South Shields, Jarrow and Hebburn and the outlying villages of Boldon, Whitburn and Cleadon Village.

62   Maud (1967) *Committee on the Management of Local Government*, The Local Government Councillor, HMSO; Widdicombe,(1986) *Research Volume 1: The Local Government Councillor*, HMSO.

Chapter 13:

The Case Study.

1   Background to the Research:

1.1   National dimension.

1.2   Chosen area.

2   Fieldwork

2.1   Research strategy.

2.1.1 Relevant factors.

3   Participant observation 1990 - 1994.

4   The Research Survey 1994.

4.1   Interviews of women members.

4.1.1 Personal characteristics: experience and aims.

4.1.2 Practical politics: obstacles and strategies.

4.2   Female Party Activists

5   The Research Survey 1997

5.1   Questionnaire for basic information with pilot.

5.2   Interviews of Council Officers

5.3   Interviews of Women members.

5.3.1 Personal characteristics: experience and aims.

5.3.2 Practical politics: obstacles and strategies.

5.4   Interviews of Female Party Activists.

6   Outcomes.

1 Background to the Research.

1.1 The national dimension.

During the past ten years there has been a growing public concern with the effectiveness of traditional processes and mechanisms for holding both politicians and policy makers to account. Hence the establishment of various commissions concerned with issues of democracy and accountability,[1] and the importance of standards of conduct for all holders of public office.[2] Particular consideration has been given to the drain of democratic activity from local government in the UK and in the unanimous concluding outcome of the Commission for Local Democracy that 'local democracy must be renewed' and that 'representative local government cannot move into the 21st century with democratic forms inherited from the 19th century'.[3] Thus the last eighteen years have been a testimony to many radical changes between central and local government, which broadly endorse the rhetoric of a more 'enabling' process, whereby the public will have greater control and public service provision is more effective. Therefore, whilst some perceive the solution as a response to consumer demands and dissatisfaction, in other words, 'homo economicus',[4] others believe that the public should be 'empowered' via the conception of new democratic settings which incorporate the full range of activities undertaken by local authorities.[5] However from a feminist standpoint the weakness which both of these positions encapsulates is one of a patriarchal relationship.

1.2 The choice of South Tyneside.

As already indicated in the previous chapter, South Tyneside was chosen as the area of study for a number of reasons. First, I had an interest in South Tyneside's local government having spent many years involved with both local party politics and the voluntary sector. Second, living in South Shields made access to the local politicians relatively easy. Third was the element of fundamental socio-economic change, which was examined in the previous chapter. Finally there was a very strong tradition of Labourism in the area, detrimental to the influence of social movements

and particularly feminism. Since the formation of the local Labour Party at South Shields in1912, there had been a very strong representation on000 the local council.[6]

2   Fieldwork

The primary source of material for this study was prepared following fieldwork in South Tyneside during the period from October 1992 to April 1997.[7] However before commencement of the study, work on a voluntary basis had been undertaken by the author, and this may have provided a significant influence on the approach adopted in the current study.

2.1   Research rationale and strategy

The reason for using an empirically based case study approach was the belief that it presented a current situation within the real life context of political life. Further, although the investigator has little control over events, as Julia Edwards points out 'the case study method is more amenable to feminist approaches to research insofar as it facilitates participants having greater control over what is researched and the interpretations which are put upon the information gathered'.[8] Academic research inevitably raises issues and concerns of social and political power, along with questioning gender specific arrangements, but the use of empirical research also provides an empowering opportunity. As examined in Section One of the thesis, which developed criticisms of 'man-made' knowledge, feminists have also interrogated methodology and sought to question the legacy of 'dualisms', 'universalisms' and 'essentialist perspectives'. Thus in Chapter Three a feminist approach to research methods was developed which sought to acknowledge the complexity of the 'so-called' research 'subjects', whilst also acknowledging and identifying the possible power relationships in the collection of the data. That is, the researcher rather than feigning a neutral position in relation to the research, must recognise her own stand point and take this into account in the collective processes of both selecting and interpreting the information gathered. According to this perspective a definition such research is not simply a contribution to a body of knowledge, but is part of feminist political practice,

that is part of a practical process of women understanding more about those conditions which contribute to injustice and marginalisation.

To this end each councillor to be interviewed was told that the research was concerned with 'local democracy, gender and party politics within South Tyneside'; was in pursuit of a Ph.D., and derived from eighteen years personal involvement with South Shields Labour Party. Also prior to the 1997 Interviews, each councillor had received a covering letter, setting out the confidential nature of the research and a copy of the open ended questions intended for the interview.[9]

2.1.1 Relevant factors

Gender, age and status of the interviewer were obviously highly significant factors during the interviewing programme. However, whilst gender and age seemed compatible with helping the interviewees feel comfortable, the later seemed to display contrary considerations. There had been some negative feelings about the research too, particularly with regard to the 1997 Interviews, when a collective decision was made not to co-operate.[10] Also a time factor placed the 1997 Interviews under severe restriction, along with the prevailing political climate, which 'locally' continued to be wary about any 'outside enquiry' and 'nationally' was on the brink of the 1997 General Election.

3   Incidental Participant Observation 1990-1994.

Although there had been an involvement with local politics in various capacities, it was not until 1990 and an invitation to stand as a local councillor that the opportunity to 'observe' the role of a member and the Local Labour Party machinery in detail came about. However, there is little doubt that the 'observations' made in the capacity of considering to be a prospective candidate enhanced the overall understanding of the subsequent research.

4   The Research Survey 1994.

South Tyneside Council is represented by twenty wards within the South Tyneside area, each with three councillor representatives; during 1994 women's

representation was thus, within South Shields the ten wards represented included Beacon & Bents, Westoe, Harton, Cleadon Park all with one Labour woman representative and Horsley Hill, with two Labour women. The remaining wards in South Shields, Rekendyke, West Park, Tyne Dock & Simonside, All Saints and Whiteleas were all represented by men only. Within Jarrow and Hebburn the ten wards represented include, Bede, Fellgate & Hedworth, Biddick Hall, and Hebburn South all with one Labour woman representative, whilst Hebburn Quay and Monkton each had two Labour women. Boldon Colliery and Cleadon & East Boldon had one Liberal Democrat woman representative. The remaining wards of Primrose and Whitburn & Marsden were represented by men only.

Although, most of the interviewees belonged to the South Tyneside Labour party, there was a very intense internal tension between the political culture of Jarrow and that of the South Shields constituency parties. The research also included two interviews with the Liberal Democrat women councillors, who represented the 'outlying communities' at Boldon and Cleadon Village. This provided a useful comparison when assessing how influential party dynamics and machinery are in helping to formulate a woman's political identity. Similarly for the purpose of comparison and an 'outside' viewpoint, I interviewed a Labour party activist from Jarrow and a senior woman administrator within South Tyneside council.

The material from the interviews was organised in such a way as to include a comparative coverage of personal characteristics, their relevant experience and working practices, including their political perspectives and, or trade union affiliation; also their comments concerning how they regarded their role as a councillors, and the implications of whether they found this a frustrating or positive experience.

4.1. Interviews

Interview as a method of collecting material is full of difficulties. Strictly structured interviews are little more than personally administered questionnaires, but with a higher response rate, whilst unstructured interviews run the risk of straying into

irrelevant conversation. The approach used resisted falling into these two categories, by using a sequence of pre-determined initial questions, very open-ended and few in number, specifically phrased in order that interviewees would talk openly. Thus the interview technique was not directed, but with an attempt to establish rapport.

Also when arranging the interviews, the offer was made to travel to wherever was most convenient for the councillor in question. Generally this meant that the interviews were conducted in the home of the councillor or in the Town Hall. Without exception, although many of the councillors were 'pushed for time', the interviews lasted for nearly an hour and some going beyond that. In each case the confidential nature of the research was underlined and each councillor was asked if they minded if the interview was taped. In some cases the tape was switched off in order that particular remarks could be made. However, all interviews were written up on the same day. Overall there was little objection to the full transcript being reproduced with personal characteristics and circumstances outlined.

4.1.1 Personal Characteristics.

Although there were one or two exceptional, 'post retirement age' women, most of the women councillors interviewed represented a middle age range of between forty to sixty years of age. Not unexpectedly marital status varied and covered a range from those with supportive spouses to those who were either widowed or divorced.

'D' who lived at the heart of Boldon colliery, the ward which she had represented for the liberal democrats since 1990, provided no exception to this. Close to retirement age, 'D' was married and her partner was very supportive. However she had not always been 'politically active' and in fact boasted a life long history in running small businesses. Her first venture had involved running a small sewing shop, and then a general dealers before finally being the landlady of the Zenith Arms, a riverside public house in South Shields. She had enjoyed this experience immensely for many years before giving up 8 years ago.

The other woman liberal democrat councillor, 'L' who represented the more affluent Cleadon Village and East Boldon ward had also worked outside of the home

for most of her life. A great deal younger than 'D', with an only daughter about to go to University, 'L' had been encouraged as a child not to be dependent upon anyone. Unfortunately, when her mother became terminally ill with cancer a couple of years previously she had given up her work as a negotiator with an Estate Agency. After her mother's death and as a consequence of having a little more time to spare, the decision to stand for the local council seemed opportune. However, with the growing expense of keeping a daughter at University, 'L' was aware that there were many problems involved with combining paid employment and 'serving' as a councillor.

'A', one of the three interviewed Labour women councillors representing South Shields wards, also expressed the problems of combining outside employment with the role of councillor. A councillor for the coastal Beacon and Bents ward since May 1990, 'A's immediate concern was in finding employment, as her one year contract with Sunderland Business Enterprise as a business consultant had not been renewed. Moreover, now in her late forties, she did not believe that 'the possibilities looked good' given the 'poor prospects' in the North East and society's 'ageism'. Speaking only briefly about her family commitments, 'A' had worked outside the home either part or full time for most of her married life. However, she had felt strongly that before agreeing to play a fuller part in local politics, 'it had been fair to wait until the youngest of her two boys was at comprehensive school'. Although she added, with a smile, that her son had often come along with her to 'leaflet' or 'canvass' during election periods.

'J' an active local magistrate, similarly voiced the view that 'to have entered politics before her daughter was around thirteen years old, would have been unthinkable'. 'J' a most active member of South Shields constituency party but no longer a Labour councillor for Biddick Hall, a South Shields ward on the border with the Jarrow constituency party, had been de-selected in favour of another labour candidate in 1993. A councillor of long standing, who had held some most influential positions within the South Shields party, for example she was Chairman of Culture and Leisure, 'chaired' a number of School Governing bodies for many years, as well as

being a member of the South Shields constituency executive committee, 'J' admitted that even with a supportive husband, it had often been difficult to balance the 'two lives', reflecting that she had often 'put council business first'.

My final interview with a South Shields councillor, 'M' similarly admitted to putting 'council business first'. 'M' had represented Cleadon Park for Labour since 1982, and had also worked outside of the home for most of her working life. A most competent champion', with a wealth of experience behind her, 'M' had originally worked in a clerical post in order to attain security for herself and four children after her divorce. Her move into a job with Social Services in 1975 until 1980, had given her a great deal of expertise, as had her work within Leisure services.

Turning to the Jarrow constituency party, my first interview was with the very influential councillor, 'C', who represented the Monkton ward. Old enough to remember Ellen Wilkinson, 'C' had worked hard during the 'war years' in the role of fund raiser; an important job which she believes played an important part in the re-election of a Labour councillor for Jarrow, as well as the Labour government of 1945. A founder member of the women's section, and a life long activist, however, 'C' had waited until her younger child, a son, had reached school-age before entering local government. However, her husband had always remained supportive, although she believed that between them she had the more 'dominant personality' and her involvement with politics and local affairs was deep. Perhaps she had not had to balance outside work, local politics and the home as some of her contemporary colleagues were now expected to do, none the less, there had often been a great deal of tension between the 'duties' of a local councillor and the 'responsibilities' to her family.

Like 'C', 'P' also represented the Monkton ward in Jarrow and similarly felt she belonged to a very strong political background, and not simply one that belonged to men. Introduced as 'a very busy lady', the interview took place in the Mayoral chamber, as she was also carrying out this year's Mayoral duties. 'P' fervently believed that women were very supportive of the Labour mission, that is, 'not simply

fundraising but out there canvassing too'. However, when it came to a more active role, like most women of her generation, 'P' believed that the family was a priority. She added, 'Ellen Wilkinson had not married, but for those of us who were, you had to put that first'. Her own entry into politics had coincided with her husband's redundancy and the fact that he could 'be there' for their daughter, who was twelve years old at the time. Due to her disability, she is registered as blind, 'P' has not worked in paid employment.

Experience and Aims:

Standing apart for her other colleagues, 'D' had not felt any deep involvement with politics, but due to her involvement in business, had come to realise that local government had a lot to offer. In other words she was interested in local issues only, and above all she was interested in 'getting things done!' Perhaps more in line with her socialist colleagues, Liberal Democrat, 'L' had came to a decision about standing for the local council due to her deep interest in the public arena of politics. However, it had not been a burning 'first' ambition, and had fallen more in line with opportunity rather than a determined decision. Although she came from a working class background, with both parents keen trade union activists, during the 1970s, 'L' became a member of the breakaway SDP party. Disillusioned with socialism and the 'state of the labour party', and attracted by the idea of 'newness' and 'breaking the mould' she became a keen supporter of this new pioneer within the 'middle ground' of politics. However, as her allegiance had been strongly based upon 'socialist roots', and an affinity with the views of Shirley Williams, she was very disappointed when the party merged with the Liberals and likewise was not keen on the David Steel/David Owen partnership. Her obvious interest in the national political scheme however did not detract from her central aim of 'helping the community', which in reality, was probably proving a difficult task, given that the council was 'Labour dominated' and the community which 'L' represented, Cleadon Village, was perhaps the most affluent in the entire area and had in fact prior to 1990 always nominated a conservative councillor to represent them.

In comparison to 'L's almost 'opportunist' involvement, those women representing Labour in South Shields seemed to fall into two distinct categories. An older 'school' represented in many ways by the long service of 'J', whose deep interest in local politics was very much part of a family tradition and those, like 'A' and 'M', who had gained support and confidence via their outside employment and trade union involvement. When 'J' replaced her mother in 1971, who herself had served since 1954, she was carrying on the Batey family lineage, via Stella Lloyd and Ella Roberts, who were both nieces of Joe Batey who played an influential role in the emergence of the Labour party in South Shields and beyond.

In comparison, 'M' had found that her membership and involvement of Nalgo, whilst working for Social Services, had given her both the support and confidence to become involved in public issues. Likewise, 'A' had first developed her political awareness, as a night club waitress in South Shields, when she had led a strike called because of the non implementation of equal pay during the 1970s. This venture had, in fact led to her being sacked. However, undeterred, most of her subsequent employment had involved a fair measure of union participation. She spoke of the great debt she owed to the union movement and especially the work organized through the education section. She also commented upon the initial reluctance by women to become involved in union matters, but emphasised that once women become involved they become their most ardent supporters. For example, the weekend 'women-only' seminars led by ASTMS had always been enthusiastically attended.

The Labour councillors from Jarrow were very keen to stress the Jarrow legacy and role of Ellen Wilkinson. However, 'C' perhaps best epitomised the 'life long interest'. Speaking of her childhood experiences during the 1930s, 'C' told of the weekly paying of her unemployed father's union dues, and how the incentive of hearing the men talk 'politics' had led to her attending the cooperative movement's evening classes about socialism. She had also remembered the inspirational figure of Ellen Wilkinson. There could be little doubt that 'C's entry into politics was part of a lifetime passion, a religion, a 'way of life'.

'P' similarly echoed that the conditions of unemployment in Jarrow had inevitably 'nurtured a strong political background'. However, her initial anger had been spurred on by her own inability to get a job. As mentioned earlier, her disability as a registered blind person, had resulted in her not being interviewed for an office job because the other women in the office had objected to the presence of her guide dog. Such 'unfairness' prompted 'P' to seek election as a local councillor, in order that she could prove her disability did not detract from her intelligence. She also believed that caring was at the heart of socialism.

4.1.2 Practical politics: obstacles and strategies.

Without exception all of the councillors interviewed had been aware of a tension at some point between their 'domestic responsibilities' and their work in local government. However, as 'J' had admitted, once committed to the 'role', they all felt that often they had 'put council business first'.

The view expressed by 'J', that 'the role of a councillor was one of caring and service', proved unanimous, especially amongst those representing Labour wards. After all as 'P' concluded 'caring was at the heart of socialism'. Nevertheless, her view that the 'political world required the complementary skills of caring and reasoning' further reinforced the problem experienced by all the women and that was the belief expressed by many of the 'older men' that women were best suited 'for certain *caring* jobs.' This also reinforced the view that 'the real purpose of politics centred around economic concerns...and this was man's work'. This was confirmed by the fact that 'C' was the only woman representative on the influential Policy and Resources Committee. Likewise Jarrow councillor 'E' was the only woman representative on the Economic Development Sub-Committee. As if in order to advance the idea of the 'individuality' of the woman councillor, and distance themselves from the stereotypical 'female imaginary, there was a general view which rejected any identification with 'women's issues', For example, the women representing Jarrow all thought of themselves as strong individuals, yet they completely rejected the idea of women's quotas. 'C', who had commenced her political career selling raffle tickets during the war, a job which

she believed played an important part in the maintenance of a local Labour council and the return of a Labour government of 1945, had in fact been a founder member of the women's section. She had always dismissed women's supportitive role, but over the years she had developed mixed feelings about the need for a strong women's section. The initial impatience she had felt as a young woman with male domination and dismissiveness had given way to a more pragmatic, 'quieter way of getting things done. This was a way, which did not get the men's backs up, as they generally did not like the collective action of women'.

Similarly despite the strong 'female tradition' within 'J's background, she believed that 'women simply had to be better than men'. Furthermore, in tension with the 'caring role and service of being a labour councillor', she was all too aware that working within local government meant participating in a 'very competitive, aggressive male game'. 'L' did not see the attributes of 'aggressiveness and competitiveness as necessarily a female thing', using the example of the 'Thatcher experience' to support her argument. Furthermore she added, 'I have my way of doing things, and others have theirs...it has nothing to do with gender'. However, she was aware that 'of course some women may use their feminine whiles', but she believed that 'this was because there were too few women in politics so that positive role models could not be created'. Also her confidence in 'equality of opportunity' was supported by her view that women of her generation, she cited the seventies, 'were quite able to put forward their views'.

Most of the women, with the exception of 'A', regarded the introduction of 'quotas', or any form of 'positive discrimination', as damaging to women, because, as 'J' believed, it would 'open up the accusation that inferior women would be given opportunities they did not deserve'. 'M' added the view that 'a woman is under more scrutiny, so has to be that little bit better than the men'. Also asked if she saw women as a separate group, 'M' replied that she saw herself as 'an individual' and was 'uncomfortable with the pleading of women as a special case'. However she was keen to acknowledge that perhaps she had been fortunate and that her very positive

experiences within Nalgo had given her much support and encouragement.

There was a firm belief among all the women interviewed that 'success came from 'hard work and being prepared'. 'D' believed that just as she had learnt during her business life, political life had an essential need for good communication skills and women were generally better than men in 'working behind the scenes'. 'M' also believed that 'in order to deal effectively with problems and their solutions there was a need to be able to rationalise and articulate them in such a way that you could obtain clear results'.

The only woman councillor interviewed, who was prepared to identify herself 'with women as a group', was 'A', although she was reluctant to see herself as an 'ardent feminist'. However, she had been aware of being 'groomed by certain influential parties before her adoption as a candidate and for this reason she had 'held out' for a more neutral or safe seat in order that she would have more autonomy.

Perhaps the most disillusioned picture was that of 'J', who believed that the councillor's job was more difficult now than it had ever been. She firmly believed that the 'role of service' had been aggravated by the poor 'press' given to those in local as well as national politics. Furthermore she maintained that 'to those outside, the nature of politics is suspect and at best people are apathetic; as a result, people simply regarded their councillor as a means to obtaining their rights'. She retold how it was not unusual, especially with regard to housing problems, to be called up during the night with demands for attention. Thus there was little regard, she felt, for the 'role of altruism' the work of a local councillor was simply regarded as part of the institutional machinery of government. A 'right' of the customer to be satisfied.

The most positive account was that of life long campaigner, 'C' who maintained that her main frustrations were with the actions of central government rather than the 'system' or her male colleagues. In answer to the suggestion that she had learnt to 'play the system', she agreed by listing her 'political successes', that is, the provision of a very good nursery provision within South Tyneside; the opening up of Danesfield a forerunner for care in the community of those with mental disabilities; the opening up

of Phoenix House, drug rehabilitation centre in Westoe Village, and the athletic stadium at Monkton. Furthermore, she wryly pointed out that we had just attended one of the most important committee's i.e. the Policy and Resources, in which every officer was male and every councillor was male she had been the only woman there!

Liberal Democrat, 'D' similarly saw the local government role of both women and men in 'crisis', particularly the way in which complex issues are overridden because of simplistic ideological rubber stamping. However, not surprisingly, given the Liberal Democrats marginal position, she also levelled her complaints at the process of 'party machinery'. For example, she recalled that expert advice from the executive was often ignored by 'ill trained councillors' simply because a unified position was required. Also she lamented the fact that local politics did not appear to be attracting young women in particular.

The woman with perhaps the most frustrating position was that of 'L' the other woman Liberal Democratic Councillor. The minority position of the Liberal Democrats within South Tyneside meant that her representation of the comparatively affluent ward of Cleadon Village had proved ineffectual in many respects and not surprisingly her condemnation of 'party machinery' was to be expected. However her main criticism centred around the problem of combining outside employment with the position of councillor and particularly the fact that South Tyneside had a policy of daytime meetings. In effect she believed that such a policy meant that only those who could participate fully within council business had to be either retired or unemployed. She further suggested that 'they could also participate if they were in a job which was sympathetic to local government activity'. For example union based representatives were able to attend without too much difficulty. Other examples of those with reasonable employment and an ability to attend meetings, were those councillors who were the local MPs researchers. 'L' believed that such 'facts' obviously influenced the complexion of local politics. It also highlighted the problem of dependency and the situation of 'powerless groups'.

'P' had a great regard for the position of such groups, given that she had entered the political world mainly as a disabled individual in order to prove to herself and the outside world that she could 'do it'. She also was also very aware that within politics the 'problem of power was problematic', particularly because 'those who had it, did not want to loose it'. She agreed that as 'things stood', such power remained mainly in the hands of men. However, because she identified herself with 'minority' groups in general, she believed that a lot could be done by women when they were like minded. Such beliefs were firmly in line with her grounding in socialism. She summarised: 'You have to believe in yourself...you have to feel good about yourself..in order that you can help other people.'

There was a general consensus amongst the women that the nature of local government was exclusionary. However, 'J' believed that this was part of a long legacy. Recalling her childhood memories of both education and social life, which was centred around South Shields Labour party, she highlighted the problems of a married woman participating in local political life. Not only had one to be self-financing payments were not introduced until Tory reform in 1974 but also South Shields had evening meetings, which had proved exclusionary in the pre-1970's climate as the women were often totally reliant upon support from husbands.

The most forceful views concerning the incompatibility of employment and local council work came from 'A'. As one of the few councillors who had also been in paid employment, 'A' had found that this had led to a great number of problems. She agreed that the hours of meetings were unreasonable to members in paid work, but believed that the reason that nothing was done to alleviate this problem was because 'they', that is, 'the ruling body' were frightened that any change to 'something more conducive would open up the eligibility of those wanting to become councillors. Such an exclusionary policy meant that those in power were able to maintain their hold on the majority, who 'by and large were dependent women, unemployed and the retired. She added: 'Perhaps the introduction of payment or evening meetings were the answer.

She also found that her involvement in local politics had often proved a barrier to successful employment. Now, when she applied for jobs, she often 'found herself leaving things off her CV'. Also 'even if employers were sympathetic, it was working colleagues, who were the most critical, 'seeing such activities as skiving'. However, 'A' felt that personally she had never abused her positions and had 'often took her lunch hour at 10 a.m. in order to attend a morning meeting'.

Another South Shields colleague, 'M' similarly believed that more could be done to 'open things out'. Her argument that the role of councillor should not be 'part time', also indicated the problem of lack of status. Not only was this influenced by the poor image held by the general public, but was also concerned with the aftermath of Thatcherism's de-centralisation. Local government provided a 'sterile role' because of the vast amount of 'restriction upon the sphere of influence'.

'M' obtained a continuing satisfaction from her personal casework role, and the ability to help those members of the public who were the most disadvantaged never failed to spur her on. Looking towards a broader picture 'M' was concerned to increase the role of public education and understanding. Also she had some interesting reflections on the general strength of community feeling, especially with regard to opposing political camps when faced with outside 'central government interference and or indifference'. She noted a renewed enthusiasm for 'pulling together',

Unfortunately, her colleague 'A' had so far experienced a tough time representing her ward, whose large Asian population, owned most of the restaurants along the town's well known Ocean Road. The strong male dominance which prevailed in this area, and the fact that many of the women were unable to speak English, had meant that her task had often proved difficult. There had been some 'awkward issues' but she had tackled them head on by 'simply going out there and confronting them'. However, she felt that she had commanded some respect for doing this. She also found that 'the way they did business' had also created problems. In other words they were keen to be part of the competitive market system, but were not keen to have 'too much competition'. 'I could eat a free curry every night of the year if

I wanted', but in reality it meant that she never ventured near Ocean Road's eating venues at all.

Finally 'A' discussed the broader dilemmas that confronted women councillors, along with other 'weak' members, in playing a full part in political decision making. Her conclusion that 'they' were often nothing more than 'puppets', whose strings were pulled by the more 'powerful' members in effect served to frustrate any debate, in other words the party machinery effectively stifled any opposition. 'A' found this the most frustrating part of local politics, as it seemed that the success of the ward depended upon whether or not you were part of the 'winning side'.

The experience of South Shields-born 'J's deselection from the Biddick Hall ward within the Jarrow constituency served to show the problems of taking an individualistic stance. 'J' was no stranger to disobeying the Labour group whip, which she had done in 1977 when a group of eight councillors opposed the idea of establishing a sixth form college in the town. However her stance in 1993 in continually voting against her Jarrow colleagues cost her the seat in the 'safe' Biddick Hall ward. 'J's determination 'not to sell her integrity', was actually part of a much greater feud between the South Shields and Jarrow constituencies, but serves as a continuing reminder of the importance of 'towing the line' within the political process.

4.2 Female Party Activist.

'N' had been involved in local politics for many years, but she found the local Labour Party format, that is the 'noisy, rule-book' ward meetings unwelcoming to women. She had been a member of the women's section too and preferred this as she felt that her comments there were regarded 'as more important than if voiced at a *mixed* ward meeting'. When asked if she felt that her or 'women's' views and or problems were well represented or 'aired', she felt that some female councillors were able to do this better than others, that is some were 'caring' whilst others like 'C' could be regarded as an honorary man.

Her overall view of politics was extremely sceptical and she in fact said that she was very disappointed by the 'members' she had met. She believed that it was a rarity

to find someone who 'cared', even though they often said that they did. She in fact saw political life as one in which certain groups held and maintained power and she felt that very little lee-way had been given to women as a whole. She agreed that perhaps individual women had been 'successful' and in the same way as a man had used her position to 'get on'. She added that she felt that some very ambitious women were 'only interested in talking to the *right* people'.

In conclusion she was very disillusioned with local politics, but when asked about other ways of achieving help for individuals or the community, she felt that it could only be attempted via the political arena....'after all' she said 'it is all about power and you have to get that sorted out first'. When it was suggested that there was perhaps an alternative way of doing things, i.e. without powerful male dominated cliques, perhaps as 'A' had suggested via the women banding together with some single aim, she agreed; ' this could be a good idea!'

5   The Research Survey 1997

Before commencing this final part of the fieldwork information was sought regarding the organisation of the council, the committee system and particularly where power lay within the system. Additionally further information was gathered with regard to the more general local government changes, the various commission reports and the current Labour Party 'modernisation' documentation.[11]

After the initial 1994 Interviews, which had proceeded smoothly, despite the often very high workload of the individuals concerned and the fact that it had taken place during the 'holiday' summer months, there was no indication that the task of talking to as many women members as possible would prove a contrary experience. Thus by way of further explanation, it was decided to broaden the research by interviewing not only women party activists within South Tyneside but also talk to representatives of the Northern Labour Women's Network.

5.1   Questionnaire for basic information and pilot.

A very brief questionnaire,[12] designed to take no more than 5/10 minutes was sent out to 'active'[13] female party members from each of the main parties in South Tyneside in order to elicit very basic information about party membership and the level of satisfaction with its general aims and processes, and also information about age, ethnic origins, daytime activity and level of participation. Each of the secretaries at the Jarrow Conservative Party and South Shields Conservative Association were contacted by telephone and a pilot questionnaire, which had also received academic consideration, was sent out to each with a covering explanatory letter. At a later date, it was agreed that 15 questionnaires would be sent to each of them, and then passed on to active members at the secretary's discretion. It was agreed that anonymity was an essential ingredient of the survey and with the help of a few stamped addressed envelopes the results would be posted back. This in fact was carried out in a remarkably efficient and conducive way.

Similarly the secretary of the Labour Party in South Shields was contacted and it was agreed that a pilot questionnaire and covering letter would be sent to the South Tyneside District Labour Party. The secretary assured me that because a very proficient computerised data base was in existence it would be a simple matter to provide a list of names, provided that it did not involve any expense on their part. However after numerous unproductive phone calls and learning that the secretary had resigned over an undisclosed matter, that is, not the provision of a list of female activists, it was decided that the information would have to be acquired via other means. In fact a comprehensive list of 30 names and addresses covering most of the wards in the constituency, were obtained and in turn the questionnaires were sent out, including an explanatory letter and a stamped addressed envelope for replies. With regard to the Liberal Democratic Party a female councillor was contacted but as she had very recently suffered a bereavement, she felt unable to help. A male colleague offered to help by distributing 30 questionnaires to party members but despite numerous 'amicable' telephone conversations, the return of the questionnaires completely failed to materialise.

Early misgivings concerning a low response rate were in fact borne out, with the Conservative party returning 13 completed questionnaires from the 20 sent out, (approx 43% response) although there was no indication of how many active members had been asked; and 18 completed questionnaires and 2 refusals from the 36 active Labour members contacted, (approx. 50% response). It was decided that it was not necessary to spend further time on encouraging a higher response rate, as the replies had formulated enough data to prove interesting and also further contact during the pre-election period may prove antagonistic.

Most of the results have been converted to diagrammatic form,[14] However it is also worth noting that all of the respondents were white/european, many of the Conservative activists were following a 'family tradition', and were also concerned about the lack of young women coming forward; whilst labour activists provided far more diverse reasons for joining the party - they were reasonably satisfied with the national party, but most expressed great concern for the 'state' of the local party. The two refusals were Labour Party activists, one complained bitterly of the 'lack of detail provided on the nature of the survey' and stated that anyway was it worth doing as 'the pattern merely reflects national findings'; the other respondent returned a completely reworded form complaining that it was 'badly designed' and could 'not be dignified with the name of questionnaire'.

Nevertheless, given that the usual caveats should be borne in mind with regard to any survey data, for example how much the views of the non-respondents would have changed the findings, or the way in which the respondents understanding of the intended question matched my own interpretations of the replies, nevertheless, it did prove possible to discern from the Labour Party replies a particular disquiet with local party decision making.

5.2 Interviews of Council Officers.

In order to clarify how the specific local government changes had affected South Tyneside council, three senior council officers were contacted prior to commencing the interviews with the women members. All venues were at the Town

Hall but kept as informal as possible. A tape recorder was not used, although notes were made concerning specific details. The research as a whole was discussed and a wealth of background information was obtained. It was disclosed that in line with all other local authorities in the UK, South Tyneside had lost twenty administrative posts, and there had been 'streamlining at the top'. Much stricter financial controls were now in place and an ethos of 'economic, efficient and effective service provision' was paramount. Not only had top personnel been subject to streamlining but also departments, however, although some committees had been 'amalgamated', for example, that of 'equal opportunities' with 'performance review', the level of personnel had not been changed. A performance appraisal scheme had not been introduced either. Of particular interest to the research was the fact that there was no longer a Chief Executive 'political advisory' department, rather such 'responsibilities' came within the newly formed Corporate Services Department, which was effectively ran through the Heads of Personnel, Auditing and Accountancy, the latter seemingly with the most power. Generally it was thought that the new organisation provided a greater 'internal' coherence, although overall it was a matter of concern that whilst efficient service provision was on the agenda, any formation of policy with regard to future developments was not. Whilst some recent 'bids' to attract outside investment had recently proved successful, this had been attributed to the hard work of the officers concerned rather than any coherent plan by the councillors. As one officer wryly observed, 'it is very difficult to ascertain any policy viewpoint, for example poverty ... I think they are against it!' Links between council members and 'other' sectors and groups in the 'community' were regarded as very weak, although once again the officer/ liaison was positive. [15] In general a 'paternalistic ethos' seemed to pervade the council members' attitude to the community. This was particularly relevant in the way in which the 'mayoral duties' were still highly regarded as the main channel for a successful council/constituent relationship. Overall there were obvious feelings of frustration amongst the officers, although some were more optimistic than others.

However there was one unanimous point made and that was to voice concern regarding the lack of council member training.

5.3 Interviews of Women Members

It was decided to try and interview as many of the women councillors as possible, especially those who had been missed during the earlier survey in 1994. There had been some changes in the representation of women since 1994, although Labour women had maintained their stronghold. Within South Shields, Westoe, Harton and Cleadon Park had retained their female representatives and added a women member at Rekendyke, also like Horsley Hill, Beacon and Bents now had two Labour women representatives. In Jarrow and Hebburn, Bede, Biddick Hall, Hebburn South and Boldon Colliery had retained their women members, and there were now two women representatives for both Fellgate & Hedworth and Monkton wards. However, Hebburn Quay now had one Liberal Democrat woman representative, whilst the 'outlying communities' of East Boldon and Cleadon Village were now represented by men only.

Once again it looked like most of the interviewees would be Labour women and it was decided that the South Shields Constituency February Monthly meeting would provide an ideal venue to renew 'old' acquaintances. However, the meeting proved to be as acrimonious as ever, and it was evident that the factional tendencies were deeply entrenched. Generally the intention to continue the research into womens' representation and local democracy was received with enthusiasm, although one long standing member stated that she had 'nothing more to add'. Nevertheless, follow up phone calls to the South Shields members suggested that a suitable venue, possibly a women's section meeting, could be arranged in order to maximise time on both sides.

Meanwhile personal letters were sent out to all the South Tyneside women members, explaining the nature of the research, an outline of the intended open ended questions and the intention to seek a mutually suitable and convenient venue. In response three members declined due to ill health and it was also learnt that the Liberal Democrat representative had very recently suffered a close bereavement. Also the

initial enthusiasm expressed by the longer serving members to arrange a suitable venue seemed to wane, despite numerous telephone conversations, and women's section meetings seemed to be particularly 'thin on the ground'. A similar pattern of events was also repeated amongst the women members in the Jarrow and Hebburn constituency. However it was not until after talking to party activists in the area that the negative feeling regarding the research was disclosed. On reflection the early comment 'that there was nothing more to add', was confirmed by another long standing South Shields member, who stated during a telephone conversation that 'within South Tyneside support amongst women was generally of an informal social kind' and 'although initiatives coming out of head office were good...on the ground it didn't amount to a bag of beans'. Although such a despondent reaction did not seem to be shared by some of the 'younger and newer serving' members', this issue of support for women councillors became a central theme of the following interviews.

5.3.1   Personal characteristics: experience and aims.

In many ways the three women members who were eventually interviewed during the closing months of the research, represented very different personal characteristics, experience, aims and problems, yet they were all keen to provide something positive for women of South Tyneside. 'A' who had been interviewed in 1994 contended that gender remained a 'great problem in South Tyneside' and most of her comments were made with regard to the obstacles women members faced and her suggested strategies to combat these. The other two women were new members, having both been elected 10 months previously in May 1996.

The interview with 'G' took place at the Town Hall in one of the council committee rooms. This had been agreed because of her 'extremely busy schedule' and it could 'just about be fit it in'. She seemed comfortable about the tape recorder and was keen to talk. 'G' first became interested in political activity through trade union commitment, she had become Branch Secretary of the GMB, and then worked very hard at the ward level. Her approach by 'influential friends in the Party' had gained her a seat representing the main coastal area and town centre ward of Beacon and Bents,

which was also the ward represented by 'A'. Although she had received no other training apart from that gained from union work, she felt that she had a lot to offer, 'her own style'. Married with two grown up sons, she stated that she was very lucky as her husband was 'extremely supportive, even tolerant of the socialising'. Adding 'not only does he give advice, but he also comes to important or special meetings, such as the AGM'. Also, although, he is very political he does not want hands on experience' ...'he is far more interested in hearing what I am doing - it's a bit like role reversal'. She had especially appreciated his support at the beginning, when she had received some bad publicity about rubbish not being cleared from the town centre. 'When he saw that I was really upset, he warned that this had just started and everyone would now have an opinion on what I said and did ... I would therefore have to think carefully about handling the criticism'.

As a 'new' member she had also been helped by a young male colleague, who had been 'very helpful but was still chauvinistic ... in line with most men in the party'. She believed that her union training had been the greatest help to her career in politics, asserting that 'if you can stand and hold your own with them - then they will respect you'. Keen to take positions of responsibility, she had accepted the nomination to be vice chair of the constituency party...'at that time the chair was always a good attender ... with little possibility of him not being there'. She had said 'yes' thinking that she had the 'position without the aggravation'. However there had been one occasion when he was very late and there was a possibility that she would have to take over. It was then that she realised her 'shortcomings' and remembers thinking ... 'there was no way that I could walk down there and take that chair'.

From that day she concentrated on developing her own style, and when she eventually took the CLP meeting, although she had experienced 'a rough ride' ... 'it went over very well ... I had a lot of support from family and friends, who were very kind and gentle ... I believe it is all about knowing your own capabilities'. However she affirmed that there had been no 'formal' training, in fact there was 'no time for training' Other than 'reading a lot' and 'sitting down in small groups to talk things

through', 'G' had no time now for other outside contacts or involvement with other groups. She had been involved with group charities before being elected, but had found that since her election in May last year the timetable had been heavy, adding ... 'I have been out of the house this morning since 7am'.

The second interview with 'V' proved a very different experience and initially she had been reluctant to meet. However, we met at her home and it proved to be a very long and productive 'talk'. She represented and lived in the Rekendyke ward, of which there had been much rebuilding during the seventies but the once bustling shopping area of Laygate was now very run down and mainly consisted of privately owned 'second hand' clothing and furniture shops. Her personal circumstances were such that she was in the process of getting divorced and her two 'teen-age' daughters were still at home. Her husband of many years had been 'gobsmacked' at her decision to stand for the council. He had taken the whole thing as a joke at first and then it became very difficult. She remembered the day when he had asked ..'how can you have moved from standing washing dishes at the kitchen sink to making major decision at the town hall'? I simply replied that 'I don't make major decisions, I don't even make major decisions in my own home'!

When asked how she had first become interested in politics, 'V' replied that she had been influenced by a 'good friend ... a man in his 60s who was a local politician in Sunderland'. She continued, 'it sounded interesting, and he was generous, genuine and honest'. He had also encouraged her to get involved by expressing the belief that local politics needed people like her. She had been reluctant at first believing that 'just being a housewife, with a cleaning job' was 'inadequate experience for a would-be councillor', although she added 'I did not feel useless'. Later she became 'fascinated...I don't know if it was about getting away from the humdrum life of housework and kids or just to be my own person'. Relating her unexpected and swift transition to becoming a council member within three years of joining the party, she had become vice chair of the ward and then a delegate at the constituency meetings. She recalled that 'it snowballed after that ... I had not even considered putting my name on the candidate list'. However

after some persuasion and assurances by her colleagues she agreed to 'think about it'. Nevertheless, ' the next thing I knew the papers were there to sign'. 'V' continued, 'I did feel that the ward needed a woman, so many people I talked to also wanted that. We did have one and she died and people said she was a fine woman, always putting herself out. Anyway all the women said it was better to talk to a woman than a man ... and so I thought maybe I can do something for the area I live in'.

'V' recalls how within weeks of 'getting in' she did not have a minute and there were people at the door and on the phone, even bothering me when I was out socialising, until I couldn't take any more. 'I asked myself, what have I taken on'? When asked if she felt the amount of calls in that initial period were the result of being regarded as a new face, and that this presented new opportunities and hopes for people in the ward. She replied that she thought this was true and now there was a great deal of ill feeling between herself and her two colleagues. Unfortunately they were very experienced councillors and 'now they have washed their hands of me and I feel as if I have been cut off and left drifting ...I feel very alone...very isolated'

Also 'V' was experiencing great difficulties trying to fit in all the meetings, as she had to continue working as a cleaner. She stated, 'I don't finish until 10.30am and the meetings start at 10a.m.. I feel as if I can't keep my employer happy, I can't keep the council happy, I can't see to my family and run a home. I have had to juggle all my hours around to fit everything in, so they have let me be flexible with my hours so I now work in the morning and at night. It is not a very good arrangement. I am just trying to survive.'

'V' disclosed that at one point she had been very close to giving the council work up and she was becoming very stressed about the whole situation. She also admitted to having another problem and that was the fact that she was deaf and so had to wear a hearing aid in the chamber. Unfortunately the noise was often so distorted, it meant that taking part in the debates was difficult. 'Anyway', she added, 'the idea of standing up makes me very uncomfortable, if you stutter or blush, they laugh at you, not to your face of course'.

5.3.2. Practical politics: aims and objectives

Moreover, physical handicap was not the only problem that 'V' faced in the chamber, rather the 'so-called nature of political activity' was equally divisive. Recalling how worried she had been voting for the first time in the chamber, she stated that although 'worried sick' she had 'listened to the debate' and 'when the time came to vote, I thought, well I will vote for what I want, because that is what democracy is all about'. However, later a senior member came bustling along and said, '..., are you aware that you voted wrong? You were sitting in seat 16 you should have voted against and you voted for!' When she replied that she had voted for what she believed was right, she was told that she had a lot to learn. She agreed that she had, although not necessarily what was being suggested by him.

'V' still finds the idea of being 'briefed on how to vote' as unacceptable and recalled how her naive questioning about 'the competition between the 'A' and 'B' teams' had made her a standing joke for weeks. However, she believes that all new members feel like this and are 'equally appalled by the way in which things are being done'. She was equally dismayed at the almost unanimous view amongst members that 'this is politics' and 'politics is a dirty business'.

Certainly, such a viewpoint seemed to have been fully accepted by 'G', who, whilst agreeing that 'politics is a devious business', rejected such conduct for herself, adding 'I may be naive but if you can't do it honestly within the political framework you shouldn't resort to such behaviour'... 'you can see how it happens though' ... 'sometimes they think the ends justify the means'. There was also an acceptance of the factional element within South Tyneside with the comment that 'it is all a numbers game' ... 'there are now three sections, who all think they are right'.

Obviously 'V's isolation was a result of her reluctance to take part in this 'numbers game' and as she had indicated the lack of support from her two ward colleagues meant that doing the daily 'ward work' was difficult. Generally she had been impressed by the level of help from the officers and departments, particularly in the beginning when she did not 'know the ropes', and was 'trying to respond to the

needs of the constituents' However she also worried that they would feel that she was being a nuisance as often it was the 'same people, who were complaining...the ones who never seem to be satisfied.' By and large the only advice that had been given from her colleagues was not to 'promise people things' ... 'because when you can't deliver they start to get abusive'.

The question of training and a support system for new members was high on the agenda during the interview with 'A', who had been interviewed in 1994 and was now a well established and 'knowledgeable' councillor. She stated, 'everybody assumes when you come in that everyone understands and it isn't so. It is very difficult for people once they are there to say what they don't know. You have to go and seek information yourself and although the officers are there for you to talk to, there is no real encouragement. There is nobody who takes you on board, such as a mentor'.

When asked about the consequences of the recent local authority reorganisation on member's support, she replied that the framework was still there for members to be guided, and with respect to maintaining an integral structure, it was far more efficient. However she later qualified this view by saying that much of the reorganisation came about shortly after she was elected and therefore it is very difficult to know how effective things had been before. In answer to the question concerning her level of satisfaction now with her role of councillor and the expertise which she had now gained, 'A' felt that as a 'town centre representative' she had an interest in housing and land development, although at the beginning she had been chiefly concerned with social services. However 'being involved with social services meant a great time commitment with lots of sub-committees and her paid work ruled that out'. She was also interested in Town planning and through this had become aware of the very real difficulties that regions like South Tyneside faced in attracting money and the very unfair system of help that was available. However, she was now far more optimistic that the council leadership were capable of forward planning. She added, 'I have seen vast improvements during the last couple of years. It takes a while to understand these processes...what can be done ... what should be done. It has been hard to

achieve and the planning committee has given the leadership, with a lot of help from the officers...and despite the so -called equal chance system ... money was not coming to this area. However, that has changed and in the last year the money is coming in ...and that is great...but it is not before time'.[16]

When asked about one of the other concerns voiced by both the council officers and in a great deal of the local authority documentation on 'citizenship', for example the situation with local community links, 'A' replied that she understood that there was much dialogue between the officers, social services and the voluntary organisations, and within her own area of interest she belonged 'to a local community association, where councillors are on the management committee and the rest of the management are made of user groups, trade unionists, a council officer and professional bodies, in other words there is plenty of dialogue both inside and outside'.

'A' also represents a sizeable ethnic group in her ward, whom she meets 'on a weekly basis'. However she had come to believe that the level of integration had to come from them. Supporting this view she added, 'I believe that the level of integration has to come from them, they do not want to challenge or become involved with the political system, especially the women. They seem satisfied with the Labour Party. They come forward in voluntary organisation and school governing bodies ... I think they feel represented as much as they want to be'. However, 'G', who also represents the same ward, was rather sceptical about such an approach, which she saw as 'rather separatist' and although she 'admired 'A' on a lot of fronts', she thought that 'trying to make her political base out of the Bangladeshi community was not very forward looking.'

Thus the animosity between ward representatives seemed to represent the fragmented ethos of the council as a whole. There even appeared to be factions within the women's sections. 'A' had been enthusiastic about the possibility of female solidarity four years earlier, but this seemed even less of a possibility now. 'G' had started a 'new' women's section in South Shields because 'the old faces saw the young women as a threat', adding ' the cup of tea brigade may have been effective politicians

but they lacked real ambition ... anyway how do you stand up and argue with an eighty plus, she has all the sympathy for her age when she stands up..it is very difficult'. Also, 'it is difficult trying to attract women in their thirties who are still involved with their families'.

Once again the difficulties of combining a political career with other responsibilities was back on the agenda. 'A' had complained bitterly of this problem, being one of the few 'working' members, three years previously. Yet, there were still no evening meetings even for the full council. Thus the frustrations of serving as a local councillor, and especially being a woman in an area like South Tyneside seemed to make the aspirations of representatives like 'V' insuperable. Even the most modest aspiration which she had voiced at her adoption speech, now seems empty:- ... 'when I stood up to say why I thought I would be a good councillor. I really believed that I could help the people I lived with. I wanted to represent the people in my area because it was a very down trodden area, the people were depressed, people in poverty traps, with no hope for the future... I felt that if I could just help somebody in the smallest way I would feel that I had achieved something'.

5.4   Interviews with Female Party Activists

During the 1994 research the interviews with the Labour women 'stalwarts' in Jarrow and Hebburn had gone very well and had provided a great deal of useful background information with regard to women's political activity in the area. Therefore, although it would have been advantageous to have been able to talk to them again, because of the time restraint it was decided to try and concentrate on those 'younger' members representing the Jarrow and Hebburn wards, particularly those connected with the Jarrow Constituency Women's Section. However, despite repeated correspondence with the councillors concerned, it became apparent that there was not going to be an opportunity to do so.

Following contact with a 'supportive' activist within the Jarrow constituency party, it was then decided to meet some of the section members at one of their ward meetings at a convenient time and venue. However an hour before the meeting, there

was a phone call to cancel the appointment owing to a directive stating that 'all political meetings were cancelled until after the election'. It was apparent at this stage that to go ahead, even on an informal basis, would have created unnecessary animosity for those involved and so neither 'formal or informal' feedback was obtained from the Jarrow or Hebburn women's section.

At this point a decision was made to broaden the research in order that a further explanation could be sought and thus an interview, at a convenient venue was arranged with the secretary of the Tyne and Wear Women's section, of which South Tyneside is a part.   After a very positive and swift response a meeting was arranged at the University, where 'Y' explained that she had been a member of the party for 48years, and had remained committed to working 'behind the scenes' rather than seeking election herself. Convinced of the necessity of such action, she justified this point by illustrating her own 'ward experience' which was in a 'deprived area of the town', yet had a successful women's section, whose fifty members met every week. Quite a few of the party 'officers' are now young women, who come along with their children, although the most active participants are women in their forties. It took a while for her to further explain both the structure and areas of the Labour women's sections as well as the duties and responsibilities that 'Y' held within the party.[17]

In response to the statement that gaining information about the women's sections from the council members within South Tyneside had proved difficult, 'Y' affirmed that they had a reputation for being ' particularly inward looking', adding that perhaps this was part of being a councillor. Moreover, it was much easier for someone like herself 'working in groups throughout the region, where a more balanced view and some very good connections' can be made. Further, she added, 'there is still a great deal of opposition to women even now with the quotas, even though they shouldn't be operating like that, especially here in the North-East where there is a rich history of the strength of both men's and women's sections in Durham. Also from what I can gather there is some intimidation and of course, some of them are in difficult positions, are they not....married to influential men? In South Shields the women members are very

middle class and think that they don't need to support the quota system. They know that I have criticised them, but it is easy for me as I have no commitments, nor am I part of a faction or a sitting councillor ...I have been put into my position by women and I do not rely on the men'.

She continued, 'I think that if a woman is strong enough she will get where she wants to be..but she has to be strong or have a good support system! Invariably, women are told this is a dirty business...this is the way the game is played ... this is what the men tell us and if you accept it, then all well and good, but if you fight back they don't like it. If you keep persisting and this is what you have to do, I know you shouldn't have to do that, but to change you have to stand your corner ... you have to be as ruthless as them. Men can be very ruthless especially in the council chamber'.

Returning to the distinct problems of South Tyneside and the factional element, 'Y' believed that the factions were being 'fed by the topping up of the new people who come in, especially women who have not had any training or background in politics. The newcomers are at their mercy, and they become dependent upon their support. It is little wonder that there is a great deal of opposition to the women's sections because it is a training ground for women not just young women but any woman.'

'Y' explained that she had always seen the aim of the women's section as one of helping women to speak with confidence, adding, 'that is politics ... to get up and speak ... to argue your corner'. However she was now also aware that to know how other areas are tackling problems can be very useful, in order to learn and 'because you may not be operating in the best possible way'. She also regarded 'the rules' as particularly significant, expressing surprise that at a regional level workshop you often realise that there are some misconceptions to the rules and regulations. Continuing with what she obviously considered as a very important point, 'Y' stressed, 'the rules are so important, and if women are to be confident players they need to know the rules'. However, after a pause she added, 'I think that the rules are important but I also think that the creation of the women's network is an equally important step. A way of

keeping the women together and giving help, even if it is just financial, so that women who are not in a good financial position, can participate'.

Much of the dialogue within the above interview with 'Y' has been reproduced with little or no alteration. It was apparent that she had found the relationship between herself and the South Tyneside members frustrating, and that she had formulated firm views concerning 'the problems'. Thus in order to elucidate the case study research responses, further 'informal conversations' took place with other members of the Northern Labour Women's Network, some amounted to quick telephone chats, whilst one memorable occasion, marked by a very late night and excellent food and wine, produced a most interesting and lively debate.

6   Outcomes

The above case study provided the empirical information from which to address the thesis hypothesis, that is a concern with the lack of women's influence and involvement in local political parties and the way in which this challenges representative democracy and therefore women's citizenship. Relevant questions which stemmed from this were:

*   the extent to which those women who are elected to the local council regard themselves as representative of their female constituents?

*   the extent to which a lack of the elected women's solidarity or outside involvement has advanced their isolation and fragmentation?

*   the extent to which this is related to patriarchal democracy, paternalistic local practices and/or personal patriarchal attitudes within local government?

Despite the initial belief that the area to be investigated was known,[18] it very quickly became evident that the investigator had little control over events. However, whilst acknowledging the specific shortcomings of the 1997 research interviews, it was felt that there was sufficient variety to demonstrate the points raised above.

Firstly, the interviewing programme sought to establish the women member's route into local politics and also discuss how they regarded their representative role. The data suggested that the motives for entering local politics were generally altruistic,

with 'family tradition' having less of an influence than perhaps it had in the past.

The second major question was concerned with those barriers which frustrated the women's aspirations. It transpired that the obstacles presented a complex range, from lack of confidence, responsibility for domestic concerns, problems of combining paid work, lack of training and support, along with a political process which 'supported a numbers game in which a few powerful men manipulated the rest'.[19]

Finally, whilst the above broadly-defined categories simply supported a plethora of similar analysis,[20] of specific interest to the thesis and to a further understanding of feminist political practice was the extent to which a strategy had been employed to both overcome these adverse conditions and promote women's representation. As 'A' had suggested in 1994, 'You know there are quite a number of women on South Tyneside council and I'm sure that if we banded together we could really get something done!'

However three years later there was very little evidence that the transformations which had taken place both within the community, the structure of local government or Labour Party initiatives had empowered the local women politicians in anything other than in furthering individual political careers. There was no evidence of Local Government Women's Committees, not even a Women's Officer. The Equal Opportunity Committee had been amalgamated with the more prestigious Performance Review Committee and was chaired by a 'long standing male councillor'. There was very little liaison with the voluntary sector, which now included some very able women,[21] and the once flourishing women's sections were sparse and fragmented.[22] Many of the officers and women themselves complained bitterly of the lack of expertise and training, although nothing had been done to promote this.

Obviously explanations for the failure of local government to meet women's needs are both complex and overlapping and to make a clear analysis of this is extremely difficult. However perhaps this case study within South Tyneside has shown that certain localities present particular problems for women's representation. That is,

women's solidarity is seen as especially threatening to those waning traditional Labourist areas.

Perhaps it is pertinent to end with a quotation from a new and still 'idealistic woman councillor who was asked to reflect upon what she initially felt made a good councillor and what she had learnt since. She replied, 'Yes there is a world of difference, but so far I have still retained that initial feeling. I would like to feel part of a group, get support and feed back from other people, but many of the other women have become segregated from the outside world. I am representing those who are just trying to survive, however it is very difficult and sometimes it seems too much and I get very upset. I don't know what to do ... my colleagues say that's why women shouldn't be in politics'.[23]

Endnotes:

1   There has been a growing public awareness and concern with regard to the increased significance of 'new agencies of governance' both at a national and local level. Such examples include, quasi-autonomous non-governmental organisations (QUANGOs), extra-governmental organisations (EGOs) and non-departmental public bodies (NDPBs).

2   The establishment of the Committee on Standards in Public life in October 1994 under the 'chairmanship' of Lord Nolan, marked a recognition by government of widespread concern about standards in public life, ranging from minisers, civil servants, and MPs to the elected members and senior officers of local authorities.

3   Commission for Local Democracy, (1995) *Taking charge: the rebirth of local democracy*, London, Municipal Journal Books: This report was set up in April 1994, under the 'chairmanship' of Simon Jenkins. It summarised the conclusions of 16 research papers which had been formulated over a two year period.

4   For example, M. Pirie, (1981) 'Economy and Local Government' in E. Butler and M. Piries eds., *Economy and Local Government*, London, Adam Smith Institute.

5   For example, J. Stewart, (1995) *Innovations in democratic practice*, Birmingham, Instiutue of Local Government Studies, University of Birmingham.

6   The local party mustered 9 members of the South Shields Council in 1915, and representation remained very strong particularly after the miners Lodges gave support after 1920, (Clark, 1992:33.)

7   See Appendix: A

8   Julia Edwards, (1995) *Local Government Women's Committees*, Aldershot, Avebury, p54.

9   See Appendix: J

10   Full discussion in **5.4**

11   John Temple, research officer for David Clark MP provided a plethora of information.

12   A copy is included in Appendices: B

13   The respondent was defined as 'active' by the Party secretary.

14   See Appendices: C-H.

15   This was confirmed by the South Tyneside Voluntary Project co-ordinator and the South Tyneside Victim Support co-ordinator.

16   More money came to other towns in the area under the Tyne and Wear development system. But now £18+ Million has come through to South Tyneside to be spent on the town centre and coastal

and dock areas.....All of the previous bids from South Tyneside were told that   they were unimaginative...but some successful ones had been formulated in a week —the whole system is unfair. Interview March 5th 1997.

[17]   'Secretary of Silksworth women's section into Sunderland North, with regular contact with Gateshead and Washington West; a delegate of the Sunderland women's section and women's council, which meet twice a year; a delegate to the District Party and the Northern Labour Women's Network, of which I am not so involved now, because I am not so keen to travel ... leave it to the younger women; chairman of the governors of a special school and also secretary of Tyne & Wear Women; Regional Executive of the Labour Party representing the town...I am very active...'.

[18]   See **1.2:** this chapter.

[19]   'J' August 1994.

[20]   See earlier theoretical discussion; also Jim Barry,(1991); Barron, Crawley & Wood, (1991); Julia Edwards (1995).

[21]   South Tyneside Voluntary Project, South Tyneside Victim Support Scheme, Age Concern, Mind, Citizens' Advice, Alzheimers Society were all co-ordinated by women.

[22]   Younger members complained bitterly of unfriendliness, exclusion and little contact with other areas, (interview March 1997).

[23]   'V' interviewed March 1997.

Chapter Fourteen

Conclusions.

> It is argued that the market for participation is now more open and varied than ever before - as a result political parties face a more vibrant, competitive market for the people's support, particularly that of women ... it is also argued that new groups and social movements are increasingly important in setting the political agenda and also that governments are now more responsive to their demands, once again women's rights owe more to such groups than to the political activity of party machinery.[1]

The aim of this thesis has been to examine whether liberal feminism can still be regarded as an active force in the goal of egalitarian and emancipatory projects. In particular in the quest to understand why the women, who live in the economically and socially marginalised locality of South Tyneside have little influence and involvement in the local political arena. The above quotation by Lipow and Seyd in 1996 relates some of the pessimism regarding the ability of political parties to be a representative political process on behalf of today's citizens. However, like them, this thesis supports the idea that 'for the deepening of democracy in modern society ... political parties and representative government are the sine qua non'.[2]

The focus of the thesis arose out of a concern that the distance between much of the feminist theoretical speculation and the reality of women's lives is irreconcilable. Thus the two main categories examined are firstly a concern with an enhanced liberal feminist definition of citizenship, which respects differences but also engages with egalitarian and emancipatory aims, and secondly, the application and examination of such a definition within feminist political practice at both national and local government level and specifically local political activity in South Tyneside. In order to pursue this further and a suitable and workable *citizen identity* could be defined, an analytical framework was developed from the theory covered within the thesis and an

assessment of this was used to categorize how the council members regarded themselves as political actors. The first strand of analysis evolved from examining the dichotomy within political theory which despite the current scepticism, maintains a stubborn resistance to challenge. That is, the long standing belief that man is active and woman is passive, man is concerned with conquering the environment, and woman is concerned with nurturance. The rational man and emotional woman intensifying the view that although we have 'political man', 'political woman' is not a recognised category. The strength of this differentiation has fluctuated in line with time and space and was probably at it's height during the 1950s. Research at the time also confirmed the importance of childhood familial socialisation and the direct transference of such learned sex role behaviour from the private to the public sphere. 'Appropriate' citizen behaviour was seen to match 'appropriate' gender role orientations, which in turn set the limits on 'appropriate' political behaviour.[3] Thus getting things done 'politically' is more suited to men despite their own feelings of competence and ability.

The case study findings confirmed firm 'appropriate' gender role orientation with either a 'strong dislike' for the 'aggressive action of practical politics', or an 'acceptance' that political activity contained a great deal of aggressive behaviour. Some of the 'older stalwarts' had experienced some very tough childhood experiences, and more often than not following the pattern of a part-time, low-paid working mother and unemployed father. These members had also worked very hard for the Labour party from their early adolescent years in complementary supportive roles, which was compatible with the 'rough and ready working partnership' which was part of the North East culture. Another significant factor and influence upon these members lives had been the 'inspirational' role model of Ellen Wilkinson, although this was tempered by the fact that she 'had not married, but for those of us who were, you had to put that first'. All from 'this generation' had supportive husbands and families and local party activism was 'a way of life', either as part of a 'family tradition' or inspired by 'the conditions of unemployment' during the 1930s.

Although 'appropriate gender role orientation' was an important ingredient amongst the 'younger' women, this had been balanced against 'circumstances' such as divorce or an unsupportive husband. Most of these women had been influenced through 'trade union and employment activity' and had taken a more assertive approach. This outlook was summarised by the statement that 'a woman is under more scrutiny, so has to be that little bit better than the men'. This also included 'being able to hold your own in an argument'.

Research into political behaviour also suggest that such beliefs as 'appropriate' gender role orientation are 'control myths',[4] that is, the belief that the essential 'private' female attributes of passivity, nurturance, and emotionalism, are not only incompatible with the strongly male defined political arena, but have successfully deflected the capability of women working for their own specific goals. This was very relevant to the situation of the 'new' member who gained her position as part of some greater 'Machiavellian' plan. Her initial feelings about 'caring and helping' the constituents in her ward, had been quickly replaced by feelings of inadequacy and isolation. This had been generated on both private and public fronts with her husband's scathing comments and the further reinforcement of this by the antagonism of her male colleagues. She had no 'work' support system and her 'mentor' had died a year earlier. Those women who seemed to 'survive' had taken on an identity which accepted the 'competitive aggressive male game' but had 'learnt to do things in their own way'. Supporting the 'critical mass theory'[5] one respondent summarised that this may be through using 'their feminine whiles'... 'but this was because there were too few women in politics so that positive role models could not be created'.

Although there is an acknowledgement that over time and culture, the effectiveness of the 'control myth' fluctuates and 'not surprisingly ... crisis is a time when gender roles ... are most likely to undergo change'.[6] However, in *Risk Society*,(1992), Ulrich Beck believes such 'change' in Western countries is not clear cut and often 'the data speak a double language. Whilst there have been epochal changes in the areas of sexuality, law and education, ... On the whole, other than sexuality,

these changes exist more in consciousness and on paper'.[7]   However, as stated in Chapter Twelve, he contends that there also remains a 'constancy in behaviour and conditions of men and women', particularly within the labour market and the relationship with state welfare.   As the 'illusion grows thin' on both sides, that is, as female expectation of equality is met with the reality of inequality, and male rhetoric of 'mutual responsibility' is in tension with old role obligations, the heightening of these diverse, contrary assertions will develop and express themselves in both political and private life.   Furthermore Beck asserts that this 'modern feudal gender order' was 'constructed in line with the emergence of industrial society in the nineteenth century'. However, Carol Pateman's research of political theory suggests;

> The political fiction of an original contract is part of the history of modern patriarchy, but modern patriarchy did not begin with a dramatic act of contract; there is no origin in that sense, from which to begin an historical investigation.   One might plausibly argue that modern patriarchy began in the seventeenth century when the contractual institutions familiar today first began to develop, but the beginning was not clear cut.[8]

In contemporary society the ideal of the citizen subject remains closely tied to market and patriarchal influences, and also to the endorsement of 'hierarchical differences'. Thus to pursue the idea of a citizen identity which is woman friendly 'may seem a particularly unpromising avenue'.[9]   However, as both 'postmodern discourse' and the empirical data[10] show the structures and institutions of 'late industrial modernity' are in a constant state of transition, and with this, the possibility of new opportunities can be realised.   As Beck states, in reality 'consciousness has rushed ahead of conditions ... but ... it remains unlikely that anyone can turn back the clock of consciousness'.[11] Thus womens' expectations must emulate this consciousness and the *identity* attributed to the *new citizen* must be a *reflective* one, that is held within a

constant 'assembled set of values, interpretations and causal connections that are effective for women'[12] and *respected* by men.

The second part of the framework was to ascertain those interests which women councillors believed they were representing, and in Chapter Twelve these interests were termed *political culture.* That is, whether the council members regarded themselves as individuals representing common human interests, or whether they regarded themselves as representing specific women's interests and to what extent the party process and ethos influenced this identity. Once again elements of theory and practice were used in this assessment, firstly in establishing a review of contemporary feminist writing on the equality/difference debate and then examining if this had any relevance in the empirical case study. As stated in Chapter Four, feminism is not only concerned with many varieties of political discourse, but also with 'the activity of giving them a voice, an access to power hitherto denied'.[13] However, the means to such an end is fraught with the legacy of fragmentation, and many of these 'fragments' have been outlined in the theoretical sections. Thus once again the search for a composite set of 'women's interests' seemed equally tenuous. For clarity it was decided that Karen Offen's two modes of thinking, 'based upon the liberal dichotomy between individualism and solidarity' would be the most useful form of analysis. Using an historical approach, she expressed the two strands of the dichotomy as 'relational', that is gender based rights campaign within a companionate, non-hierarchical egalitarian vision of society; and 'individualist' that is argued from an autonomous, abstract, non gendered self as the basic unit of society.

Also of relevance was the fact that a great deal of feminist theory and practice around the late 1970s had emphasised the repressive aspects of the state,[14] which further endorsed the view that any possible empirical work or political activity undertaken within the political arena was regarded with either ambivalence or a great deal of suspicion. Further endorsement came from feminist political theory with the example of Pateman's 'discourse of fraternity',[15] portraying the view that men alone are the political actors and that any political tensions which may exist tend to be

created as differences between men, thus suggesting that 'women's interests' are generally subject to male interpretation. However, provoked by the increased centrality of central government under Thatcher, in practical terms women began to enter local political and bureaucratic arenas as a means of reaction and resistance and by 1981, the Greater London Council had set up its first women's committee, which was quickly followed by other local authorities.[16] Nevertheless, such participation was still regarded as an unessential allegiance. Pringle and Watson summarise this stance;

> Feminist interventions retained a marginal character and focused on the 'interests' of particular, disadvantaged groups rather than the more general policy issues. There was suspicion of local government workers and concern about accountability.[17]

As discussed in Chapter Twelve, although there is still a great deal of sympathy with this sceptical stance, after the unrelenting policies of the Thatcher government, there has also been a great deal of headway into feminist participation within the political arena,[18] by a broadly defined coalition of women mainly motivated by a strong commitment to sex equality and the belief that politics is everywhere.[19]

Many initiatives had also come from both Walworth Road and the Fabian Society,[20] so the research remained optimistic that at least some of the members interviewed would feel that they represented some empathy with specific women's interests. However, the identification of any common bond or identification with one another as women proved far more problematical than envisaged, even though 'shared status' must play a fundamental part of any political culture. Both of the Liberal Democrat members saw themselves as autonomous individuals, keen to pursue a 'middle ground' within politics and 'serve their community, which they fervently believed was being failed by the Labour party. Those Labour members who had been council members for many years certainly fell into Pateman's 'discourse of fraternity',

which was inspired either by their class consciousness developed during the periods of vast unemployment or the tradition of 'family service and obligation' to the working class community. Similarly, those women who had entered via union involvement or the public sector regarded that they were representing 'common human interests' and the commitment to their constituents was a high priority amongst them all. Only three members mentioned a concern to represent specific groups and they included 'those with disabilities', an 'ethnic minority who formed quite a sizeable community within the ward' and those who were 'depressed, in poverty traps and with no hope for the future'. Of these three women councillors, only two saw a particular connection with the women they represented and the specific problems that they were facing. Many of the members were part or had been part of women's sections. These were organised on a ward basis but it appeared they reflected a 'social nature rather than a political one', were fragmented with little interaction within either Jarrow or South Shields and had generally been engulfed by the factional problems which dogged the whole process of local politics in South Tyneside. Only one member, during the 1994 interviews, had expressed any enthusiasm for female solidarity as a means of improving the political process. For example to block the more powerful members use of the 'party machinery' which effectively stifled any opposition or meant that some councillors were 'nothing more than puppets'. However she was now far less optimistic that this could be a possibility. Only two accordant themes seemed to unite the women and that was a 'lack of political training and support', especially for 'newcomers', and the 'lack of younger women coming forward as either representatives or activists'.

Finally the application of a ideal form of 'feminist political practice' was used to assess any specific gender activity of women council members political activity. The criteria used was that of Julia Edwards concentrated research, described in Chapter Twelve. In fact, despite central government legislation and tight financial restraint, many local councils have successfully mobilised women's activism through the formation of women's committees throughout the 1980s and in Scotland a number of

new committees were set up in 1990 and 1991. However, the local history of such committees varies across the country and as Lovenduski and Randall suggest,

> The bottom line for the women's committees is political - without political support at
>
> the level of the council, they cannot continue to deliver the policies and services that
>
> local feminists demand.[21]

As reported in the Case Study there was no evidence of any 'feminist political practice' in South Tyneside. A women's committee had never been formed, there was not a women's officer appointed and generally 'equal opportunities' seemed to have a very low profile. All of the members interviewed during both 1994 and 1997 were reluctant to address this problem in any depth. There had been a greater focus on specific gender activity during the latter interviews and from the information gained 'informally' from the party activists the questions regarding specific women's issues were either considered with a great deal of 'mistrust' or were regarded as 'irrelevant'. As one member commented, specific women's issues might be alright in Walworth Road, but here 'on the ground they don't amount to a bag of beans'. It was also revealed that the women's sections had a serious lack of younger women members and were not the 'lively and thriving' meetings that had been presented in 1994. Unfortunately I did not get an opportunity to attend any South Tyneside meetings as they were all cancelled until after the 1997 election. The interviews with the 'outside' party activists were perhaps the most illuminating and went a long way in explaining why the attempts to interview the council members had been 'frustrated', apart from simply a suspicion of academic research and, or, the fact that we were on the eve of a crucial general election. However the initial disappointments were replaced by a more determined effort to understand the particular problems of the locality.

Obviously as an 'interested' observer the failure of South Tyneside council to meet the needs and expectations of women's representation were disappointing especially when so many of the problems could have been relieved through a network

of 'encouragement, support, and political education'.[22]   The isolation of these women was perhaps the most relevant intimation and, as stated in the case study research outcomes, it was the suggestion that women's solidarity was regarded as threatening to the once elite group of Labour Party members, that is working-class men from the dominant trade unions, that seemed the most appropriate accurate.[23]   Certainly the factional elements seemed to 'feed off' weak and isolated members.

It was difficult to relate such a violation of 'equal opportunity' in 1997. Feminists had been joining the party since the 1970s. They had helped to formulate the manifesto which has just swept 'new Labour' into government with a record number of 101 women members.   However here 'on the ground' the political process remained 'dire', with formal, hierarchical meetings bound by ritual and rules, with a constant competitive and aggressive spirit. Only the most hardy or determined could survive it and the alternative of the women's section was seen as 'second best', or at best 'a social affair'.

Such conclusions lead to a further explanation concerning the reluctance of the women council members in not wanting to be identified as a specific group. That is the possibility that they did not want to be dismissed simply on the grounds of their sex, because if 'sex' is used as the sole dichotomous pointer, it will only provide a partial explanation of their political activity and attitudes. Also a limited explanation often serves to reinforce those perspectives which view all women as victims and such a construction of oppression may also reinforce culture. Women do not want to be regarded as victims and as Nancy Cott argues, 'women's identification with other women, their willingness to say 'we', may come about most readily when women do not see themselves as members of other oppressed or disadvantaged groups'.[24] Thus the analogy of power and politics is maintained.

It is hardly surprising that in South Tyneside there has been little popular resistance to the loss of local democracy caused by central government restraints other than the financial limitations on the provision of services. As discussed in Chapter Eleven, Cairns thesis is particularly relevant and if local government is to command

popular support as a democratic institution, it must clearly offer a democratic relationship which is valued by the public.[25]   This relationship is based on representation and an ability to consult with *all* the citizens who are being represented is essential.   Obviously some top-down measures are required but as Cairns concludes:

> The onus is on local government to initiate a virtuous circle through a bottom-up
>
> revival based on good democratic practice. To do so, it must be willing to advance
>
> beyond the orthodox view that the problem of local democracy is simply one of
>
> centralism and lay aside the victim mentality which two decades of that centralism
>
> has fostered.[26]

There can be little doubt that, given the lack of confidence in the 'political system' citizens both need and are calling for an involvement in those decisions which directly affect their lives. However, such a process needs a strong party system. As Lipow and Seyd propose:

> Disaggregating parties and representative democracy makes individuals - citizens -
>
> weak and simultaneously, whatever the democratic rhetoric about direct democracy
>
> employed, empowers elites. ... A top-down party can only be the means for creating
>
> a top-down society, whatever the rhetoric of its leaders. A bottom-up party based on
>
> local branches, associations and clubs connected to broader social movement, such
>
> as - women, trade unions, environmental and sexual rights - has the possibility of
>
> transforming a top-down society into a democratic one.[27]

However such matters are not the focus of this thesis and will require further discussion elsewhere.[28]

Returning to the initial aim of the thesis, which sought to undertake the difficult task of seeking new definitions for the concepts of citizenship and political action.   As examined in Section Two, citizenship is based upon a hierarchical division, a

two-tiered system of citizenship with powerless, predominantly female 'client citizens'[29] and more powerful, disproportionately male 'electoral citizens'. Feminist theory has long questioned whether women want to support the growth and development of an institution that incorporates them into such a powerless position and above all, does not give any hint of greater representation within those arenas and institutions that shape their lives? However, it is difficult to see how women could possibly challenge the powerful proceedings which control their lives without being a part of those very processes of decision making themselves.

Furthermore, present ideas in society are seemingly dismissive of the 'narrowly political' arena. For example, the conclusion of the Commission of Citizenship's report states,

> The participation of citizens in their society is both a measure and a source of that
> society's success; democracy and involvement are not, and should not be, reducible
> to the narrowly political, but concern the very business of life[30],

The political concerns of citizenship are not narrow and this thesis considers the role of citizenship as one of reinstating the 'political' as a means of providing women with greater fulfilment gained from greater participation, and involvement rather than a resigned acceptance or a 'growing frustration with the fragmentation and passivities of contemporary life'.[31] The challenge to liberal democracy and its maintenance of distinct public and private arenas are not the issue. Rejecting Pascall's stance that 'transforming citizenship, risks draining away meaning. If the key social roles are those of parent, household worker and citizen, then citizenship is characteristically about public life in contrast to private life'.[32] In many ways everyday life is already political, and a key site of power relations, especially for those women deeply dependent upon state help. Moreover an increased women's presence within the mechanisms and processes of power would enhance any redefinition of what was regarded as either 'public concern' or 'private choice'.

The concept of a more active democratic participation cannot be too far away from any feminist standpoint and researchers such as Lovenduski and Randall maintain that, within the British context, the pragmatic goals of 'seeking to promote and integrate women into public life with the hope that the implementation of feminist policies will follow' has proved most influential.[33] However, whilst this view can be generally understood in terms of a practical methodology, it is also an endorsement for the so-called 'limited' position of equal opportunity liberal feminism. Such a viewpoint can envelope a new conception of politics which abandons oppositional ways of thinking, and can open up new opportunities. A citizenship like the experiences of women themselves, which is not static and fixed but, part of an ongoing historical process which shadows the transformation of modern society and modern political communities. A constant renegotiation of the boundaries of public space, which can only be accessed between the **abstract** principles of theory and the pragmatism needed for **practice**.

The final thought is left with the subject of this thesis, that is the individual citizen who may pose numerous identities, which she cannot always make the basis for political action. To continue to affirm a firm identity may in fact become an 'end in itself' and also risks continuing fragmentation. As Lovenduski and Randall affirm;

> Identity operates at the level of the individual, who, if she is to act politically, must
>
> prioritize one or perhaps two or three of her identities which become the basis of her
>
> political action. Such prioritization is crucial if political alliances are to be made, if
>
> winning coalitions are to be formed.[34]

Endnotes:

[1]   A. Lipow and P. Seyd, 'The Politics of Anti-Partyism', *Parliamentary Affairs*, Vol 40, No2, April 1996, p276-277.

[2]   Ibid., p274.

[3]   Robert Weissberg,(1974), *Political Learning, Political Choice and Democratic Citizenship*,

p116.

4   J. Lipman-Blumen, (1984), *Gender Roles and Power*, Englewood Cliffs, NJ:Prentice Hall, p186.

5   See Chapter Ten.

6   J. Lipman-Blumen, (1984), *Gender Roles and Power*, Englewood Cliffs, NJ:Prentice Hall, p186.

7   Ulrich Beck, (1992), *Risk Society: Towards a New Modernity*, London, Sage, p103.

8   Carole Pateman, (1988), *The Sexual Contract*, Cambridge, Polity, p220.

9   A. Phillips, (1993), *Democracy and Difference*, Cambridge, Polity, p87.

10   see Section Three.

11   Ulrich Beck, (1992), *Risk Society: Towards a New Modernity*, London, Sage, p105.

12   B. As, (1976:96) Erik Gronset, Family and Gender Roles, Work-breadwinning-equality', Kathleen Jones and Anna Jonasdottir, (1988), *The Political Interests of Gender*, London, Sage, p82.

13   Deborah Thom, 'A lop-sided view: feminist history or the history of women'? Kate Campbell, ed., (1992), Critical Feminism, Open University, p25.

14   Examples are: Eli Zaretsky, (1973); M. Dalla Costa, (1975); C.MacKinnon, (1982); C.Delphy, (1984).

15   Carole Pateman, (1988), *The Sexual Contract*, Cambridge, Polity, p78-82.

16   see Chapter Twelve; Julia Edwards, (1995) *Local Government Women's Committees*, Aldershot, Avebury.

17   R. Pringle and S. Watson, 'Women's Interests', M. Barrett and A. Phillips, eds., (1992), *Destabilizing Theory*, Cambridge, Polity, p59.

18   See Questionnaire: Appendix: B; Many of the Labour party activists cited 'Thatchersim' as one of the reasons for joining the party.

19   Joni Lovenduski and Vicky Randall, (1993), *Contemporary Feminist Politics*, Oxford, Oxford University, p5.

20   Kathy Sutton, Equalities Officer, Policy Directorate The Labour Party, 150 Walworth Road, London SE17 1JT; Patricia Hewitt and Deborah Mattinson, (1989), 'Women's Votes: the key to winning', *Fabian Research series* 353, London; also Brooks, Eagle and Short, (1990), 'Quotas now: women in the Labour Party *Fabian Research series* 541, London.

21   Joni Lovenduski and Vicky Randall, (1993), *Contemporary Feminist Politics*, Oxford, Oxford University, p205.

22   The Northern Labour Women's Network offers all of these support lines.

23   Anna Coote and Polly Pattullo, (1990),' Labour and Equality', *Power and Prejudice*, London, Weidenfeld and Nicolson,167 -186.

24   Nancy Cott, (1987), *The Grounding of Modern Feminism*, New Haven:Yale University, p9.

25   David Cairns, 'Rediscovering democratic purpose in British Local Government', *Policy and Politics*, vol 24 no 1 1997p 21.

26   Ibid., p25.

27   A. Lipow and P. Seyd, 'The Politics of Anti-Partyism', *Parliamentary Affairs*, Vol 40, No2, April 1996, p282.

28   Charter 88 and current debate on a system of proportional representation at local level.

29   A point made by Birthe Siim's Scandanavian, USA and UK comparison which states that weaker welfare systems have increased women's reliance on the state as clients. A. Borochorst and B. Siim (1987) 'Women and the advanced welfare state - a new kind of patriarchal power'? A. Showstack Sassoon, ed., *Women and the State*, London Hutchinson.

30   Report of the Commission on Citizenship, *'Encouraging Citizenship'*, (1990), London HMSO p 42.

31   A. Phillips, *'Citizenship and Feminist Theory'*, G. Andrews, ed.,(1991), *Citizenship,* London, Lawrence and Wishart, p76.

32   Gillian Pascall, 'Citizenship - A Feminist Analysis', Drover and Kerans, (1993) *New Approaches to Welfare Theory,* Aldershot, Edward Elgar, p125.

33   Joni Lovenduski and Vicky Randall, (1993), *Contemporary Feminist Politics,* Oxford, Oxford University, p7.

34   Joni Lovenduski and Vicky Randall, (1993), *Contemporary Feminist Politics,* Oxford, Oxford University, p88.

Bibliography

Abbott and Wallace, eds., *Gender Power and Sexuality* Macmillan, Basingstoke 1991.

Abdela, L., *Women with X Appeal*, Macdonald Optima, London, 1989.

Andrews, G., ed., *Citizenship*, Lawrence & Wishart London, 1991.

Banks, O., *Faces of Feminism,: A Study of Feminism as a Social Movement*, Martin Robertson, Oxford, 1981.

Barratt, J. and Downs, J. *Organising for Local Government*, Longman LGTB, Harlow, 1988.

Barrett, M & Phillips, A. eds. *Destabilizing Theory* Polity Cambridge 1992.

Barron, J., Crawley, G. and Wood, T., *Councillors in Crisis, The Public and Private Worlds of Local Councillors*, Macmillan, Basingstoke, 1991.

Barry, J. *The Women's Movement and Local Politics*, Avebury, Aldershot, 1991.

Barry, N., *Modern Political Thought*, Macmillan, Basingstoke, 1989.

Beck, U. *Risk Society*, Sage, London, 1992.

Belsay, C & Moore, J. eds., *The Feminist Reader, Essays in Gender and the Politics of Literary Criticism*, Macmillan, Basingstoke 1989.

Benhabib, S. *Situating the Self* Polity Cambridge 1992.

Berlin, I., *Four Essays on Liberty*, Oxford University, Oxford, 1968.

Bloch, A. *The Turnover of Local Councillors*, Joseph Rowntree, York 1992.

Bock, G. & James, S. eds., *Beyond Equality and Difference*, Routledge, London, 1992.

Boyne, R. & Rattansi, A. *Postmoderism and Society* Macmillan, Basingstoke 1990.

Bradley, H. *Men's Work, Women's Work*, Polity, Cambridge, 1989.

Brooke, R. *Managing the Enabling Authority*, Longman LGTB Harlow, 1989.

Bruce Douglass, R. ed., *Liberalism and the Good* Routledge 1990.

Bryson, V. *Feminist Political Theory*, Paragon House, New York, 1992.

Burns, D., Hambleton, R., and Hoggett, P. *The Politics of Decentralisation*, Macmillan, Basingstoke, 1994.

Butler, D. & Kavanagh, eds. *The British Election of 1992*, Macmillan, London 1992.

Campbell, K. (Ed.) *Critical Feminism*, Open University, 1992.

Clark, D. *We Do Not Want the Earth: The History of South Shields Labour Party*, Bewick Press, Tyne & Wear, 1992.

Cochrane, A., Clarke, J. & McLaughlin, E., eds. *Managing Social Policy*, Sage London, 1994.

Cockburn, C. *The Local State: The Management of Cities and People*, Pluto, London 1977.

Coole, D. *Women in Political Theory* Harvester Wheatsheaf 1988

Coote, A ed., *The Welfare of Citizens: Developing New Social Rights*, IPPR/Rivers Oram, London 1992.

Cosslett, T., Easton, A., Summerfield, P., eds., *Women, Power and Resistence,* Open University Press, Buckingham, 1996.

Cranston, M. *What are Human Rights?*, Bodley Head, London 1973.

Dahl, R., *Democracy and its Critics*, New Haven, 1989.

Dahlerup, D. *The New Women's Movement: Feminism and Political Power in Europe and the USA*, Sage, London 1986.

Dallymayr, F. ed. *From Contract to Community; Political Theory at the Crossroads*, M. Dekker, New York, 1978.

Daly, M., *Beyond the Father: Towards a Philosophy of Women's Liberation*, Beacon Press, Boston, 1973.

Daly, M. *Gyn/Ecology*, Beacon Press, Boston 1978.

Daly, M. *Pure Lust*, Beacon Press, Boston1984.

Deakin, N. *The Politics of Welfare*, Harvester Wheatsheaf, Hemel Hemstead, 1994.

De Beavoir, S. *The Second Sex*, Picador, (1949), 1988.

Drover, G. & Kerans, P. New *Approaches to Welfare Theory*, Edward Elgar, Cambridge, 1993.

Dunleavy, P. and O'Leary, B. *Theories of the State*, Macmillan, London, 1987.

Dunn, J ed. *Democracy: The Unfinished Journey 508BC - 1993AD*, Oxford University, Oxford,1992.

Dyhouse, C., *Feminism and the Family 1880-1939*, Basil Blackwell Oxford, 1989.

Easton, D., *A Systems Analysis of Political Life*, Wiley, New York, 1965.

Edwards, J., *Local Government Women's Committees*, Avebury, Aldershot, 1995.

Eisenstein, Z.R. *The Radical Future of Liberal Feminism*, Longman, New York 1981.

Eisenstein, Z.R., *Feminism and Sex Equality: Crisis in America*, Monthly Review Press, New York, 1984.

Eisenstein, Z.R. *The Female Body and the Law*, University of California Press 1988.

Elcock, H., Jordan, G.,Midwinter, A. and Boyne, G., *Budgeting in Local Government: Managing the Margins*, Longman Harlow, 1989.

Elshtain, J.B., *Public man, Private Woman*, Martin Robertson, Oxford 1981.

Elshtain, J.B., *Meditations on Modern Political Thought*, Praeger Press 1986.

Elshtain, J.B., *Power Trips and Other Journeys*, University of Wisconsin Press 1990.

Evans, J., ed., *Feminism and Political Theory*, Sage Publications, London, 1986.

Ferris, J. and Page, R., eds., *Social Policy in Transition*, Avebury, Aldershot, 1994.

Firestone, S. *The Dialectic of Sex*, Paladin, London 1972.

Fransway, S, et al., *Staking a Claim*, Polity, Cambridge,1989.

Friedan, B. *The Feminine Mystique*, Penguin, 1986.

Friedan, B. *The Second Stage*, Michael Joseph London, 1981.

Foucault, F. *The History of Sexuality*, Vol 1 Penguin, London, 1990.

Fox-Genoveses, E. *Feminism without Illusions*, University of North Carolina Press 1991.

Gamble, A. *The Free Economy and the Strong State*, Macmillan, Basingstoke, 1988.

Giddens, A. *The Constitution of Society*, Polity, Cambridge1984.

Giddens, A. *Modernity and Self-Identity*, Polity Cambridge 1991.

Gilligan, C. *In a Different Voice*, Harvard University, 1982.

Giroux, H. *Border Crossings*, Routledge 1992.

Graves, P.M. *Labour Women*, Cambridge University, 1994.

Griffiths, M & Whitford, M. eds. *Feminist Perspectives in Philosophy*, Macmillan Basingstoke 1988.

Gross, E. & Pateman, C. eds. *Feminist Challenges* Allen & Unwin 1986.

Gunew, S. ed. *Feminist Knowledge: Critique and Construction*, Routledge, London, 1990.

Gyford, J., *The Politics of Local Socialism*, Allen and Unwin, London, 1985.

Habermas, J. *Towards a Rational Society*, Heinemann, London 1971.

Habermas, J., *Legitimation Crisis*, Heinemann, LOndon, 1975.

Hall, S. and Jacques, M, eds., *The Politics of Thatcherism*, Lawrence and Wishart, London 1983.

Hall, S. ed *Modernity and its Futures*, Polity/ Open University, Cambridge,1992.

Harding, S. *Whose Science? Whose Knowledge?* Open University Press, 1991.

Harman, Harriet, *The Century Gap*, Vermilion, London, 1993.

Harris, D. *Justifying State Welfare*, Balckwell Oxford 1987.

Harstock, N., *Money, Sex and Power: Towards a Feminist Historical Materialism*, Longman, New York, 1983.

Hay, C. *Re-Stating Social and Political Change*, Open University, Buckingham, 1996.

Hayek, von F., *The Road to Serfdom*, Routledge and Sons Ltd., London, 1944.

Hekman, S.J. *Gender and Knowledge* Polity Cambridge, 1990.

Held, D. ed. *States and Societies*, Basil Blackwell/Open University, Oxford, 1983.

Held, D., *Political Theory and the Modern State*, Polityy, Cambridge, 1989.

Held, D. *Political Theory Today* Polity Cambridge, 1991.

Held, D., ed., *Prospects for Democracy*, Polity Cambridge, 1993.

Heller, A. & Feher, F. *The Postmodern Condition*, Polity Cambridge 1988.

Hill, B. *Women, Work and Sexual Politics in Eighteenth Century England*, Basil Blackwell, 1989.

Hirst, P. *Representative Democracy and Its Limits*, Polity, Cambridge, 1990.

Hollis, P. *Ladies Elect: Women in English Local Government 1865-1914*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1987.

Hutton, W. *The State We're In*, Vintage, London 1996.

Ignatieff, M. *The Needs of Strangers*, Hogarth London 1990.

Jones, B. ed., *Political Issues in Britain Today*, Manchester University Press, Manchester, 1989.

Jones, K. & Jonasdottir, A. *The Political Interests of Gender*, Sage, London,1988

Jordan, B. *Rethinking Welfare*, Blackwell, Oxford 1987.

Keane, J. *Democracy and Civil Society*, Verso, London 1988.

Keith-Lucas, B. and Richard, P. *A History of Local Government in the Twentieth Century*, Allen & Unwin, London, 1978.

Kennedy, M., Lubelska, C., Walsh, V. *Making Connections*, Taylor and Francis, USA 1993.

Klingemann, H. and Fuchs, D. eds., *Citizens and the State*, Oxford University, New York, 1995.

Kymlicka, W. *Liberalism, Community and Culture*, Clarendon, Oxford 1991.

Kymlicka, W. *Contemporary Political Philosophy* Clarendon, Oxford 1991.

Kuhn, T. *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, Chicago, 1970.

Laffin, M. and Young, K. *Professionalism in Local Government*, Longman, Harlow, 1990.

Le Grande, J. *The Strategy of Equality*, Unwin Hyman, London, 1982.

Lister, R. *Exclusive Society: Citizenship and the Poor*, Child Poverty Action Group, London, 1990.

Lloyd, G. *The Man of Reason*, Methuen Press 1984.

Locke, J. *Two Treatise of Government*, Cambridge 1960.

Loney, M., Boswell, D. & Clarke, J. eds. *Social Policy & Social Welfare*, Open University, Milton Keynes, 1983.

Lovenduski, J. and Hills, J. eds. *The Politics of the Second Electoriate: Women and Public Participation*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London 1981.

Lovenduski, J. and Randall, V. *Contemporary Feminist Politics*, Oxford University, Oxford, 1993.

Lovenduski, J and Norris, P. *Gender and Party Politics*, Sage, London, 1993.

Lowe, R. *The Welfare State in Britain since 1945*, Macmillan, Basingstoke, 1993.

Lyndon, N. *No More Sex War*, Sinclair-Stevenson, 1992.

McLellan, D. *The Thought of Karl Marx*, Papermac London 1980.

McMillan, C. *Women, Reason and Nature*, Blackwell, Oxford 1982.

McNay, L. *Foucault & Feminism*, Polity, Oxford 1992.

Macedo, S. *Liberal Virtues* Clarendon Oxford 1990.

Mackinnon, C. *Towards a Feminist Theory of the State*, Harvard University 1989.

Marshall, T.H. *Sociology at the Crossroads*, Heinemann, London 1963.

Marsland, D. *Welfare or Welfare State*, Macmillan, Basingstoke, 1996.

Meehan, J. ed., *Feminists Read Habermas*, Routledge, London 1995.

Metcalfe, L and Richards, S. *Improving Public Management*, Sage, London 1990.

Mill, J.S. *On Liberty with The Subjection of Women and Chapters on Socialism*, (1869) Stefan Collini, ed., Cambridge University, Cambridge 1989.

Millett, K. *Sexual Politics* Virago London 1977.

Mitchell, J. & Oakley, A. eds. *What is Feminism?* Blackwell, Oxford 1986.

Morgan, K. *Labour People*, Oxford Uuniversity Press, Oxford 1987.

Morris, L. *The Workings of the Household*, Polity Press, Oxford, 1990.

Mouffe, C. ed *Dimensions of Radical Democracy*, Verso London 1992.

Mulgan, G. *Politics in an Antipolitical Age*, Polity, Cambridge, 1994.

Mulhall, S. & Swift, A. *Liberals & Communitarians*, Blackwell, Oxford, 1992.

Nicholson, L.J. ed. *Feminism/Postmodernism* Routledge, London 1990.

Norris, P. and Lovenduski, J., *Political Recruitment: Gender, Race and Class in the British Parliament*, Cambridge Universtiy, Cambridge, 1995.

Nozick, R. *Anarchy, State and Utopia*, Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1974.

O'Brien, M. *The Politics of Reproduction*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London 1981.

Okin, S.M. *Justice, Gender and the Family*, BasicBooks 1989.

Oldfield, A. *Citizenship and Community*, Routledge London 1990.

Ortner, S.B. *Woman, Culture and Society*, Stanford Press 1974.

Pateman, C. *Participation and Democratic,* Theory Cambridge University Press, 1970.

Pateman, C. *The Problem of Political Obligation,* Polity, Cambridge 1985.

Pateman, C. *The Sexual Contract,* Polity Cambridge 1988

Pateman, C. *The Disorder of Women,* Polity Cambridge 1989

Pateman, C. & Gross, E. eds. *Feminist Challenges,* Allen & Unwin, Sydney 1986.

Pearsall, M. ed. *Women and Values,* Wadsworth 1986.

Perryman, M. ed. *Altered States, Postmodernism, Politics, Culture,* Lawrence & Wishart, London, 1994.

Pierson, C. *Beyond the Welfare State,* Polity, Cambridge, 1994.

Phillips, A. *Democracy and Difference,* Polity, Cambridge 1993.

Phillips, A. *Divided Loyalties,* Virago London, 1987.

Phillips, A. *Engendering Democracy,* Polity Cambridge 1991.

Phillips, A. ed. *Feminism and Equality,* Basil Blackwell, 1987.

Phillips, A. *The Politics of Presence,* Clarendon, Oxford, 1995.

Plant, R. *Modern Political Thought,* Basil Blackwell, Oxford 1991.

Plant, R & Barry, N. *Citizenship and Rights in Thatcher's Britain: Two Views,* IEA, London 1990.

Pugh, M. *The Evolution of the British Electoral System 1832-1987,* Historical Association, London 1988.

Rabinow, P.(ed) *The Foucault Reader,* Penguin, London 1991.

Randall, V. *Women and Politics, An International Perspective,* Macmillan, London 1987.

Rawls, J. *Theory of Justice,* Oxford University, Oxford 1973.

Raz, J. *The Morality of Freedom,* Clarendon, Oxford 1988.

Reade, E. *British Town and Country Planning,* Open University Press, Milton Keynes, 1987.

Reinharz, S. *Feminist Methods in Social Research,* Oxford University, Oxford, 1992.

Rendell, J. ed., *Equal or Different: Women's Politics 1800-1914*, Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1989.

Rhodes, R. *Beyond Westminster and Whitehall: Sub-Central Governments of Britain*, Unwin Hyman, London, 1988.

Roche, M. *Rethinking Citizenship*, Polity, Cambridge, 1992.

Rogers, S. *Performance Management in Local Government*, Longman, LGTB, Harlow, 1990.

Rosenua, P.M. *Postmodernism & The Social Sciences. Insights, Inroads, and Intrusions*, Princeton, 1992.

Rossi, A. *Essays on Sex Equality*, University of Chicago, London 1970.

Rousseau, J.J., *Social Contract*, 1762, Trans. M. Cranston, Pengiun, London, 1968

Rowbotham, S., *The Past is Before Us*, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1990.

Rowbotham, S., *Women in Movement*, Routledge, London, 1992.

Sartori, G., *Democratic Theory*, Praeger, New York, 1965.

Schmitt, C. *The Concept of the Political*, University of Chicago, London, trans. 1996.

Schumpeter, J. *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy*, Allen & Unwin, London 1943.

Scott, J. W. *Gender and the Politics of History*, Columbia University 1988.

Segal, L. *Slow Motion, Changing Masculinities, Changing Men*, Virago London 1990.

Segalen, M. *Love and Power in the Peasant Family, Rural France in the Nineteenth Century*, Basil Blackwell, Oxford 1983.

Seidman S. & Wagner, D. G. eds. *Postmodernism and Social Theory*, Blackwell Oxford, 1992.

Shanley, M.L. & Pateman, C. eds. *Feminist Interpretations and Political Theory* Polity, Cambridge 1991.

Showstack Sassoon, A., *Women and the State*, Hutchinson, London, 1987.

Smyth, G. ed. *Refreshing the Parts*, Lawrence & Wishart, London 1992.

Soper, K. *On Human Need*, Harvester Press, 1981.

Spelman, E. *Inessential Woman*, Women's Press, London, 1988.

Spender, D. *For the Record: The Meaning and Making of Feminist Knowledge*, Women's Press, London 1992

Spender, D. *There's Always Been a Women's Movement This Century*, Pandora, 1983.

Stacey, M. & Price, M. *Women, Power and Politics* Tavistock 1981

Stoker, G. *The Politics of Local Government*, Macmillan, Basingstoke, 1991.

Sunstein, C.R. ed. *Feminism & Political Theory*, University of Chicago Press, London 1990.

Taylor, H., *The Enfranchisement of Women*, K. Soper, ed., Virago, LOndon, 1983.

Taylor-Gooby, P. *Social Change, Social Welfare and Social Science*, Harvester Wheatsheaf, Hemel Hemstead, 1991.

Titmuss, R.M. *Commitment to Welfare*, Allen & Unwin, London 1981.

Todd, J. ed. *A Wollstonecraft Anthology*, Polity Cambridge 1989.

Tong, R. *Feminist Thought*, Unwin Hyman, London 1989.

Torode, J. and Khan, N. *Why Bother? A study of the frustrations, the failings and the future of our elected councillors*, Local Government Management Board, London, 1991.

Vallance, E. *Women in the House*, Athlone, London 1979.

Vincent, A. & Plant, R. *Philosophy, Politics & Citizenship*, Basil Blackwell, Oxford 1984.

Walby, S. *Theorizing Patriarchy*, Basil Blackwell, Oxford 1990.

Walkowitz, J. *Prostitution and Victorian Society: Women, Class and the State*, Cambridge University, 1980.

Ware, A. *Citizens, Parties and the State*, Polity, Cambridge, 1987.

Waters, M. *Modern Sociological Theory*, Sage Publications, London, 1994.

Watson S., ed., *Playing the State: Australian Feminist Interventions*, Verso, London, 1990.

Weale, A. *Political Theory and Social Policy*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1983.

Weedon, C. *Feminist Practice & Poststructuralist Theory*, Blackwell Oxford 1987.

Weeks, J. *Sexuality*, Routledge, London 1993.

Wilks, S. ed., *Talking About Tomorrow*, Pluto, London, 1993.

Williams, G. ed., *John Stuart Mill on Politics and Society*, Fontana, Glasgow, 1985.

Wolff, R.P. *The Poverty of Liberalism*, Beacon Press,1988.

Wollstonecraft, M. *The Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, (1792), Penguin London 1985.

Woolfe, V. *A Room of One's Own*, Penguin, London 1985.

Young, I.M. *Justice and the Politics of Difference*, Princeton University Press 1990.

Journals / Articles:

Antipode 25:1 1993.

British Journal of Political Science, Vol 19, 1989

Development and Change, Vol 24 No 3 July 1993.

Ethics: 104; Jan 1994

Equal Opportunities Commission Annual Report.

Equal Opportunities Review, Number 44, July/August 1992.

Fabian Research Series 353, 1989.

Fabian Research Series 541, 1990.

Feminist Review, Special Issue, No 39 1991.

Feminist Review, Citizenship, No 44, Summer 1993.

Hypatia, 4(2).1989.

Journal of Politics, Vol 54 No 4 1992.

Local Government Studies, 18 (3) 1992.

London Review of Books, 1989.

National Interest, Summer 1989.

New Left Review 1991.

New Times, 1989.

New Times, July 9th 1994.

Parliamentary Affairs, Vol 44 no 2 April 1991.

Parliamentary Affairs, Vol 49 No 2 April 1996.

Policy and Politics, Vol 24 No1 1997.

Political Quartlery 60, 1989/

Political Quarterly 61, 1990.

Political Quarterly Vol 63 No1 1992.

Politics and Society, Winter Haworth, New York 1974.

Politics and Society, Vol 7 No3 Fall Haworth, New York 1987.

Political Studies, XXXII, 1984.

Political Studies XL Special Issue 1992.

Political Studies, Vol 44 No 4 1996.

Political Theory Vol 13 No1 Feb. 1985.

Political Theory August 1989.

Political Theory February 1990.

Political Theory August 1993.

Political Theory Vol 9 1981.

Praxis International 1991.

Praxis International 1992.

Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society, 5(4) Summer 1980.

Sign of the Times Discussion Paper, 1994.

Social Research, Vol 60, No 2 Summer 1993.

Socialist Review, vol 90 no 2 1990

Sociology Vol 28 No 2 May 1994.

Teaching Politics, Vol 13 1984.

Theory, Culture and Society, Vol 5 1988.

Theory, Culture and Society, Vol 9 1992.

Women, Culture and Society, 1974.

Women's Studies International Forum, 5(6) 1982.

Surveys and Reports:

Adam Smith Institute, *Wiser Counsels: the Reform of Local Government,* London 1989.

Audit Commission, *The Impact on Local Authorities' Economy, Efficiency and Effectiveness of the Block Grant Distribution System,* London HMSO 1984.

Audit Commission, *The Competitive Council,* Management Paper No 1, London HMSO 1988.

Bains report: *The New Local Authorities: Management and Structure, report of the Study Group on Local Authority Management Structures,* London HMSO, 1972.

British Candidate Survey of 1992.

British General Election 1979 -1992.

Commission for Local democracy, *Taking charge: the rebirth of local democracy,* Municipal Journal, London 1995.

Department of Environment White Paper, *Local Government in England, Government Proposals for Reorganisation,* London HMSO 1971.

General Household Survey 1992.

Labour Party, NEC Action/Advice Note, November 1991.

Labour Party: *Renewing democracy, rebuilding communities,* London 1995.

Local Government Commission for England, *Renewing Local Government in the English Shires:* a report on the 1992-5 Structural review, London HMSO 1995.

The Conduct of Local Authority Business, London HMSO 1986.

The Royal Commission on Local Government, 1966-1969, London HMSO 1969.

The Commission for Local Democracy Research Report No1, 1994.

266

Appendix A

Methods

The study was based in the area known as South Tyneside, including South Shields, Jarrow, Hebburn, Boldon and Cleadon.

The research involved three stages

* general gathering of information.

* a postal survey.

* case studies.

Information gathering:

Interviews with key informants gave an overall picture of the past and present situation. The sample was selected, not on a random basis, but in order to ensure coverage of the range of political perspectives and length of involvement.

Postal Survey:

The questionnaire sought basic information on:

* party organisation.

* aims and constitution.

* membership range.

* participation and activity.

* decision making structure

* staffing -paid and unpaid.

* budget, sources of funding.

* personal reasons for involvement.

Case Study

Under the broad heading of seeking to identify to what extent the local party political system facilitates women councillors to pursue gender issues/interests*.

Case study gathered qualitative information on:

*	organisational roots and values

*	decision making culture and structure

*	the effects of recent policies, particularly welfare and community care.

*	perceived differing solutions

*	contact and collaboration with other agencies and parties

*	level of involvement

*	key pressures

A minimum of ...long interviews in each organisation was carried out.

....details of who...

Within the voluntary sector four organisations formed the basis of the in-depth case studies. The choice reflected the dimensions of both change and/or ambiguities along with ownership and size.

*	a donor organisation with a strong statutory input;

*	a donor organisation undergoing major changes to become more business-like;

*	a user-based organisation which was facing the challenge of growth;

*	a private sector

* contested concept. See Jonasdottir, 1988:35.

Appendix B

Women and Party Politics

A survey of women and political party membership within South Tyneside.

Surveyor: Sheila Emmett, University of Durham

Contact Tel No. 0191 5153215/ 4552283.

Date:

Please *circle* the most appropriate answer.

About your party:

1   Which party do you belong to?.....................   A....*Conservative*

                                                                                    B....*Labour*

                                                                                    C....*Liberal Democrat.*

2   What do you regard as the main priority of your party?

        A....*economy*   B....*unemployment*

        C....*housing*   D....*health*

        E....*education*   F....*environment*

        G....*crime*   H....*democracy*

3   Are you satisfied with the methods of funding? .... Yes/No

4   Are you satisfied with the decision making process?...... Yes/No

5   Are there other ways in which you think your party needs to change?

      (i)Nationally...

      (ii)Locally...

....

About yourself:

6   Which of the following age groups do you belong?

        A....*18-24*   B....*25-34*

        C....*35-44*   D....*45-54*

        E....*55-64*   F....*Over 65*

7   How would you describe your ethnic origins?

        A....White/European   B....Black Caribbean

        C....Black African   D....Black British

        E....Indian/Pakistan/Bangladesh

        F....Chinese   G....Middle Eastern

        H....Other

8   What are your main daytime activities?

        A....paid full-time work B....paid part-time work

        C....caring at home   D....voluntary work

        E....looking for a job   F....other

9   What level is you party participation?

        A....*Never*   B....*Occasional*
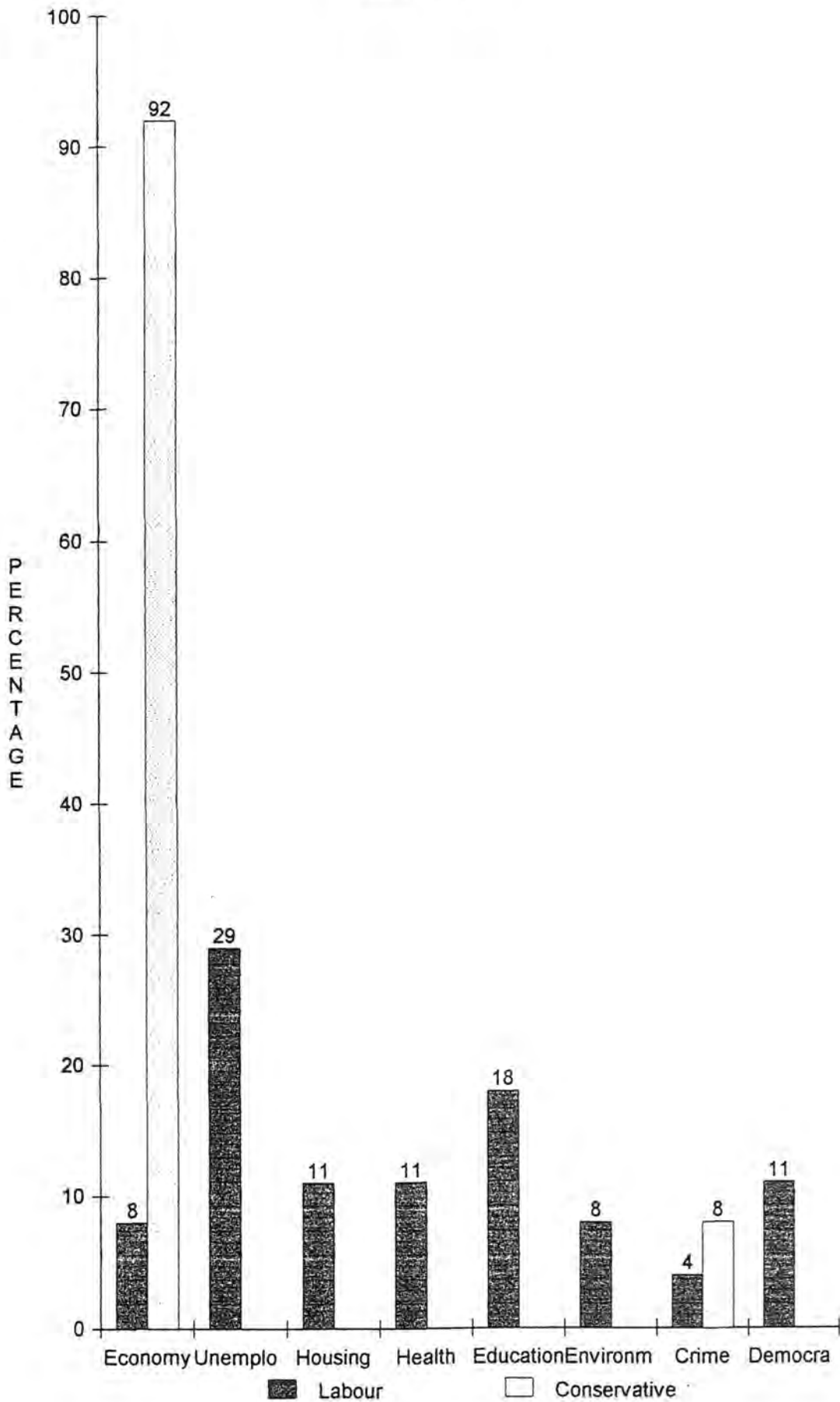
        C....*Frequent*   D....*Very Active*

10   What persuaded you to join a political party?

....

....
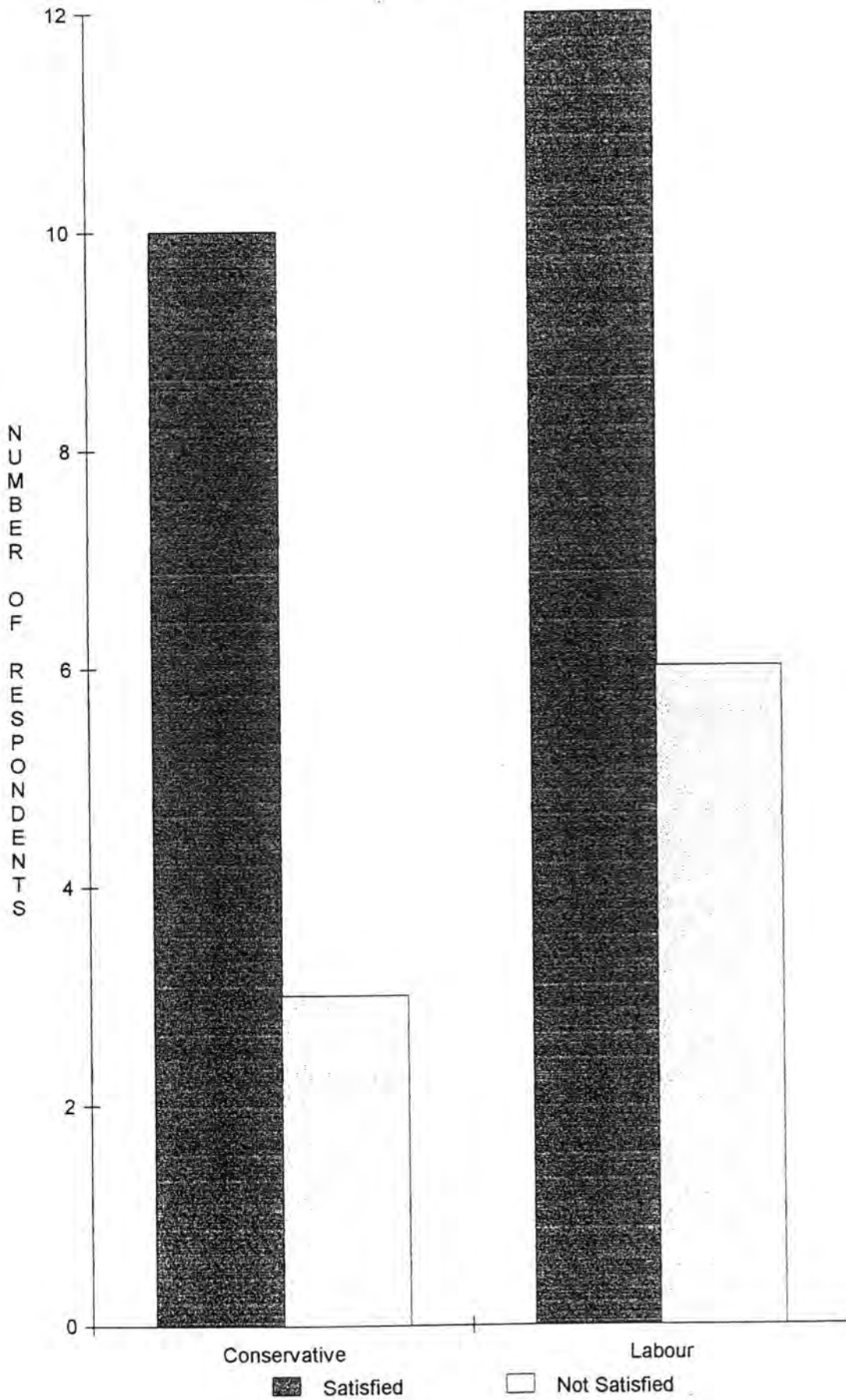

Thank you very much for answering these questions - all replies will be treated in confidence.

PARTY PRIORITIES
MARCH 1997

P
E
R
C
E
N
T
A
G
E

100 —

90 —   92

80 —

70 —

60 —

50 —

40 —

30 —   29

20 —   18

10 —   8   11   11   8   8   11

0 —

Economy Unemplo Housing Health EducationEnvironm Crime Democra

Labour   Conservative

PARTY FUNDING
MARCH 1997

N
U
M
B
E
R

O
F

R
E
S
P
O
N
D
E
N
T
S

Conservative   Labour

▨ Satisfied   ☐ Not Satisfied

PARTY DECISION MAKING
MARCH 1997

Chart: Number of Respondents by party (Conservative, Labour) showing Satisfied and Not Satisfied responses.

AGE OF PARTY ACTIVISTS
MARCH1997

N U M B E R   O F   R E S P O N D E N T S

AGE

Labour   Conservative

PARTY ACTIVISTS
MARCH 1997

NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS

DAYTIME ACTIVITY

Paid F.T.   Paid P.T.   Caring   Voluntary   Other

Labour   Conservative
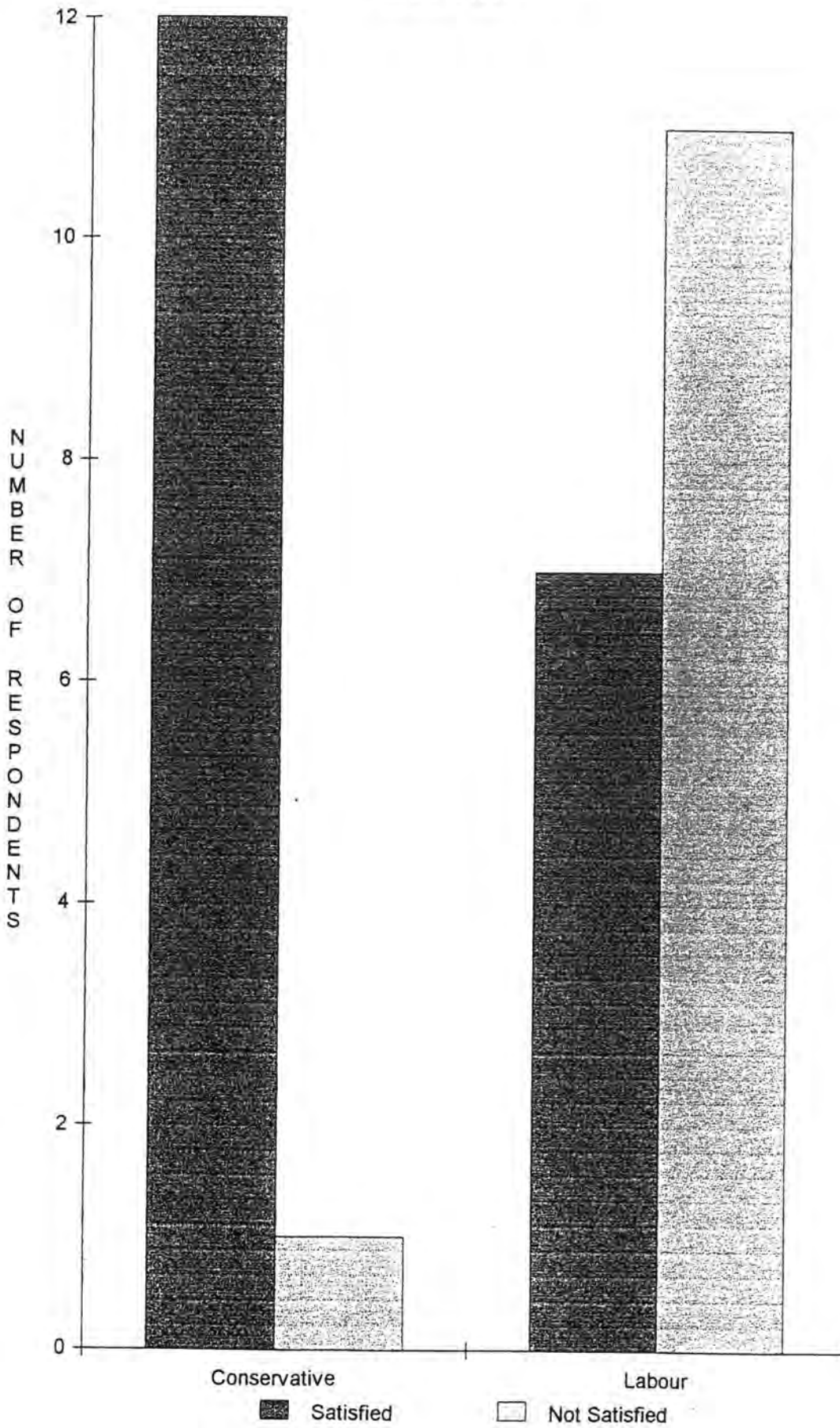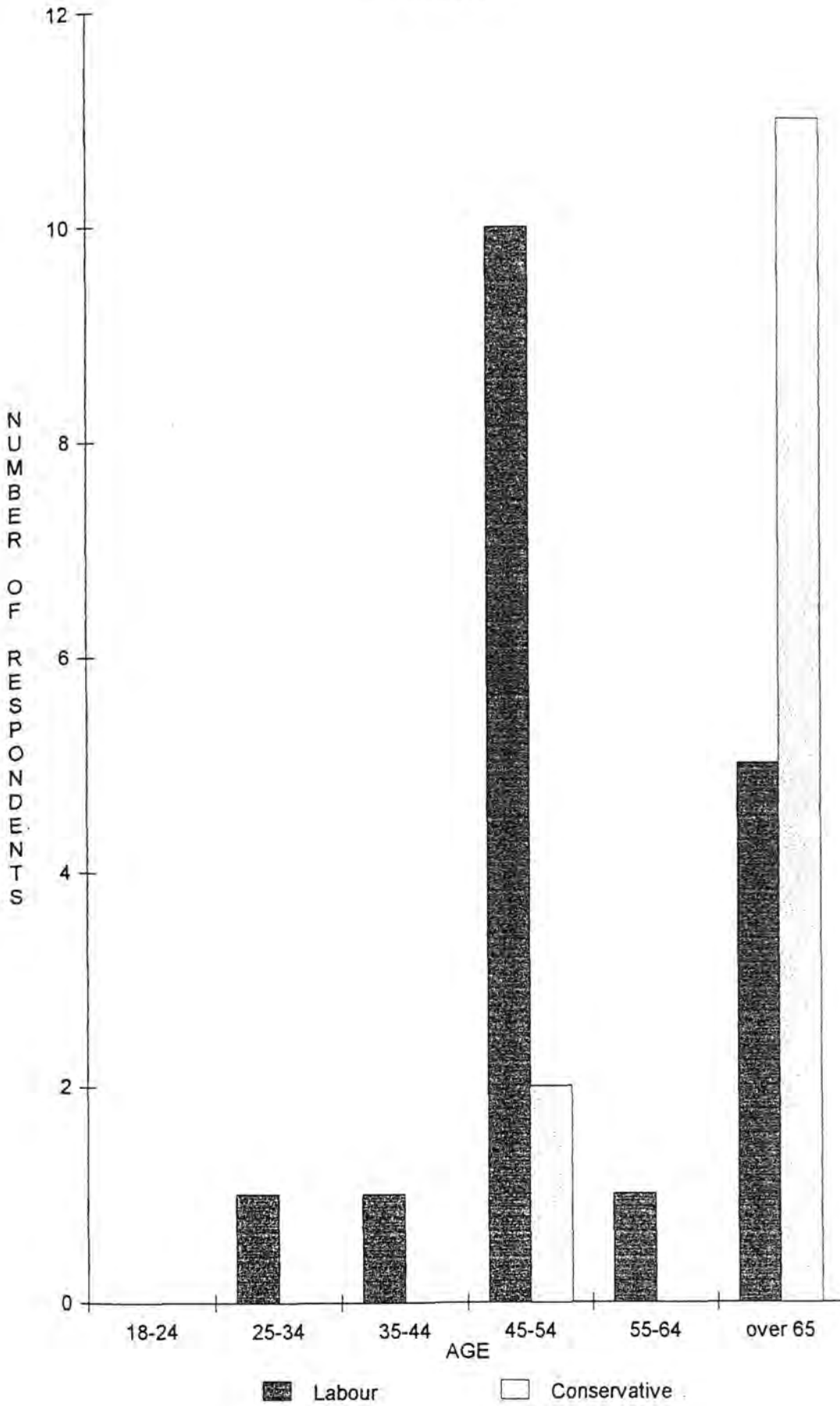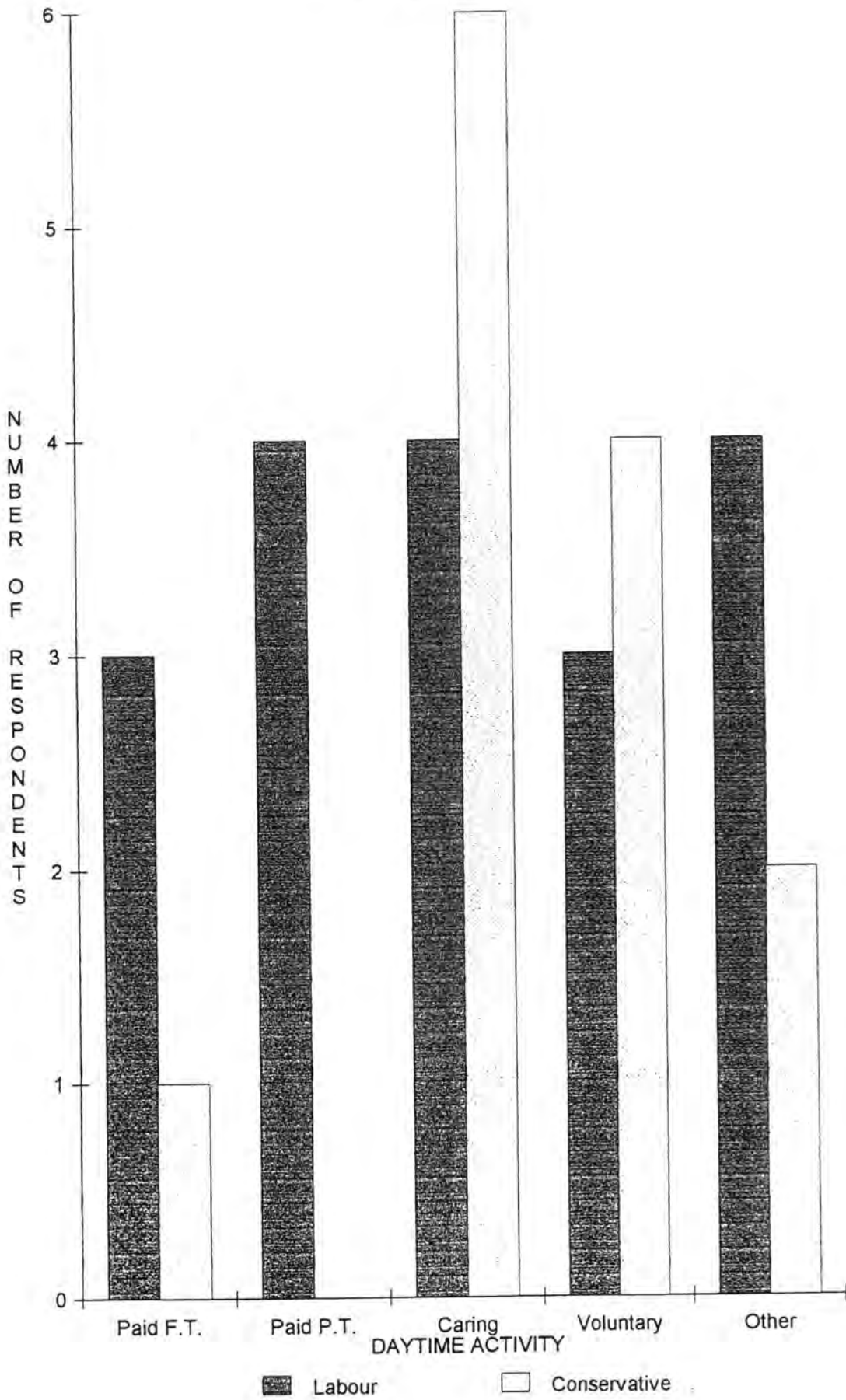
PARTY ACTIVITY
MARCH 1997

NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS

PARTICIPATION

Never Occasional Frequent Very Active

Labour Conservative
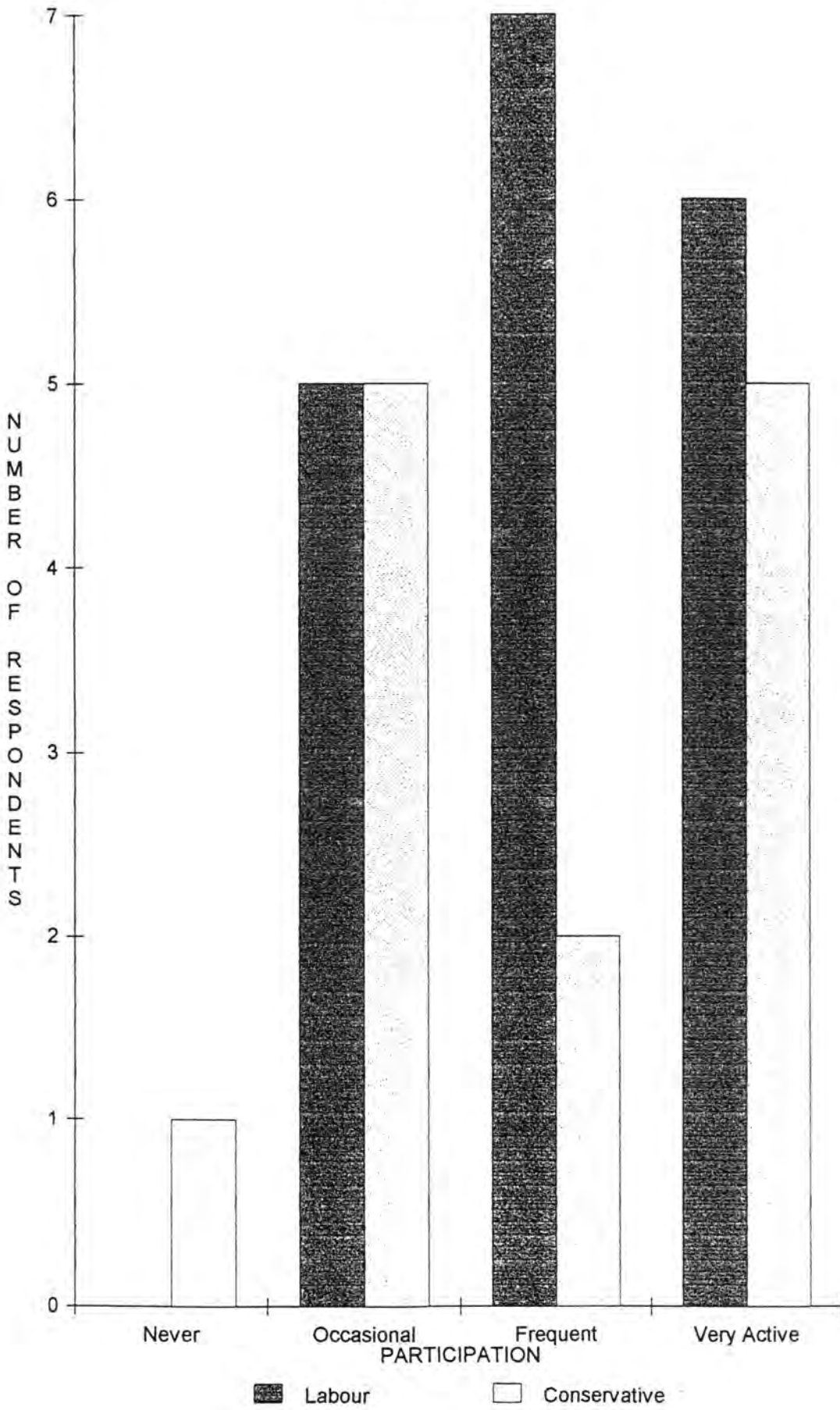
Appendix J

The Interviews:

Some of the broad questions I will be asking are as follows:

(a)   How did you first become interested in 'council work'/ the nature of your decision to stand as a councillor and opinion of reasons when asked by differing people?

(b)   Reasons for accepting a nomination, knowledge of the 'type' of work, training undertaken, opinion of courses?

(c)   Satisfaction with time spent on various aspects of council work and suggested improvements?

(d)   Your 'specialisms'; what aspects do you feel the most/least effective; the reasons for your answers?

(e)   Opinions on and attitudes to distribution of power on the council/ also those activities of the council which have 'helped' most; particular problems in area requiring council's attention?

(g)   Opinions on personal characteristics necessary to make a 'good' councillor?

(h)   Particular activities awarding most/least personal satisfaction; preferences with regard to 'broad' policy making/compromise?

More specific question regarding some of the primary obstacles created by the organisation of local government for women are as follows:

(i)   Specific mechanisms/ quotas/ attitudes of the leadership?

(j)   Divided loyalties/women's claims/party line?

(k)   Lack of childcare/attitude of partners?

(l)   Attendance allowance/paid work/paying for childcare?

(m)   Councillor workload?

(n)   Overt/covert sexism?

(o)   Bureaucratic procedures/strict adherence to the rules?

(p)   Networks with local women's representation?

(q)   Strategies for change?

APPENDIX I.

Gender and the ladder of recruitment:

	CONSERVATIVE PARTY		LABOUR PARTY	
	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %
Incumbents	95	5	89	11
Inheritors	89	11	88	12
Challengers	86	14	72	28
Final Short list	84	16	68	32
Interviewees	83	17	69	31
Seat applicants	87	13	75	25
List eligibles	83	17	63	37
Apply National Board	85	15	No equivalent	
Party members	52	48	60	40
Party voters	47	53	52	48

Incumbents = MPs elected in the previous election who are re-standing in the same seat for the same party.
Inheritors = candidates selected for an open seat previously held by their own party where the sitting MP has retired.
Challengers = Candidates fighting a seat held by another party.

Source- British Candidate Study, 1992. From Lovenduski and Norris - Gender and Party Politics.

APPENDIX II.

Approval of policy proposals:

"Do you approve or disapprove of the following proposals for increasing the number of women in Parliament?" (Combined percentage for 'strongly approve' or 'approve').

	CONSERVATIVE PARTY			LABOUR PARTY		
	Members	PCCs	MPs	Members	PCCs	MPs
Party training for women	79	73	70	92	98	93
Better childcare facilities in Parliament	58	63	52	93	100	97
Changing the hours of Parliament	58	56	47	90	95	76
Financial Support for women PCCs	24	9	2	59	62	37
Positive Quotas	26	4	4	64	79	62

PCCs = Prospective Parliamentary Candidates.
Source - British Candidate Study, 1992. From Lovenduski & Norris - Gender and Party Politics.
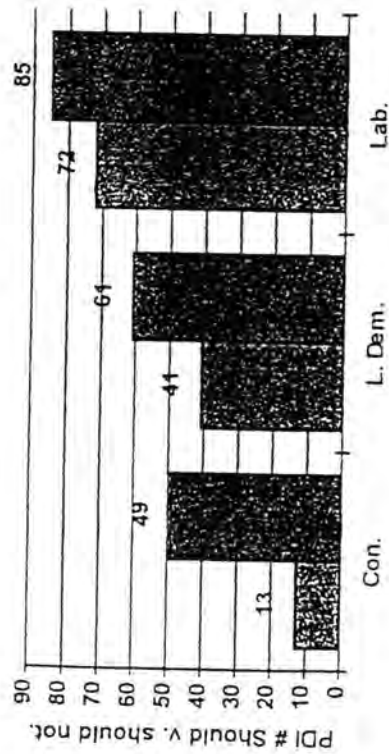
APPENDIX III.

Mean Issue Salience.

Respondents were asked to rank these issues from most important (10) to least important (1).

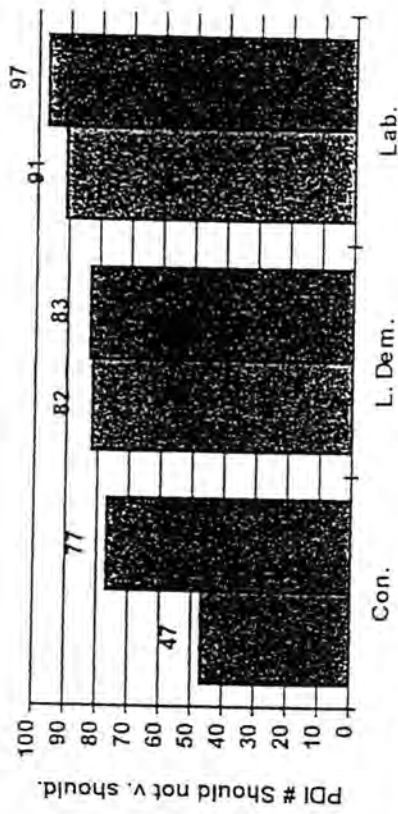|	ALL	CONSERVATIVE.		LIBERAL/SDP.		LABOUR	
		Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Unemployment	7.2	6.0	6.9	7.3	7.3	7.3	7.7
NHS	5.7	4.3	5.1	5.9	6.1	6.1	7.1
Education	5.2	4.3	5.5	5.7	5.8	5.8	5.9
Defence	4.1	5.4	4.5	4.2	3.9	3.9	4.1
Law & Order	3.6	4.7	5.3	3.3	2.5	2.5	3.9
Social Services	2.8	1.8	2.3	2.3	2.9	2.9	3.5
Inflation	2.4	4.4	4.4	2.2	2.0	2.0	0.6
Nuclear energy	1.6	0.8	1.1	1.3	1.6	1.6	2.0
Equal opportunities	1.8	0.6	0.3	1.5	1.9	1.9	2.3
Local Government	1.8	1.4	2.2	1.9	1.6	1.6	1.3
Unions	1.1	1.9	1.1	0.7	1.1	1.1	1.3
Child care	0.9	0.5	0.1	0.4	0.7	0.7	1.9
Agriculture	0.5	0.6	1.1	0.6	0.5	0.5	0.3

Source - British Candidate Survey, 1987. From Norris and Lovenduski - "Women Candidates for Parliament: Transforming the Agenda".
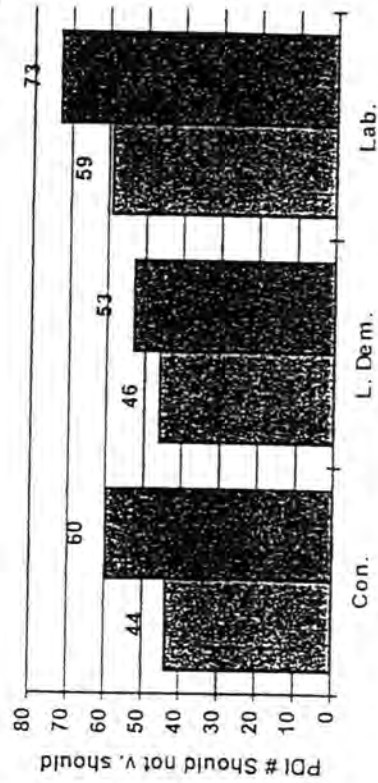
ATTITUDES TO WOMEN'S RIGHTS.

Rape in marriage should be a crime

PDI # Should not v. should.

Con. 47, 77
L. Dem. 82, 83
Lab. 91, 97

Equal opportunities for women not gone too far

PDI # Agree vs. Disagree

Con. -7, 40
L. Dem. 80, 91
Lab. 93, 100

Women
Men

Law should not restrict abortion in first trimester

PDI # Should v. should not.

Con. 13, 49
L. Dem. 41, 61
Lab. 72, 85

More severe punishments for domestic violence

PDI # Should not v. should

Con. 44, 60
L. Dem. 46, 53
Lab. 59, 73

(Source - British Candidate Study. From Norris - _Women Politicians: Transforming Westminster?_)

ATTITUDES TO ECONOMIC ISSUES

Taxes v. Services

Nationalisation v. privatisation

Trade Union Power

Inflation v. unemployment

Women

Men

(Source: British Candidate Study. From Norris "Women Politicans Transforming Westminster?").

ATTITUDES TO SOCIAL ISSUES.
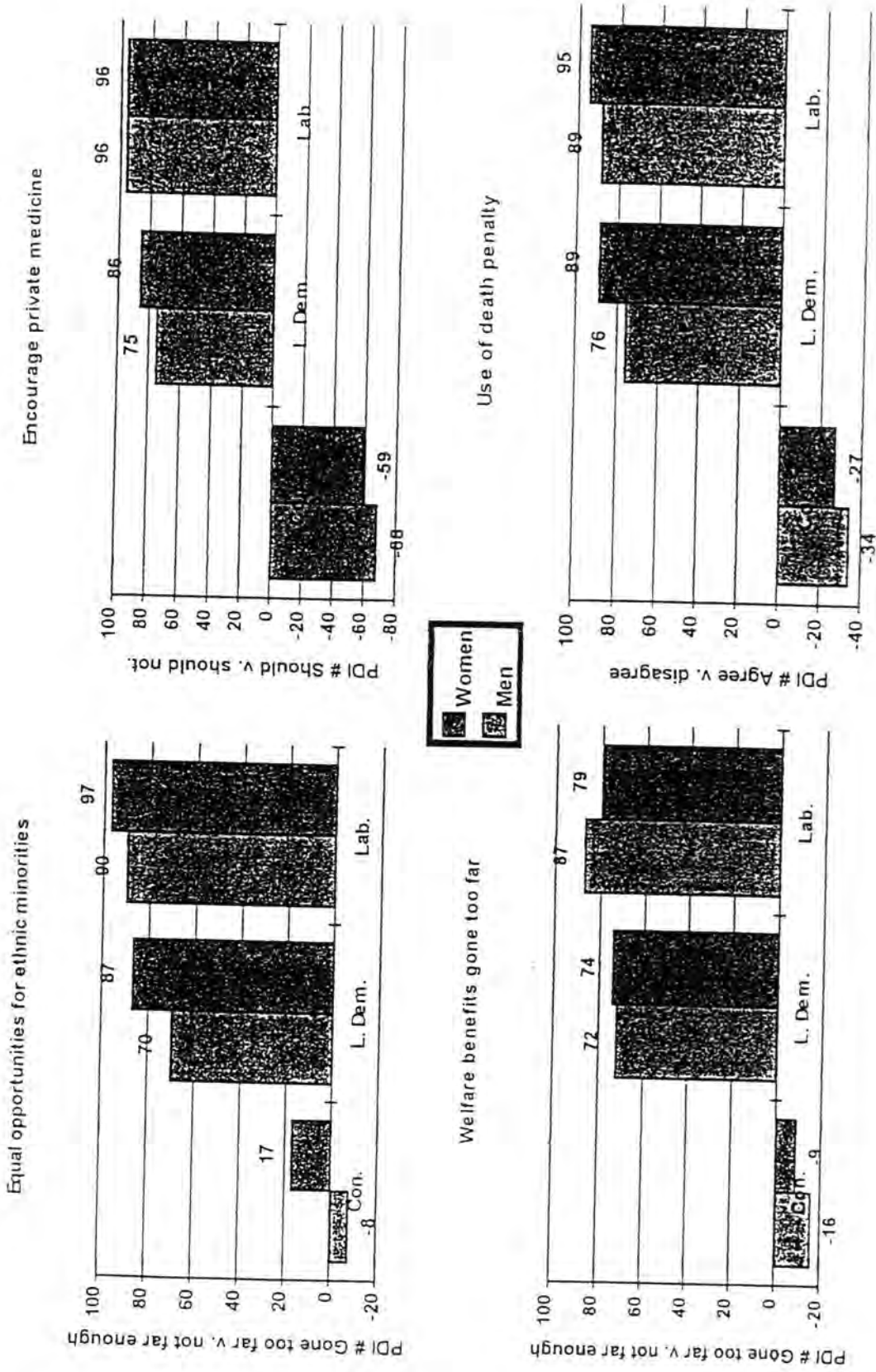
Encourage private medicine
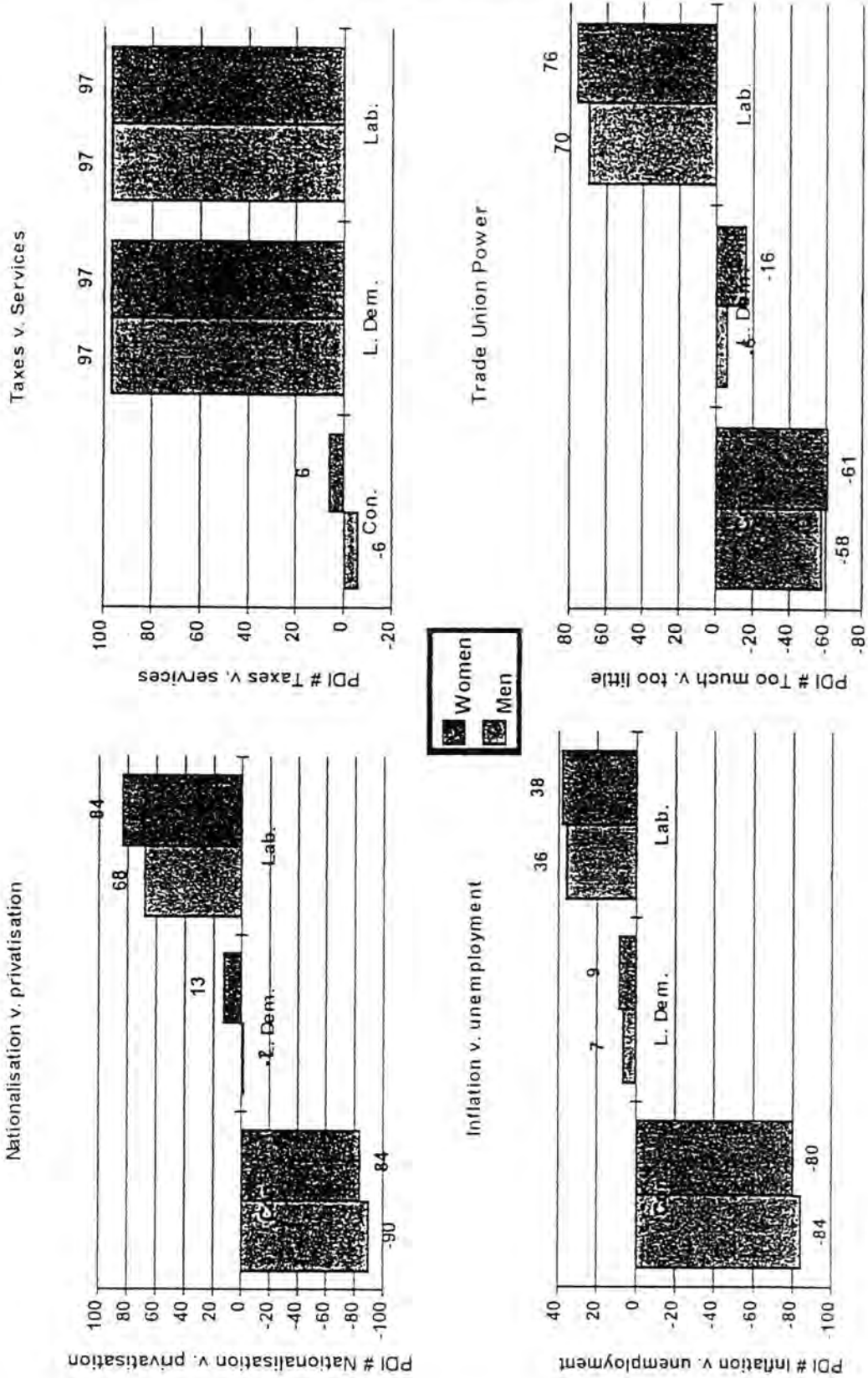
Use of death penalty

Equal opportunities for ethnic minorities

Welfare benefits gone too far

Women
Men

(Source - British Candidate Study. From Norris - "Women Politicians: Transforming Westminster").
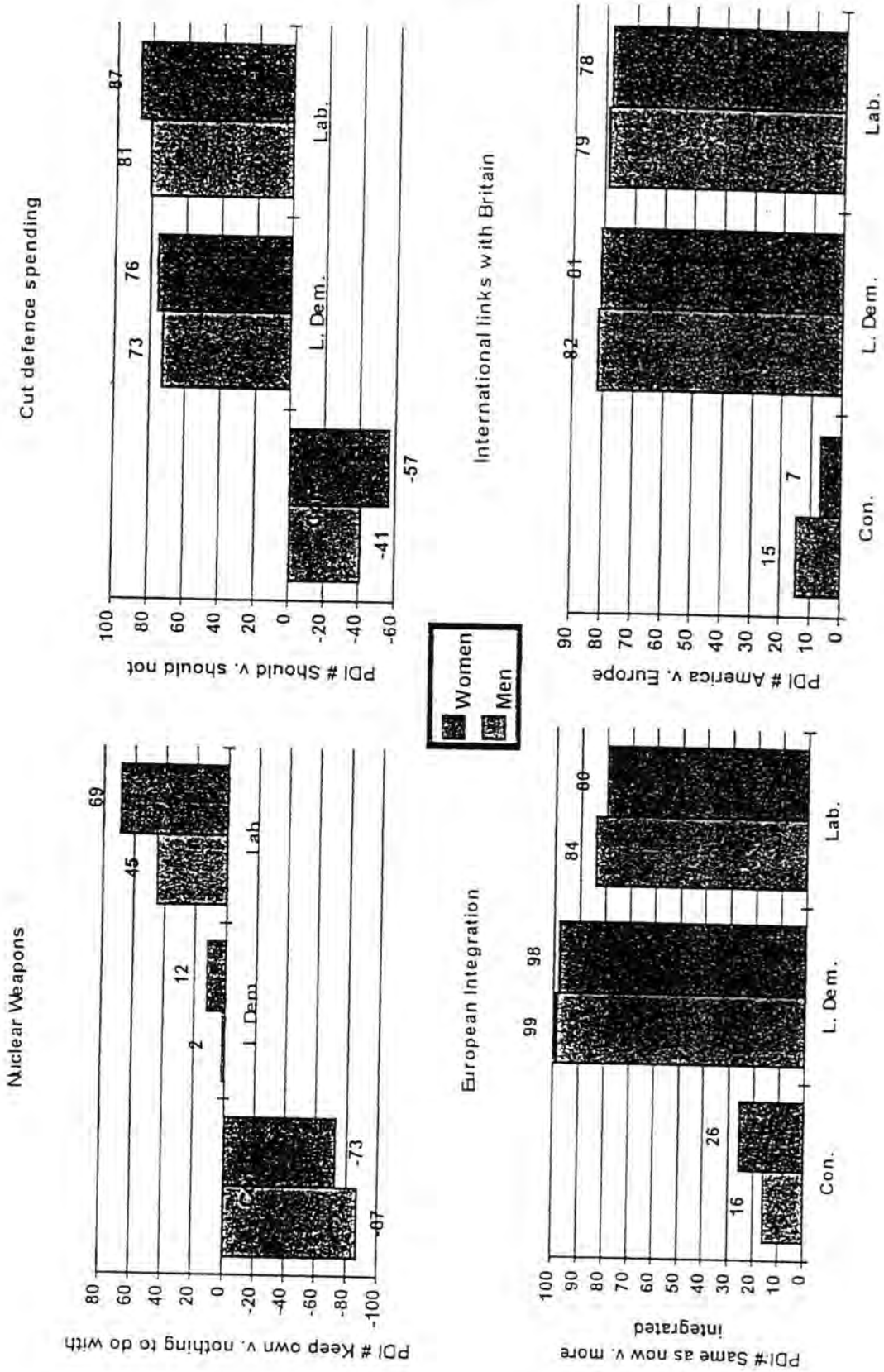
ATTITUDES TO FOREIGN POLICY ISSUES.

Cut defence spending

International links with Britain

Nuclear Weapons

European Integration

Legend: Women / Men

(Source - British Candidate Study. From Norris - "Women Politicians: Transforming Westminster?").

Women candidates and MPs, 1918–92

	Conservative		Labour		Liberal/ Lib. Dem.		Other		Total	
	Cands.	MPs	Cands.	MPs	Cands.	MPs	Cands.	MPs	Cands.	MPs
1918	1	–	4	–	4	–	8	1	17	1
1922	5	1	10	–	16	1	2	–	33	2
1923	7	3	14	3	12	2	1	–	34	8
1924	12	3	22	1	6	–	1	–	41	4
1929	10	3	30	9	25	1	4	1	69	14
1931	16	13	36	–	6	1	4	1	62	15
1935	19	6	35	1	11	1	2	1	67	9
1945	14	1	45	21	20	1	8	1	87	24
1950	28	6	42	14	45	1	11	–	126	21
1951	29	6	39	11	11	–	–	–	74	17
1955	32	10	43	14	12	–	2	–	89	24
1959	28	12	36	13	16	–	1	–	81	25
1964	24	11	33	18	25	–	8	–	90	29
1966	21	7	30	19	20	–	9	–	80	26
1970	26	15	29	10	23	–	21	1	99	26
1974 Feb.	33	9	40	13	40	–	30	1	143	23
1974 Oct.	30	7	50	18	49	–	32	2	161	27
1979	31	8	52	11	51	–	76	–	210	19
1983	40	13	78	10	115	–	87	–	280	23
1987	46	17	92	21	106	2	84	1	328	41
1992	59	20	138	37	144	2	213	1	554	59