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**Department of English**

**Women's Political Participation in England and its  
Impact on Gender Relations in Parliamentary Politics  
(1945-1997)**

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Es-Science in British Civilization

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## **STATEMENT OF ORIGINALITY**

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**Miss. Laounia GOURCHAL**

**May24,2022**

# Dedications

I dedicate this work to my dearest Parents for their unconditioned love, support, prayers and encouragement.

To my “*Second Mother*” **Prof. Faiza SENOUCI MEBERBECHE** who ceaselessly endeavoured to let me work and adore writing every single letter in this thesis despite the tough and the unbearable circumstances I went through.

To my lovely sisters **Kadaouia** and **Mokhtaria**

To my Adorable nephew **Adem**

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## ABSTRACT

The bicameral parliament in England, before 1918, was managed by male MPs and male Prime Ministers only without any possibility to include women. Allowing women to stand as MPs to be elected in 1918 represented a turning point in the history of women's political participation. After WWII, the female employment opportunities were maximized, however their increased political integration remained in question. The aim of this research is twofold. On the one hand, it attempts to investigate the female political immersion from 1945 till 1997 shedding light on the ups and downs women went through in the House of Commons and the House of Lords. On the other hand, it tries to elucidate the nature of gender relations and the impact of the female entry to the "Men's House" on male-female political relations. To meet this end, the qualitative method is relied on through resorting to books, articles, blogs and archive materials. The findings show that the female involvement in parliamentary politics was overshadowed by a lone criterion which is underrepresentation. Despite some high ministerial positions granted to women, the female appointees continued to represent the elite and underrepresented minority in the bicameral parliament. Put simply, the female integration's impact was dual. It was a double-edged sword. It strengthened fruitful male-female relations and, inevitably, triggered hostile and unstable reactions in other cases.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

<b>ATS</b>	Auxiliary Territorial Service
<b>AWS</b>	All-Women Shortlists
<b>AWSP</b>	All-Women Shortlists Policy
<b>BBC</b>	British Broadcasting Corporation
<b>Deb</b>	Debates
<b>ELFS</b>	East London Federation of the Suffragettes
<b>EPCC</b>	Equal Pay Campaign Committee
<b>FANY</b>	First Aid Nursing Yeomanry
<b>GOV</b>	Government
<b>HC</b>	House of Commons
<b>HL</b>	The Housewife League
<b>IWSPU</b>	Independent Women's Social and Political Union
<b>LNSWS</b>	London National Society for Women's Suffrage
<b>MP</b>	Member of Parliament
<b>MWA</b>	Married Women's Association
<b>NCB</b>	National Coal Board
<b>NUM</b>	National Union of Mineworkers
<b>NUWSS</b>	National Union of Women Suffrage Societies
<b>PFC</b>	Parliamentary Fire Committee
<b>PM</b>	Prime Minister
<b>PMQ</b>	Prime Minister Questions
<b>QBS</b>	Queen Bee Syndrom
<b>QT</b>	Question Time
<b>SNP</b>	Scottish National Party
<b>SSI</b>	Separate Sphere Ideology

<b>SOE</b>	Special Operations Executive
<b>UK</b>	United Kingdom
<b>WAAF</b>	Women's Auxiliary Air Force
<b>WLA</b>	Women's Land Army
<b>WNAC</b>	Women's National Advisory Committee
<b>WPS</b>	Women Power Committee
<b>WRNS</b>	Women's Royal Naval Service
<b>WSPU</b>	Women's Social and Political Union
<b>WTS</b>	Women's Transport Service
<b>WVS</b>	Women's Voluntary Service
<b>WWI</b>	World War One
<b>WWII</b>	World War Two

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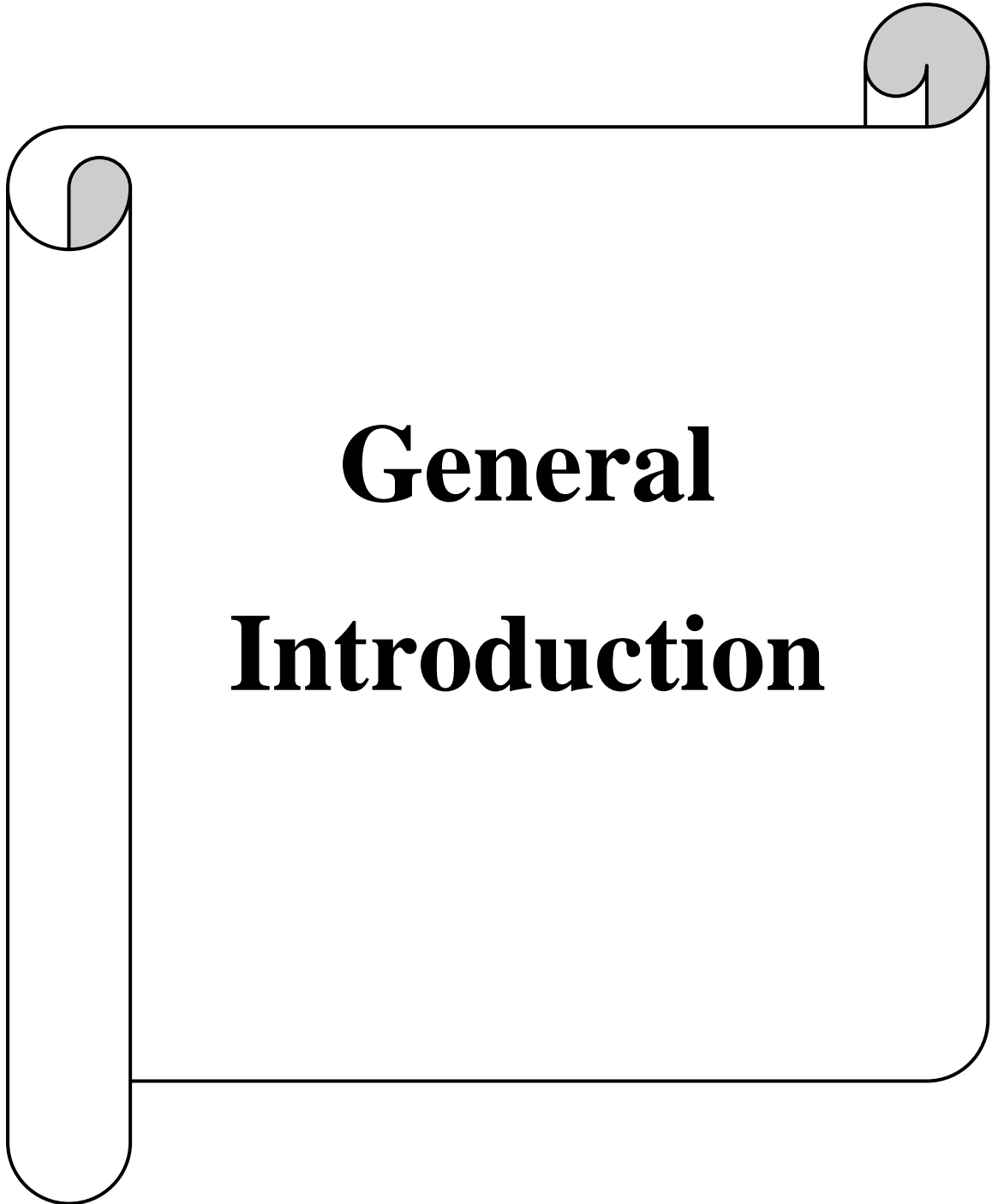
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**General  
Introduction**

## General Introduction

In the nineteenth century Britain, women lived in a patriarchal society exhibiting their responsibilities and capabilities in the home serving their fathers, husbands, brothers performing a myriad of domestic tasks in the family. The British common beliefs concerning gender roles and gender relations glorified the Separate Sphere Ideology (SSI the Private and the public spheres). Working outside home was the onus of men only in the Public Sphere; they were the breadwinners not women. Women, therefore, had to enjoy their femininity and their ideal role of caring for the family in the Private Sphere (home). In this regard, women were subjected to the male authority and dominance being prevented from the democratic principles alongside men.

The public patriarchy, coincided with the private patriarchy, persisted in the second half of the nineteenth century without granting women any opportunity to make economic, social or political progress. The female awareness of the heavy burden of gender disparity and the tremendous marginalization of women rights in the British society signaled the beginning of un-going women movements claiming for social, political, economic and educational emancipation. What added insult to the injury in nineteenth century Britain was the increased political and economic progress for men only. The diversity of Reform Acts extending suffrage for men mirrored the marginalization and the tyranny expressed towards women.

One of the focal female movements was the suffrage movement firstly began in 1866. Women, in England, believed that the right to vote (also called suffrage or franchise) was a pivotal prerequisite for political emancipation on the one hand. On the other hand, it served as important principle of genuine democracy. Women suffragists thrived to gain the franchise through which they could choose their representatives in parliament and air out their voices in parliamentary politics. Reaching no result in their pro-suffrage campaign, women resorted to violence and civil disobedience as a method to gain their political rights similarly as men. After years of vain attempts to gain the vote, the male ministers finally got convinced to grant women the partial suffrage in 1918 then the equal vote on the same terms as men in 1928.

The partial enfranchisement of women in 1918 prompted a radical change in the female political status in the already-male led sphere of politics. Shortly after the partial enfranchisement, Women's Qualification Act was enacted allowing women reaching the age of 21 to stand as candidates to share the process of decision- making with men. This



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Act opened new horizons for women to start enjoying the seeds of their political emancipation in England. Starting from 1918, parliament became a mixed sex institution where gender political roles would be performed. Before 1918, the British parliament as was solely led by men without any possibility to include women. Even its establishment in the thirteenth century (1295) was accomplished by men.

The female political participation as MPs, Cabinet Ministers, advisers, Speakers had broken the male-dominated political mould where gender competition for fruitful political decision –making became a defining principle of the parliamentary environment. Thus, women’s political immersion reached the zenith due to the female ceaseless endeavours when a woman became the first woman Prime Minister in the twentieth century Britain represented by Margaret Thatcher.

The story of women’s involvement in parliament was the same story of the involvement of strangers or groups of people in a new environment in which they were neither familiar with the environment nor familiar with the people there. The way of accustoming themselves into the new arena can be short or lengthy mission. The reaction to the new comers differed from one recipient into another. They could be friendly, hostile or both at the same time. By the same token, they could welcome or resent the strangers’ coming. The same thing happened in the British parliament when women joined men in their “House” in 1918. The female political integration was a new chapter concerning gender co-existence in parliamentary politics. Women started to experience difficult political circumstances full of ups and downs. After WWII, the female political integration increased, but women kept representing the elite among male MPs and male Prime Ministers.

The choice of this topic that explores “Women’s Political Participation in England and its Impact on Gender Relations in Parliamentary politics (1945-1997) did not arise out of vacuum. Several reasons triggered the researcher’s vehement interest in tackling this one. First and foremost, the fact that women all over the world are denied their political rights based on one sole justification stating the unsuitability of women in politics. The latter should remain under an immense male control. Moreover, one of the pivotal ideas to be clarified was to find out the reason that strengthened the female underrepresentation in the House of Commons and the House of Lords as MPs, Ministers and Speakers. What was paradoxical in the British political spectrum was that if British women in the British history could stand as Queens, like Mary I (reigned from 1553-1558), Queen Elizabeth I

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(reigned from 1558-1603), and Queen Victoria (reigned from 1837-1901), knowing the “why” behind minimizing the female entry to parliament as MP after WWII (1939-1945) is of great significance in this conducted research.

This research is devoted to mirror the female parliamentarians’ ups and downs surrounded by men in parliament. Parliamentary politics, in England, is a field that proved the female capabilities in doing men’s work. The gist of this thesis revolves around digging deep into the female involvement in the bicameral parliament in an era extending from 1945 to 1997. That is to say it tries to elucidate the female immersion in the House of Commons and the House of Lords after the Second World War, when the female political under-representation persisted, till 1997 when politics became “feminized” in the light of increasing the number of women in parliament.

Women, whether married, widowed or single supported the war efforts through the myriad of tasks they performed and the vacant male jobs they filled when men were outside joining the military forces. WWII represented a turning point concerning the role that women MPs played during the war. Eventually, a progress in the female political involvement was expected after the war as a reward for their war work, but in vain. This thesis, additionally, attempts to reveal the way women MPs were treated by their male colleagues and the male Prime Ministers focusing on the breakthroughs women achieved and the hurdles they encountered in their political journey. Last but not least, it tries to examine the impact of the female political involvement on gender relations in parliament. To meet this end, the following research questions are put forward:

1. Was women’s political integration in the House of Commons maximized or minimized after the Second World War?
2. What characterized the female political participation in the bicameral parliament?
3. How did women’s immersion in politics impact gender relations in parliament?

To answer the above-mentioned research questions, this research is compartmentalized into four chapters. The aim of the first chapter is threefold. Firstly, it provides a historical background of women’s early calls for their involvement in the process of representation in which they strove to have a have a voice in shaping the political representation through being able to vote in parliamentary election. This was peacefully and later on violently demanded from the male politicians. Secondly, it showcases the dawn of the female political involvement as MPs for the first time through

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the enactment of the People Representation Act in 1918. The latter was considered as a political apotheosis in the political history of women. The chapter traces the nature of women's political journey in the House of Commons after joining men in their "House". Their journey was overshadowed by ups and downs, but WWII served as important landmark when women proved themselves able to assume male responsibilities and ready to represent other women in the House of Commons.

The second chapter aims at digging deep into the female political status after WWII. It investigates the different Conservative and Labour Prime Ministers' attitudes towards either maximizing or minimizing women's political presence. The chapter seeks to analyze the number of women voters, candidates and elected MPs to better expound the nature of the female political representation and compare it with their male counterparts. Moreover, the chapter attempts to examine the different barriers women encountered in parliament and the hurdles outside parliament that really thwarted their successful political involvement. The chapter tackles also the nature of male-female political relations in parliament.

The nub of the third chapter turns around tackling the political breakthrough achieved by the first woman Prime Minister (1979-1990) in the British history Margaret Thatcher. It tries to analyze the political presence of Thatcher as a politician and as a leader over men in their "House". Light is shed on her as a sample to reflect the positive and the negative aspects of the female political immersion in parliamentary politics. Margaret Thatcher is an example of those women who had beaten the record through entering parliament not as a Member of Parliament, but the leader of all MPs. Margaret Thatcher represented the power of a woman in politics, but her tenure posed several paradoxical facts when it comes to the promotion of women political progress and the way she treated men in their "House".

The fourth chapter mirrors the shift from woman Prime Minister into another male Prime Minister John Major. It tries to shed light on the way Thatcher's successor John Major treated women MPs and the nature of the female political involvement under a male leader from over again since his predecessor strengthened discriminative policies to indirectly exclude women from politics. Put simply, the chapter clarifies gender relations in parliament. The final part of the chapter mirrors the political watershed in the women's political agenda triggered by the general election of 1997.

## General Introduction

For the sake of data collection, the qualitative method is relied on to conduct this historical research. To find out the answers to the aforementioned questions, several knowledge sources are of paramount importance. The primary sources and the secondary ones played a vital role. The Acts, speeches, reports , books, blogs' articles, journal articles, websites and YouTube videos carry among their a myriad of realities about women in the “Men’s House”.



**Chapter**

**One**

**Chapter One  
Historical Background to Women’s Political Integration in  
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### 1.1 Introduction

The female partial suffrage in 1918 paved the way for an unchallengeable women's presence in the political arena joining men in the process of decision-making. This year, all women reaching the age of 30 and above were allowed to vote through the enactment of the People's Representation Act. The same year carried another political breakthrough for women. They were, again in 1918, allowed to stand as Members of Parliament (MPs) through the parliamentary passage of the Women's Qualification Act. The latter gave women ageing 21 and more a chance to stand as MPs to be elected and to enter parliament as decision-makers.

The desire for equal franchise on the same terms as men persisted after 1918. In 1928, the enfranchisement of women reached its zenith when all women, reaching the age of 21, were fully enfranchised on the same terms as men in the light of the Equal Franchise Act (1928). The universal suffrage opened new horizons for women to choose their representatives in parliament<sup>1</sup> and started embarking on the process of political representation in parliament as an institution devoted for decision-making. The first woman as MP in the British history Nancy Astor (1919-1945)<sup>2</sup> paved the way for the entry of more women into the House of Commons.<sup>3</sup> Women MPs experienced a kind of marginalization and underrepresentation in the "Men's House"<sup>1</sup> (parliament).

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<sup>1</sup> Parliament is a group of people who make the laws. The most common meaning of parliament refers to a country's legislative (law-making) body. The word comes in part from the French verb *parler*, which means to speak, which makes sense since this group of people assemble to talk about laws and issues. Known as "the Mother of Parliaments", the UK's parliament was one of the ancient parliaments in the world. Before the establishment of parliament in England, the management of the monarchy was the duty of the monarch (kings and queens). The English parliament is a bicameral<sup>1</sup> one; consisting of two chambers or houses the House of Lords (The Upper House) and the House of Commons (The Lower House). "The History and Workings of the UK Parliament", *About-Britain.Com* <https://about-britain.com/institutions/parliament.htm> (Accessed November 18, 2021).

<sup>2</sup> Nancy Witcher Astor (1879-1964) was the first woman to sit in the British House of Commons. On 1st December 1919, Nancy Astor took her oath in the House of Commons, a momentous day as she became the first female MP to sit in parliament. She continued to serve as an MP until the end of the war in 1945 when she was advised by her colleagues and husband not to stand again. Jessica Brain, "Nancy Astor", *Historic UK* <https://www.historic-uk.com/CultureUK/Nancy-Astor/> (Accessed May 13, 2022)

<sup>3</sup> The word "Commons" is derived from the Norman French word "communes" referring to "geographic and collective communities of their representatives". The House of Commons is the short name, but its full and official name is "The Honourable the Commons of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland in Parliament Assembled". It included 635 members elected each five years through holding general elections. From those 635 members, only 516 went for England's Parliament. Unlike the House of Lords, all the members in the House of Commons were elected holding office till the dissolution parliament decided by the Prime Minister. "United Kingdom", 131

When the Second World War (WWII) flared up in 1939, women proved themselves as active supporters to war efforts and those women MPs tremendously supported the war through setting several decisions that were workable for effectively calling women to run war works when men were busy fighting in the battlefields on the one hand. On the other hand, women MPs seized the opportunity of the war to defend women's rights. This chaotic era that culminated in the absence of men represented an opportunity for women to prove they were able to assume male responsibilities.

This chapter, in fact, aims at investigating the nature of women political integration extending from the dawn of their partial enfranchisement to the end of the war. Moreover, it attempts to shed light on the different roles played by women as political participants and the nature of their contribution to war efforts. It tries to examine, additionally, the impact of the female full enfranchisement in 1928 on their political integration. Last but not least, this chapter carries among its folding facts about the reaction of male MPs towards the first female admission into the House of Commons that was firstly established by men, managed by men and devoted to men.

### 1.2 Women: From Partial Enfranchisement into Political Admission(1918)

Women, in England, did not become political participants from scratch. Their admission to the House of Commons was not the first step. The dawn of their intervention in the process of decision making dated back to 1918 through gaining the right to vote. The latter was not vouchsafed to them overnight, but after a lengthy battle and a tough campaign for the franchise.. The female suffrage movement started in the nineteenth century and evolved in the twentieth century to become more violent. What seems surprising is that women were fighting for the vote and over night they were allowed to become MPs, an achievement that they were not battling for.

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[http://archive.ipu.org/parline-e/reports/arc/united\\_kingdom\\_1979\\_e.pdf](http://archive.ipu.org/parline-e/reports/arc/united_kingdom_1979_e.pdf) (Accessed November25,2021)

<sup>1</sup> Brian Harrison, "Women in a Men's House: The Women MPs, 1919-1945", in *Women at Westminster: An Account of Women in the British Parliament, 1918-1966*, ed. Pamela Brookes (London: Peter Davies, 1967),628.



### 1.2.1 The Beginning of Female Peaceful Suffrage Movement (1866)

Suffrage or the right to vote is one of the pivotal ingredients and characteristics of democracy. Through suffrage, voters can, in every corner of the world, choose their representatives in parliaments and, above all, select the ones seen as appropriate to hold political responsibilities. Before the start of the suffrage movement in England, women were ultimately excluded from democratic principles. They lived in a patriarchal community deprived from any political right despite the range of gains they had such as property ownership and access to higher education. Being exempted from voting was perceived as injustice, humiliation and discrimination against women.

In the 1800's, things took another turn. Women grew more aware and conscious of the total importance of the suffrage. They believed that they were living in society and they were taxed, so their voices should be heard and they must be represented. They, firstly, embarked on the process of claiming for the vote by hook or by crook. What triggered their movement was the 1832 Reform Act. The latter, known as the Great Reform Act or the First Reform Act, extended the vote to men only. Before the passage of the Act, a woman called Mary Smith<sup>1</sup> presented a petition to the male MP Henry Hunt (1830-1833) to be introduced to the House of Commons. The 1832 Reform Act, excluding women from the franchise, listed several reforms. Among the important ones, it enfranchised "the small landowner's tenant farmers and shopkeepers, all the householders who paid a yearly rental of £10 or more and some lodgers"<sup>2</sup>. Women continued to be denied the vote and the first petition was in vain. They needed to organize themselves and act as one class, not individually.

Women suffragists started their suffrage movement in 1866 in a peaceful way relying on petitions to parliament without any resort to violence. It is important to point out that not all the male MPs were against enfranchising women. There were men in the House of

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<sup>1</sup> Mary Smith was a woman from Stanmore in Yorkshire, says that she pays taxes and is subject to the law, so she did not see why she should not be able to vote. She introduced the first petition presented by Henry Hunt MP to the House of Commons. *The Historic England Blog*, February 6, 2018 <https://heritagecalling.com/2018/02/06/how-the-vote-was-won/> (Accessed May 13, 2022).

<sup>2</sup> "The Reform Act 1832", UK Parliament <https://www.parliament.uk/about/living-heritage/evolutionofparliament/houseofcommons/reformacts/overview/reformact1832/> (Accessed April 15, 2022)

Commons who worked on helping women to get the vote. John Stuart Mill and the husband of one of women suffragists Henry Fawcett remained good examples of male champions of universal suffrage.

On June 7, 1866, the Victorian philosopher, economist and MP, John Stuart Mill (1805-1873), presented the second petition that encapsulated 1500 women signatures.<sup>1</sup> It was presented in an attempt to enfranchise women in the 1867 Reform Act<sup>2</sup>, but in vain. Furthermore, he kept endeavoring to make the suffrage for women a reality. On May 20, 1867, Stuart Mill proposed an amendment to the 1867 Reform Act through replacing the word "man" with "person". The amendment never accepted in parliament and the female enfranchisement remained in question.<sup>3</sup> Introducing his amendment, he commented:

Whether there is any adequate justification for continuing to exclude an entire half of the community, not only from admission, but from the capability of being ever admitted within the pale of the Constitution, though they may fulfill all the conditions legally and constitutionally sufficient in every case but theirs<sup>4</sup>

More importantly, "the Ladies Petition"<sup>5</sup> marked the official and the organized beginning of the female suffrage campaign. They strive to convince parliamentarians in the House of Commons to grant the vote to women householders. It was urgent to give the vote to "all householders, without distinction of sex, who possess such property or rental qualification as your Honourable House may determine".<sup>6</sup>

The 1866 petition was not drafted overnight. The final petition was the outcome of preparation, women's meetings and the process of signatures' collection. In May 1866, Barbara Bodichon (1827-1891)<sup>7</sup> wrote to John Stuart Mill's stepdaughter Helen Taylor

<sup>1</sup> "Women's Suffrage Timeline", British Library Learning, February 6, 2018 <https://www.bl.uk/votes-for-women/articles/womens-suffrage-timeline> (Accessed April 15, 2022)

<sup>2</sup> The Act increased the electorate to almost 2.5 million men. The most important change was the granting of the vote to occupiers in the boroughs (people who rented properties rather than owning them). "Second Reform Act of 1867" <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/guides/z6c6cqt/revision/8> (Accessed April 17, 2022)

<sup>3</sup> Sofia A. Van Wingerden, *The Women's Suffrage Movement in Britain, 1866-1928* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 1999), 11.

<sup>4</sup> "Representation of the People Bill", House of Commons Debates, 20 May 1867, C. 817.

<sup>5</sup> Wingerden, 02

<sup>6</sup> Wingerden, 02.

<sup>7</sup> Barbara Leigh Smith Bodichon (1827-91) was one of the foremost founders of the women's rights movement in Britain. "Barbara Leigh Smith", *The Victorian Web* <https://victorianweb.org/gender/wojtczak/bodichon.html> (Accessed May 14, 2022)

(1831-1907) proposing for her the idea of claiming for the vote. In her letter to Helen, she wrote: "I [Barbara Bodichon] am very anxious to have some conversation with you about the possibility of doing something towards getting women votes' and proposed 'to try simply for what we were most likely to get'"<sup>1</sup> Helen agreed and welcomed the idea believing the 1867 Reform Act was under discussion, It would be very possible for women to be enfranchised in the light of the next 1867 Reform Act. In her letter to Bodichon, Helen replied:

It is very desirable that women who wish for political enfranchisement should say so .... I[Helen Taylor] think also that it is utterly out of the question to suppose that there is the slightest chance of anything whatever being now obtained'. Still, '[i]f a tolerably numerous petition can be got up,my father will gladly undertake to present it'<sup>2</sup>

The first and the important thing needed was the collection of enough number of signatures.<sup>3</sup> Helen Taylor and Barbara Bodichon, helped by other women suffragists Elizabeth Garrett (1836-1917), Emily Davies (1830-1921), Bessie Rayner Parkes (1829-1925) and Jessie Boucherett (1825-1905) formed a committee, known as "the Informal Ladies Petition Committee"<sup>4</sup> and they started working on the wording of the petition. The meetings used to be held at Elizabeth Garrett's home and a number of letters were exchanged between those women to clarify the points they are interested in.<sup>5</sup> To gather the signatures, Clementia Taylor (1810-1908) opened her home for receiving women who were eager to sign. Women used to write their names and their addresses as form of signature.<sup>6</sup>

The 1867 Act excluded women from the electorate based on "legal incapacity". The majority of male MPs kept rejecting the admission of women in the electorate because they believe that the vote is not an affair undertaken by females.

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<sup>1</sup> Quoted in A.P.W. Robson, "The Founding of the National Society for Women's Suffrage 1866-1867" *Canadian Journal of History*, Vol. 8 (1973): 7-8 in Wingerden, 10

<sup>2</sup> Helen Taylor to Barbara Bodichon, 9 May 1866, 7/BMCjBI, Fawcett Library (FL)

<sup>3</sup> Gillian Murphy, "The 1866 Women's Suffrage Petition", July 25, 2018 <https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/lsehistory/2016/06/07/the-1866-womens-suffrage-petition/> (Accessed April 17, 2022)

<sup>4</sup> Wingerden, 10.

<sup>5</sup> Murphy, "The 1866 Women's Suffrage Petition".

<sup>6</sup> Murphy, "The 1866 Women's Suffrage Petition".

Reform Act would nonetheless exclude women from voting because women were under a legal incapacity. Women had no right to take part in public affairs, not because of any inferiority of the species, but because of their position in the world: the absence of such a right is referable to the fact that in this country, in modern times, chiefly out of respect to women, and a sense of decorum, and not from their want of intellect, or their being for any other such reason unfit to take part in the government of the country, they have been excused from taking any share in this department of public affairs<sup>1</sup>

By the same token, to make the female suffrage a public issue, John Stuart Mill published an essay entitled “the Subjection of Women” in 1869. He glorified gender equality, women rights and, above all, the importance of the vote for women. He wrote:

The principle that regulates the existing social relations between the two sexes—the legal subordination of one sex to the other—is wrong itself, and is now one of the chief obstacles to human improvement; and it ought to be replaced by a principle of perfect equality that doesn't allow any power or privilege on one side or disability on the other..... But the true virtue of human beings is fitness to live together as equals.... If you agree with me about the equality of women in the family, I don't expect to have much trouble convincing you about the other aspect of the just equality of women, namely their admissibility to all the functions and occupations that have until now been the monopoly of the stronger sex [Mill's phrase]. Why have women's disabilities outside the home been clung to? I mean, of course: why have men clung to their belief in the disabilities of women outside the home?<sup>2</sup>

Besides the male support, women were obliged to strengthen their peaceful campaign. They started establishing pro-suffrage bodies to make from their demand an official one. The first organization labeled Manchester National Society for Women's Suffrage (MNSWS) was formed in 1867 and another one called London National Society for Women's Suffrage (LNSWS) was formed the same year. The latter used to be an informal committee formed to work on the 1866 petition to parliament. Through these couple of organizations, women could speak out their desire for the vote through organizing public meetings to clarify their demands to each other. The first female public meeting and the new chapter for their campaign started in the Free Trade Hall on April 14,

<sup>1</sup> Chorlton v. Lings, 4 CP. 374, 388 (1868)

<sup>2</sup> John Stuart Mill, “The Subjection of Women”, General Reference Collection 8413 , BLL01002492949

1868. During the different stages of the campaign, women suffragists, sometimes, found a shelter in restaurants and teahouses.

The establishment of pro-suffrage organizations surged the coming year. In 1879, the umbrella organization National Union of Women Suffrage Societies (NUWSS) included 17 organizations<sup>1</sup>. It was founded by the leading female suffragist Millicent Garrett Fawcett (1847-1929)<sup>2</sup>. All the petitions presented to parliament in the 1860's were defeated because Victorian Britain (1837-1901) was overshadowed by the female domesticity. It was known as "The Age of the Home"<sup>3</sup>. The vote and the female immersion in political matters were seen as a threat to their femininity. Decision-making was and would remain a male task only.

Besides petitions to the House of Commons, the publication of pamphlets, preparation of leaflets and public meetings played an essential role in attracting more women suffragists to struggle for the vote and, most importantly, to make people aware of the necessity of the vote for women. As an example, the LNSWS published a pamphlet in 1884 in which the urgent need for the vote was ingrained. The pamphlet carried among its folding the 25 reasons behind needing the vote as a way to list the reasons why women needed the vote. It was written:

Because it is the foundation of all political liberty that those who obey the law should be able to have a voice in choosing those who make the law, because it is the foundation of the British constitution that taxation and representation should go together, because parliament should be the reflection of the wishes of the people, because the enfranchisement of

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<sup>1</sup> "Birth of a Movement", *Historic England* <https://historicengland.org.uk/research/inclusive-heritage/womens-history/suffrage/birth-of-a-movement/> (Accessed April 15,2022)

<sup>2</sup> Millicent Garret Fawcett (1847-1929) was the most influential leader of the moderate women's suffrage movement in Britain from the 1860s to the 1920s. As the president of the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies (NUWSS), which was formed in England in 1897 she played a key role in gaining the right to vote for women in England during a time when there was an almost unanimous male opposition to female suffrage. "Millicent Garrett Fawcett", *A Digital Exhibition & Encyclopedia* <https://hist259.web.unc.edu/millicentgarrettfawcett/> (Accessed May14,2022)

<sup>3</sup> Brigitte Remy-Hébert, "The First Women's Movement: Suffragist Struggles in the 19<sup>th</sup> and Early 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries", 04 [https://www.jfki.fu-berlin.de/academics/SummerSchool/Dateien2011/Papers/juncker\\_remy.pdf](https://www.jfki.fu-berlin.de/academics/SummerSchool/Dateien2011/Papers/juncker_remy.pdf) (Accessed April 15,2022)

women is a question of public well-being, and not a help to any political party or sect....<sup>1</sup>

The pamphlet included also women suffragists' writings about the reasons that led them to fight for the vote. Among them, it can be listed Miss Harriet Grote (1792-1879), Mrs Maria G Grey (1816-1906), Marta Crawford Merington and Paulina Irby (1831-1911).<sup>2</sup>

Until 1884, no progress had made and no parliamentary promise was given to enfranchise women and, even, the idea of franchise, was not an important topic in parliamentary debates. The parliamentary exclusion from women from taking part in elections persisted through time. Another Reform Act<sup>3</sup> was passed in 1884 extending the suffrage to men, but not even considering a limited suffrage to women. The same scenario of the parliamentary onslaught on enfranchising women was repeated in the 1890's. Until 1903, the suffrage movement was referred to by historians as "doldrums"<sup>4</sup> in which no progress was made and the right to vote was still unreachable quest. For this reason, some women suffragists thought about being violent in their campaign.

### 1.2.2. The Militant Suffrage Movement (1903-1914)

Determining no result under the peaceful and the respectable tactics, another group of women, dubbed 'suffragettes'<sup>5</sup> organized themselves to claim for the right to vote in a violent way. They believed that the resort to militancy would be fruitful strategy. Emmeline

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<sup>1</sup> Bristol and West of England Branch of the National Society for Women Suffrage, LSE Digital Library, UDC box 343

<sup>2</sup> For more details about the content of their writings, see **APPENDIX A , P 261**

<sup>3</sup> The Third Reform Act of 1884 brought the franchise in the counties into line with the 1867 householder and lodger franchise for boroughs. "Third Reform Act 1884" <https://www.parliament.uk/about/living-heritage/evolutionofparliament/houseofcommons/reformacts/overview/one-man-one-vote/> (Accessed April 17, 2022)

<sup>4</sup> Barbara Winslow, "Sisters of Suffrage: British and American Women Fight for the Vote", The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History (2009-2019), <http://ap.gilderlehrman.org/history-by-era/politics-reform/essays/sisters-suffrage-british-and-american-women-fight-for-vote> (Accessed April 15, 2022)

<sup>5</sup> The term suffragette was firstly coined in January 1906 by a British *Daily Mail* reporter while covering the Women's Social and Political Union and their militant demonstrations demanding the right to vote. (The fights for suffrage in Great Britain and the United States overlapped.) Belittling and mocking the demonstrators' efforts, the male reporter used the feminized and twee play on the word *suffragist*, which denotes a person advocating to expand voting rights. Erica Gonzales, "How the Term *Suffragette* Evolved from Its Sexist Roots", *Bazaar*, August 18, 2020 <https://www.harpersbazaar.com/culture/politics/a33633227/suffragette-meaning-history/> (Accessed April 17, 2022)

Pankhurst (1858-1928)<sup>1</sup> and her daughters Christabel (1880-1958), Sylvia (1882-1960)<sup>2</sup> and Adela (1885-1961) established the Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU) in 1903. It was a suffragist organization devoted to strengthening violent methods to convince the male MPs to grant women the vote. Emmeline and others chose their own adopted motto "Deeds not Words"<sup>3</sup> Even men perceived the idea of resorting to militancy as a fruitful tactic that would acquaint women with the vote. The Irish political activist George Bernard Shaw stated:

If I [George Bernard Shaw] were a woman I'd simply refuse to speak to any man or do anything for men until I'd got the vote. I'd make my husband's life a burden and everybody miserable generally. Women should have a revolution. They should shoot, kill, maim, destroy until they are given the vote<sup>4</sup>

Emmeline Pankhurst, her daughters and other suffragettes campaigned violently to acquire the franchise on the same terms as men. They hinged on a number of militant tactics, described as "aggressive"<sup>5</sup>, to push the male MPs to change their mind and grant women the vote. Their activities aimed at destruction, disturbance and chaos spread. They wanted to spread "an irreparable damage"<sup>6</sup> as revenge against the male MPs. The suffragettes believed that the civil disobedience and the forceful intervention might alter things. If the male authority deprived them of their right, then this male autocracy must meet bitter repercussions. From 1903 to the outbreak of the First World War, the militant campaign represented the female desire for the suffrage.

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<sup>1</sup> Emmeline Pankhurst (1858-1929) was a militant champion of [woman suffrage](#) whose 40-year campaign achieved complete success in the year of her death, when British women obtained full [equality](#) in the voting franchise. Her daughter [Christabel Harriette Pankhurst](#) also was prominent in the woman [suffrage](#) movement. "Emmeline Pankhurst" <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Emmeline-Pankhurst> (Accessed May14,2022)

<sup>2</sup> Sylvia Pankhurst was a political activist and campaigner for women's rights, who is remembered chiefly for her use of militant tactics in the fight for women's right to vote. she was imprisoned for the first of many times in 1906. The First World War caused a rift in the Pankhurst family: while Emmeline and Christabel supported the war effort, Sylvia emerged as a radical socialist and pacifist. "Sylvia Pankhurst" <https://www.english-heritage.org.uk/visit/blue-plaques/sylvia-pankhurst/> (Accessed May14,2022)

<sup>3</sup> "Start of the Suffragette Movement", UK Parliament <https://www.parliament.uk/about/living-heritage/transformingsociety/electionsvoting/womenvote/overview/startssuffragette-/> (Accessed April 15,2022)

<sup>4</sup> George Bernard Shaw, quoted in Antonia Raeburn, *The Militant Suffragettes* (London: Michael Joseph, 1973),16

<sup>5</sup> Ina Zweiniger-Bargielowska, *Women in Twentieth Century Britain* (New York:Routledge, 2001),02

<sup>6</sup> Julia Bush, *Women Against the Vote : Female Anti-Suffragism in Britain* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 62

In October 1905, the suffragettes' forceful involvement started. The event that signaled the beginning of the militant campaign was when Christabel Pankhurst and Annie Kenney (1879-1953) were jailed due to their interruption of a Liberal Party meeting at Manchester Free Trade Hall and because of the disrespect of Christabel to the police. It was reported that "wishing to commit an assault, Pankhurst spit at a policeman and ended up in jail".<sup>1</sup> They asked the British Foreign Secretary Edward Grey (1905-1916) when suffrage would be granted to women, but they were ousted brutally from the meeting.<sup>2</sup>

This event attracted more suffragettes to start thriving for more forms of civil disobedience. They embarked on a process of demonstration, arsons, bombings, destroying governmental buildings and as a kind of a disrespect for male MPs, they used to throw stones at them whenever they were outside, delivering speeches or gathering for parliamentary meetings. In 1909, the militant movement reached its peak when the suffragettes were involved in a direct physical attack of MPs and Prime Ministers (PM). Their outcry was addressed to the anti-suffragist Prime Minister Herbert Asquith (1908-1916)<sup>3</sup>. Several imprisonments and women's hunger strikes developed. It was estimated that in 1909, more than 110 hunger strikes were carried out; in 36 of these cases, the prisoners were forcibly fed.<sup>4</sup> Forced-feeding was a drastic measure taken by the government to avoid the death of great number of women in jail.

In 1910, a pro-suffrage Bill was presented to the House of Commons for the sake of enfranchising the married women and women property holders. If it would be accepted, this meant the enfranchisement of 1.000.00 women.<sup>5</sup> The Bill was introduced for parliamentary approval thrice, but it was rejected by Prime Minister Herbert Asquith who

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<sup>1</sup> Susan Kingsley Kent, *Sex and Suffrage in Britain 1860-1914* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), 179.

<sup>2</sup> Kingsley Kent, 179.

<sup>3</sup> Herbert Henry Asquith (1852-1928) firstly reached parliamentary politics as a Liberal MP in 1886. In the Twentieth century, he was elected as a Liberal Prime Minister serving from 1908-1916. Charles Arnold Baker, *The Companion to British History, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed* (New York: Taylor & Francis e-Library, 2007), 60-61

<sup>4</sup> "The National Women's Social and Political Union", Annual Report (1909), 28 February 1910, 14 <https://digital.library.lse.ac.uk/objects/lse:pop498wiw> (Accessed May15,2022)

<sup>5</sup> "Conciliation Bills", *Cove* <https://editions.covecollective.org/chronologies/conciliation-bills> (Accessed April 17,2022)



promised women the franchise in the 1910 General Election campaign.<sup>1</sup> He betrayed them through his parliamentary rejection of the Conciliation Bill three times.<sup>2</sup> His stubborn view of denying women the vote triggered more intense civil disobedience. On November 18, 1910, 300 suffragettes made the move to The House of Commons to meet the PM, but he refused to speak with them. They gathered in the Caxton Hall waiting, but in vain. Their confrontations with the police who prevented them from entering resulted in a series of assaults. The bitter confrontations between the Police took place on Friday. This day was known in the history of the female suffrage campaign “the Black Friday”<sup>3</sup>.

The suffragettes were treated in a inhuman way by the police as they were tortured and severely beaten. Christabel Pankhurst stated “women were beaten, kicked and stripes almost naked. The hair of the women was torn out in handfuls”<sup>4</sup>. The police imprisoned many women suffragettes. In prison, also, they kept demanding the vote even if this would cost them their lives. They carried on the hunger strikes.

In 1913, the suffragettes shifted to a new kind of destruction that aimed at expanding unbearable anarchy in England. They shifted from destroying and burning the governmental institutions into destroying public buildings such as telegraph, telephones wires, shops, postal boxes, tea-houses, schools. Moreover, they resorted to burning churches and smashing windows in the different streets of England.<sup>5</sup> From 1905 to 1914, hundreds of suffragettes were imprisoned and thousands of properties were destroyed.<sup>6</sup> When the Great War (WWI) flared up in 1914, the women suffragists and the suffragettes halted the peaceful and the violent activities to be devoted to supporting the war efforts. The role of their pro-suffrage organizations NUWSS and WSPU shifted into pro-war bodies. Through those organizations, Millicent Fawcett and Emmeline Pankhurst

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<sup>1</sup> “Militancy and Conciliation 1900-1912”, UK Parliament <https://www.parliament.uk/about/living-heritage/transformingsociety/electionsvoting/womenvote/case-studies-women-parliament/suffragettes-in-trousers/militancy-and-conciliation/> (Accessed April 17,2022)

<sup>2</sup> Hannah Awcock, “On This Day: Black Friday, 18th November 1910”, *Turbulent Isles*, November 18, 2018 <https://turbulentisles.com/2018/11/18/on-this-day-black-friday-18th-november-1910/> (Accessed April 29,2022)

<sup>3</sup> Harold L.Smith, *The British Women's Suffrage Campaign 1866-1928*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.(United Kingdom: British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data,2001),49

<sup>4</sup> Kingsley Kent, *Sex and Suffrage in Britain*, 181

<sup>5</sup> Kingsley Kent, 181.

<sup>6</sup> Wingerden, 73.

started supporting the war through encouraging the female mobilization to serve in the home front.

### 1.2.3 The Suffrage Ladies during WWI (1914-1918)

In England, women regardless their age, were ready to serve the home front. As war workers, they replaced men in the most difficult jobs. The war, above all, was an occasion that negated the already borne-in-mind stereotypes stating that woman place was the home. During WWI, women were outdoors serving their country and preserving the sector of employment when men were absent joining the armed forces. Statistics revealed the female increased recruitment during the war. "Between 1914 and 1918, an estimated two million women replaced men in employment, resulting in an increase in the proportion of women in total employment from 24 per cent in July 1914 to 37 per cent by November 1918"<sup>1</sup>

The outbreak of WWI altered the process of the suffrage cause. The female suffragists and suffragettes suspended all pro-suffrage activities and readied themselves to support the war. Before the war, the suffragettes, under Emmeline Pankhurst, were acting against the government, but directly after the start of the war, they became governmental proponents through helping Prime Minister Herbert Asquith (1908-1916) to recruit more women as war workers. This revealed the female readiness in times of danger. Though deprived of the vote, women suffragists and suffragettes never stood hand-tied whenever needed to serve their country. Emmeline vehemently believed that "women couldn't fight, they shouldn't vote"<sup>2</sup>. She called women to work as nurses, doctors, munitions' workers, dockyards workers, farmers, transport industry workers, factories and arsenals workers, banks workers.<sup>3</sup>

Emmeline and her daughter Christabel devoted their militant organization WSPU to support the war rather than violently claiming for the vote. Instead militancy, they

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<sup>1</sup> "Suffrage in Wartime", UK Parliament <https://www.parliament.uk/about/living-heritage/transformingsociety/electionsvoting/womenvote/overview/suffragetteswartime/> (Accessed April 27,2022)

<sup>2</sup> Joan Montgomery Byles, "Women's Experience of World War One: Suffragists, Pacifists and Poets" *Women Studies International Forum* Vol.08,n° 5 (1985):473

<sup>3</sup> "Women and the First World War", The National Archives [https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/pathways/firstworldwar/document\\_packs/women.htm](https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/pathways/firstworldwar/document_packs/women.htm) (Accessed April 27,2022)

favoured militarism through their magazine *Britannia*<sup>1</sup>. Their periodical was devoted to the war propaganda to publish anything pertinent with the pro-war cause. Furthermore, they delivered speeches expounding the importance of being ready to support the war effort. Their endeavours, to have a hand in protection England during wary circumstances, reflected their “patriotic feminism”<sup>2</sup>. Christabel glorified the role played by women war workers and acknowledging the female collaboration to save England. She stated “[they were] the women who prevent the collapse of the nation while men are fighting the enemy”<sup>3</sup>.

The suffragettes were not the sole war supporters; the female peaceful suffragists under Millicent Garrett Fawcett played a focal role during the war. Women suffragists and suffragettes believed that supporting the war effort would push men to change their minds over the important role women could play in men's works. They would be, inevitably, rewarded by men in parliament. Fawcett disbanded all the pro-suffrage activities and devoted its pro-suffrage organization the NUWSS to support the war efforts. Millicent Fawcett, represented by her organization NUWSS, started forming, financing women's field hospitals where injured soldiers would be treated and staffing ambulances.<sup>4</sup> The NUWSS brought women nurses to serve in those hospitals. In the light of Fawcett's doughty intervention to support the war, she claimed “Let us show ourselves worthy of citizenship whether our claim to it be recognized or not”.<sup>5</sup> This does not mean that she forgot about the suffrage. She kept demanding the suffrage during the war unlike the WSPU which totally forget about the suffrage.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> During the war, the name of the WSPU's periodical was changed into *Britannia*. Before the war, it was named *Suffragette*. Angela K. Smith, “The Pankhursts and the War: Suffrage Magazines and First World War Propaganda”, *Women's History Review* Vol 12, n° 01 (2003): 103

<sup>2</sup> William Murphy, “Suffragettes”, *International Encyclopedia of the First World War* Version 1, December 5, 2018, 05 <https://encyclopedia.1914-1918-online.net/article/suffragettes> (Accessed April 27, 2022)

<sup>3</sup> June Purvis, *Emmeline Pankhurst: A Biography* (London:Routledge, 2002), 268.

<sup>4</sup> Nicoletta Gullace “British Women would have waited far longer for the Vote without World War I”, *The Conversation*, August 6, 2014 <https://theconversation.com/british-women-would-have-waited-far-longer-for-the-vote-without-world-war-i-29860> (Accessed April 29, 2022)

<sup>5</sup> Gullace “British Women Would Have Waited far Longer for the Vote”.

<sup>6</sup> Gillian Wearing, “Millicent Fawcett”, *14-18 Now*, April 24, 2018 <https://www.1418now.org.uk/commissions/millicent-fawcett/about-millicent-fawcett/> (Accessed April 28, 2022)

The suspension of the suffrage activities was opposed by some women suffragettes. They were not against supporting the war, but they were strongly disagreeing about forgetting about the suffrage cause fought for years before. To keep demanding the vote during the war, another pro-suffrage organization was established in March 1916 labeled as the Independent Women's Social and Political Union (IWSPU). It was established by Charlotte Marsh (1887-1961)<sup>1</sup> who believed that the suffrage question had not to be neglected in times of war; it should be always in action even if the government was busy. Even the IWSPU had its own journal *the Independent Suffragette*. Other leading women suffragettes in the IWSPU were Edith Rigby (1872-1948) and Dorothy Evans (1888-1944). It suspended its anti-war propaganda in 1917.

It is important to point out that not all the female suffragists and suffragettes supported the war. There were other pro-suffrage women who were hostile to serve in the home front whatever the factors labeled as "anti-war women".<sup>2</sup> They believed that the government that kept depriving women of their democratic right did not deserve to be supported and helped in hard times. Among those women who opposed the support of the war were: Sylvia Pankhurst, Emily Hobhouse (1860-1926), Catherine Marshall (1880-1961), Helena Swanwick (1864-1939), Olive Schreiner (1855-1920) and Kate Courtney (1878-1974).<sup>3</sup>

Sylvia Pankhurst left the WSPU and formed the East London Federation of the Suffragettes (ELFS) in January 1914. She was supported by other anti-war women from the ELFS including Melvina Walker (born 1874), Norah Smith (1874-1963) and Jessie Paine (1864-1933) to publicly oppose the war and remain far from offering any slight piece of help. Instead of supporting the war, Sylvia started claiming for the rights of working women through the ELFS journal entitled the *Woman's Dreadnought*<sup>4</sup>. In this periodical,

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<sup>1</sup> Charlotte Marsh was a militant suffragette who joined the WSPU in 1907. In June 1908, Charlotte was arrested for obstructing the police and sentenced to a month in Holloway. During World War I, Charlotte was Prime Minister Lloyd George's chauffeur. She left the WSPU in 1916 and established her own IWSPU. "Charlotte 'Charlie' Marsh", *Suffragette Stories* <https://suffragettestories.omeka.net/bio-charlotte-charlie-marsh> (Accessed May14,2022)

<sup>2</sup> Katherine Connelly, "Sylvia Pankhurst, the First World War and the Struggle for Democracy" *Revue Francaise de civilization Britannique* XX-1 (2015): 04 <https://doi.org/10.4000/rfcb.275>

<sup>3</sup> Montgomery Byles, 473

<sup>4</sup> *The Woman's Dreadnought* was a weekly newspaper produced in London in 1914 by the anti-war suffragette Sylvia Pankhurst. "Woman's Dreadnought", *Oxford Reference*

any issue linked with war, mobilization, patriotism, nationalism, especially women's conscription was bitterly<sup>1</sup> attacked through plenty of anti-war articles.

Although opposing the war, the pro-war efforts by the female suffragists and suffragettes were not for granted. In 1916, debates over the partial enfranchisement and the reformation of the electoral process started in the House of Commons. Several legislations passed during war years guaranteeing electoral reforms. Great attention was paid to women suffrage question due to their important contribution to war efforts. The male MPs believed that they should, at least, reward women for their great war work they performed during the Great War.<sup>2</sup>

The Speaker of the Commons, James William Lowther (1905-1921), firstly suggested some electoral reforms. One of them was pertinent with partially enfranchising women.<sup>3</sup> In May 1917, the Bill was firstly introduced into the Commons. On June 19, 1917, Clause 4 tackling the enfranchisement of women was discussed. There were male MPs who opposed the clause denying women the vote. One of them was the Conservative MP Frederick Banbury (1903-1924). He shared the same view of the anti-suffragist<sup>4</sup> Prime Minister Herbert Asquith.

Both of them believed that women were not and would not be qualified for the vote and the political representation would remain a male task without the intervention of women. He stated what Asquith already claiming "I [Frederick Banbury] oppose this, in my opinion, as a student of history and of our own public life, experience shows that the natural distinction of sex which admittedly differentiates the functions of men and women in many departments of human activity ought to be recognized, as it always has been recognized, in the sphere of Parliamentary representation"<sup>5</sup>. The male interest in the

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<https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780199646241.001.0001/acref-9780199646241-e-1493> (Accessed April 28,2022)

<sup>1</sup> K.Smith, "The Pankhursts and the War", 110.

<sup>2</sup> "Neither Fair, Nor Desirable, Nor Wise : The Representation of the People Bill", *UK Vote 100* , June 16,2017 <https://ukvote100.org/2017/06/16/the-representation-of-the-people-bill/> (Accessed April 28,2022)

<sup>3</sup> "Women Get the Vote", UK Parliament <https://www.parliament.uk/about/living-heritage/transformingsociety/electionsvoting/womenvote/overview/thevote/> (Accessed April 28,2022)

<sup>4</sup> "The Women's Suffrage Movement" <https://www.tchevalier.com/fallingangels/bckgrnd/suffrage/> (Accessed April 28,2022)

<sup>5</sup> "Neither Fair, Nor Desirable, Nor Wise : The Representation of the People Bill".

enfranchisement of women was not the lone issue paving the way for the limited suffrage. The woman leader of the NUWSS, Millicent Fawcett, played a vital role in the final agreement to grant women the vote. She led a deputation of women war workers to meet Liberal Prime Minister David Lloyd George<sup>1</sup> (1916-1922).<sup>2</sup>

The early hopes for allowing women to taste the sweet taste of democracy came in December 1917 when the House of Commons voted for the partial enfranchisement of women and passed the Bill to the House of Lords for more discussions on January 10, 1918. Fortunately, the Bill was not opposed in the House of Lords. Millicent Fawcett, tirelessly, was present enjoying the moment she waited for more than three decades. In February 1918, the Bill received the royal assent granting a limited suffrage to women under the leadership of Liberal Prime Minister David Lloyd George. He granted women, over the age of thirty, the limited franchise as a reward for the great war work they fulfilled during the war.

### 1.2.4 Women's Partial Enfranchisement (1918)

Following WWI, things took another turn concerning the suffrage cause. After lengthy debates lasting more than one year, women were partially enfranchised, but the equal enfranchisement on the same terms as men was still in question. Women over the age of thirty got the limited franchise in 1918. This was ingrained in the Representation of People Act of 1918. The age of thirty (30) was not chosen for granted to limit the female electoral involvement. There was a sole reason behind the age limitation. It was because the process of extension would not encapsulate large number of women. In his article entitled "Votes for Women: The Groundbreaking Election of 1918", Alwin Collinson (2018) explained the reason behind choosing the age of 30 and above in which women would be enfranchised. She wrote:

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<sup>1</sup> David Lloyd George (1863-1945) was British [Prime Minister](#) (1916–22) who dominated the British political scene in the latter part of [World War I](#). He was raised to the peerage in the House of Lords in the year of his death. "David Lloyd George", *Britannica*, March 22, 2022 <https://www.britannica.com/biography/David-Lloyd-George> (Accessed April 28, 2022)

<sup>2</sup> Wearing, "Millicent Fawcett".

Everybody knows why the age of thirty years was fixed as the age at which women could vote. It had nothing to do with their supposed capacity or incapacity between the ages of twenty-one and thirty-one. That limit was adopted in order to meet the objection to the extension of the franchise without some limit of the number of women voters. That is the reason why the age limit of thirty was introduced, in order to avoid extending the franchise to a very large number of women, for fear they might be in a majority in the electorate of this country. It was for that reason only, and it had nothing to do with their qualifications at all. No one would seriously suggest that a woman of twenty-five is less capable of giving a vote than a woman of thirty-five.<sup>1</sup>

The Representation of the People Bill, also called "limited suffrage bill"<sup>2</sup> was passed by the House of Commons on June 19, 1917. The House of Commons voted 385 to 55<sup>3</sup> to agree on the clause that stated the partial enfranchisement of women. The bill was not only drafted to enfranchise women, it was also devoted to enfranchise all men reaching the age of 21. Because it enfranchised only women who aged 30 or over, the bill denied women under the age of the thirty the parliamentary franchise.

There were several conditions that dictated the vote for women after they were partially enfranchised. The first criterion was the age over thirty. Another requirement, for women who reached the age of thirty and above, was that they had to be previous electors in local elections or married to men who had already taken part in local elections.<sup>4</sup> The third one was the property ownership. In the light of holding a property as a condition to vote, the bill enfranchised those women householders or those women whose husbands were householders. It enfranchised also women who were occupiers of property of £5<sup>5</sup> and female graduates from the British Universities.

The Representation of the People Bill became a law in February 6, 1918. It resulted in tripling the electorate rising from 7.7 million to 21.4 million. This meant the addition of

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<sup>1</sup> Alwin Collinson, "Votes for Women: The Groundbreaking Election of 1918", *Museum of London*, December 14, 2018 <https://www.museumoflondon.org.uk/discover/1918-election-first-time-women-voted> (Accessed November 12, 2021)

<sup>2</sup> Patricia E. Chu, *Race, Nationalism and the State in British and American Modernism*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 93.

<sup>3</sup> L. Smith, *The British Women's Suffrage Campaign 1866-1928*, 87

<sup>4</sup> Laura E. Nym Mayhal, "Suffrage and Political Activity", GALE Digital Collection [http://gdc.gale.com/assets/files/wws/GML40207\\_Suffrage.pdf](http://gdc.gale.com/assets/files/wws/GML40207_Suffrage.pdf) (Accessed June 4, 2016)

<sup>5</sup> June Purvis, "Emmeline Pankhurst in the Aftermath of Suffrage, 1918-1928" in *The Aftermath of Suffrage: Women, Gender and Politics*, ed. Julie V. Gottlieb and Richard Toye (England: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 19.

9.2 million female voters and 4.5 million male voters.<sup>1</sup> If light is shed on the statistics of women only, it was estimated that the Representation of the People Act enfranchised 8,400,000 women who comprised a percentage of 39, 60% of the electorate in 1918.<sup>2</sup> As mentioned before, one among the requirements for the new female voters was that they should be local electors or at least wives of local electors. This requirement forbade many women from voting although they met the other conditions. Although those women attained the age of thirty and above, they could not vote because they were not local electors before and even their husbands. It was reported that five million women (5,000,000)<sup>3</sup> who comprised 22%<sup>4</sup> of those women who attained the age of thirty and above in 1918.

The limited enfranchisement of women in 1918 was described as “a surprise for the suffragettes”<sup>5</sup> because they did not expect this political victory. This Act received a royal assent as a reward for women suffragists and suffragettes’ devotion to the war. It was stated in the Act in Chapter 64:

A woman shall be entitled to be registered as a parliamentary elector for a constituency if she has attained the age of thirty years; and is not subject to any legal incapacity; and is entitled to be registered as a local government elector in respect of the occupation in that constituency of land (not being a dwelling-house) of a yearly value of not less than five pounds or of a dwelling-house, or is the wife of a husband entitled to be so registered... [She] shall be entitled to be registered as a local government elector for any local government electoral area – where she would be entitled to be so registered; and where she is the wife of a man who is entitled to be so registered in respect of premises in which they both reside.<sup>6</sup>

Women played a very important role in the home front when men were outside involved in the battle fields. 2 million women started involving themselves in tasks already

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<sup>1</sup> “What Was the 1918 Representation of the People Act?”, *History Extra*, February 7, 2018 <https://www.historyextra.com/period/20th-century/what-was-the-1918-representation-of-the-people-act/> (Accessed April 18, 2022)

<sup>2</sup> H.L. Smith, 88.

<sup>3</sup> Mary Hilson, “Women Voters and the Rhetoric of Patriotism in the British General Election of 1918” *Women’s History Review*, Vol.10.No.2 (2001):327.

<sup>4</sup> Hilson, 327.

<sup>5</sup> Martin D. Pugh, “Politicians and the Woman’s Vote 1914-1918” *History* Vol59, n°197 (1974): 358

<sup>6</sup> Representation of the People Act, Catalogue ref: C65/6385



done by men only.<sup>1</sup> Women's effective participation in WWI led politicians to change their mind concerning their reluctance to grant women the vote. The British historian (born 1959) Jane Robinson confirmed that the Act was passed as an acknowledgement to women's replacement of men in most difficult jobs such as munitions works. She stated:

The activity of the suffrage campaigners "went a long way to proving that women were responsible and that they had the intelligence and application and articulacy to carry out the new responsibilities that they were given in the First World War, which in turn helped with getting the vote at the end of the war."<sup>2</sup> The partial enfranchisement was followed by another political victory for women in which they were officially welcomed in parliament as MPs.<sup>3</sup>

Women war workers were ready to support men in hard times. Their participation brought effective results after the war. Due to their brave involvement and their ability to run male works, they started to enjoy the seeds of democracy through being partially enfranchised.

### 1.2.5 The Dawn of Women's Political and Electoral Participation

The limited suffrage vouchsafed to women was followed by a political success for women. Directly after enfranchising them, women were officially allowed to stand as candidates to be elected to the House of Commons. The Women Qualification Act was enacted on November 21, 1918. It gave to all women reaching the age of 21, on the same terms as men, an opportunity to become MPs. Months later in 1919, the first woman MP Nancy Astor was elected to join men in the Commons. The political participation for women became, then, a reality.

Most importantly, this Act was brought into action without any demand or claim from women. They never organized a movement, or at least introduced a bill demanding the political admission into the parliamentary politics. It was a parliamentary overnight decision to include women in the House of Commons.<sup>4</sup> The Act stated "A woman shall not

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<sup>1</sup> "Representation of the People Act", *Gazette: Official Public Record* <https://www.thegazette.co.uk/awards-and-accreditation/content/149> (Accessed April 18,2022)

<sup>2</sup> "What Was the Representation of the People Act ?".

<sup>3</sup> "What Was the 1918 Representation of the People Act ?".

<sup>4</sup> Mari Catherine Takayanagi, "Parliament and Women, c.1900-1945," Phd Diss., ( London: King's College, 2012), 17

be disqualified by sex or marriage for being elected to or sitting or voting as a Member of the Commons House of Parliament”<sup>1</sup>

The first occasion when women rushed to vote came in December 1918 through taking part in the General Election of 1918. It was the first election when women comprised a 40% <sup>2</sup> percentage of the electorate. This election was described as “groundbreaking election”<sup>3</sup> since it represented a time when women firstly lived an outstanding moments in which their voices would be heard. It was estimated that the number of women who could vote in 1918 reached 8,5 million women and 17 female candidates, from different political parties<sup>4</sup>, stood as candidates to be elected. The results of the election revealed the victory of Prime Minister David Lloyd George supported by Conservatives to form a coalition government. The following table provides detailed statistics about the number of male and female candidates in the election, the votes, the share of the vote plus the seats won for the most pioneer political Parties (the Conservative Party<sup>5</sup>, the Labour Party<sup>6</sup>, the Liberal Party<sup>7</sup> and others. 17 women candidates stood in this

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<sup>1</sup>Parliament Qualification of Women Act , Chapter 47, Parliamentary Archives, HL/PO/PU/1/1918/8&9G5c47

<sup>2</sup> Collinson.

<sup>3</sup> Collinson.

<sup>4</sup> Those Political Parties included the Liberal Party, the Labour Party, The Conservative Party and the Women's Party. Collinson.

<sup>5</sup> The Conservative Party was established in 1834 by Robert Peel (1788-1850) who served as the Prime Minister from (1834–35, 1841–46). Lord Norton of Loth, “Conservative Party: Political Party United Kingdom” <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Conservative-Party-political-party-United-Kingdom> (Accessed November19,2021)

<sup>6</sup> The Labour Party emerged at the beginning of the twentieth century, but its origins dated back to 1874. In 1893, it was founded as the Independent Labour Party (ILP) by Keir Hardie (1856-1915). In 1900, the Labour Representation Committee (LRC)<sup>6</sup> was established. In 1906, it took the name the Labour Party after scoring 29 seats in the General Election of 1906. The Party came to represent the interests of the trade unions and working classes protect their rights in parliament. Rhiannon Vickers, *The Labour Party and the World: The Evolution of Labour's Foreign Policy 1900–51*, Vol1 (Manchester: Manchester University Press,2004),20/ “A Brief History of the Labour Party”, *History Extra*, April 6,2020<https://www.historyextra.com/period/20th-century/labour-party-history-facts-origin-uk-first-prime-minister-britain/> (Accessed November19,2021)

<sup>7</sup> The Liberal Party emerged in the mid -nineteenth century. It remained a minor one until the second half of the twentieth century. It did not enjoy political trends like the Conservative and the Labour Parties. Being merged with the Social Democratic Party, its name became the Liberal Democratic Party in 1988. All the Liberals shared a common principle that stated “the source of progress lay in the free exercise of individual energy”. Paul David Webb, “Liberal Party: Political Party, United Kingdom”, *Britannica* <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Liberal-Party-political-party-United-Kingdom> (Accessed November20,2021)

election<sup>1</sup>. They were divided as the following: 01 female conservative, 04 Labour, 04 Liberal and 08 women from other political parties.<sup>2</sup> 1918, women candidates argued that the 'woman's point of view' was needed in Parliament and emphasized their 'special knowledge' on matters concerning women and children.<sup>3</sup>

**Table 1.1. The Number of Candidates, Votes and Seats Won in the General Election of 1918 in England**

	Conservative Party	Labour Party	Liberal Democrats	Others
Candidates	352	291	327	181
Votes (Millions)	3.41	1.81	2.14	0.69
Share of Vote (%)	42.6	22.6	26.3	8.5
Seats Won	315	42	107	21

**Source:** Sam Pilling and Richard Cracknell, "UK Election Statistics: 1918- 2021: A Century of Elections", House of Commons Library Number CBP7529 , August 18, 2021 , 20-21

The figure below shows a "happy and smiling" woman, one of the millions of women who "walked shoulder to shoulder with their husbands, brothers, sons and lovers to vote for the first time in 1918 general election"<sup>4</sup>. Her smiling face represented the bliss expressed through being an elector. She accompanied her little daughter with her. This portrays the fact that even though being busy caring for the family and children, she made the move to the electoral station to choose her representative in parliament.

<sup>1</sup> "Parliament Qualification of Women Act" UK Parliament <https://www.parliament.uk/about/living-heritage/transformingsociety/electionsvoting/womenvote/parliamentary-collections/nancy-astor/parliament-qualification-of-women-act/> (Accessed April 18,2022)

<sup>2</sup> Elise Uberoi, Chris Watson, Shadi Daneshi, Paul Bolton and Richard Tunnicliffe, "Women in Politics and Public Life", Research Briefing , House of Commons Library Number01250, March04,2022 , 11 <https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/SN01250/SN01250.pdf> (Accessed April 20,2022)

<sup>3</sup> Lisa Berry-Waite , "20th Century History, Conferences/Seminars, Electoral Reform, Women And Parliament", *The History of Parliament*, JUNE 11,2019 <https://thehistoryofparliament.wordpress.com/2019/06/11/she-is-an-outsider-in-public-life-women-parliamentary-candidates-1918-1923/> (ACCESSED APRIL 18,2022)

<sup>4</sup> Collinson

**Figure 1.1.** A British Woman Voting for the First Time in the 1918 General Election



**Source:** Iona Hamilton, “Women Vote in a UK General Election for the First Time-December 1918”, *The Guardian*, December 14, 2018 <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/from-the-archive-blog/2018/dec/14/women-vote-uk-general-election-first-time-1918> (Accessed April 29, 2022)

Most of the female candidates in the general Election of 1918 were the female suffragettes who resorted to violent methods demanding the vote. From those candidates, it can be listed Christabel Pankhurst, Emmeline Pethick-Lawrence (1867-1954), Norah Dacre-Fox (1878-1961), Emily Phipps (1865 – 1943), Edith How-Martyn (1875 – 1954), Charlotte Despard (1844 – 1939) and Constance Markievicz (1868 – 1927)<sup>1</sup>. The latter did not serve as a suffragette in the militant campaign. The 8,5 million women, who were partially enfranchised, represented 40% of the female population in Britain. From those 17 standing candidates, only Constance Markievicz was elected, but she did not take her seat for it

<sup>1</sup> Constance Markievicz was an Anglo-Irish countess and political activist who was the first woman elected to the British Parliament (1918), though she refused to take her seat. She was also the only woman to serve in the first Dáil Éireann (Irish Assembly), in which she acted as minister of labour (1919–22). “Constance Markievicz”, *Britannica* <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Constance-Markievicz> (Accessed May 14, 2022)

served as a Deputy in the Irish Parliament.<sup>1</sup> The scarcity of the elected women candidates was the result of the political unpreparedness. Women candidates had only 23 days<sup>2</sup> to launch their electoral campaign before the general election of 1918. Their unreadiness to dig deep in their electoral programs triggered voter's reluctance to vote for them.

The early female limited political achievement meant a lot to women and it was considered as a political success since it was the outcome of ceaseless endeavours to gain the vote. The female political integration did not halt in 1918, but it was only the beginning of the female entry to parliament in small fractions. The second woman elected into the Commons and the first woman taking her seat there was Nancy Astor. She was the first woman pioneer in the already only-male led politics.

### 1.2.6 Nancy Astor: The First Woman MP

The first woman in the British history to get her seat in the House of Commons was Nancy Astor (1879-1964). She was elected in the 1919 by-election as a Conservative MP in November 15 representing the constituency of Plymouth. She remained in the House of Commons until her retirement in 1945 after 25 years of political service.<sup>3</sup> Her great political performance and her fascinating election campaign's style attracted more voters to repeatedly vote for her. She was elected in seven elections.<sup>4</sup>

Nancy Astor was the first woman reaching the only-male sphere (parliament) breaking all the barriers previously making it impossible for a woman to have a say in parliamentary legislations. The Minister of Munitions Winston Churchill (1917-1919)<sup>5</sup> was one of those people denying the role of women in politics and one of those who opposed the coming of Nancy Astor to parliament. Her presence in

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<sup>1</sup> Collinson.

<sup>2</sup> Lisa Berry-Waite, "I Stuck to Plymouth, Plymouth Stuck to Me': Nancy Astor, Electioneering and Female Parliamentary Candidacy", Open Library of Humanities, September 10, 2020, 04 [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/344813041\\_I\\_Stuck\\_to\\_Plymouth\\_Plymouth\\_Stuck\\_to\\_Me'\\_Nancy\\_Astor\\_Electioneering\\_and\\_Female\\_Parliamentary\\_Candidacy](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/344813041_I_Stuck_to_Plymouth_Plymouth_Stuck_to_Me'_Nancy_Astor_Electioneering_and_Female_Parliamentary_Candidacy) (Accessed April 29, 2022)

<sup>3</sup> "Women in Parliament: A Guide to the History of Women's Participation in Parliament and their Representation in the Historical Collections", Speaker's Advisory Committee on Works of Art, The Speaker's Art Fund, 25 <https://www.parliament.uk/globalassets/documents/WORKS-OF-ART/Women-in-Parliament-Catalogue.pdf> (Accessed November 26, 2021)

<sup>4</sup> Berry-Waite, 01

<sup>5</sup> Winston Churchill (1874-1965) was a British statesman, orator, and author and [Prime Minister](https://www.britannica.com/biography/Winston-Churchill/During-World-War-I) (1940-45, 1951-55). "Winston Churchill", *Britannica* <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Winston-Churchill/During-World-War-I> (Accessed May 14, 2022)

parliament was “embarrassing to him”<sup>1</sup>. He told her “we hope to freeze you out.”<sup>2</sup> He used other words of offense to address her like “yankee”<sup>3</sup> because she was an “American-born lady”.<sup>4</sup> As a reaction to this male humiliation, she sent him a letter telling that he MUST treat her fairly.<sup>5</sup> He apologized to her later.<sup>6</sup>

The male support to Astor played a focal role in her rising to candidacy in the by-election of 1919. She was the wife of a male MP Waldorf Astor (1910-1919) who supported her and even proposed the idea for her to stand as a candidate to take his seat after his withdrawal from the House of Commons to join the House of Lords inheriting the seat of his father. She was very afraid<sup>7</sup> of emerging on the political scene as a candidate, but successfully did. She remained a Conservative MP until 1945. She claimed that her husband was the only one who pushed her towards success. In her 1922 Speech, she stated

My entrance into the House of Commons was not, as some thought, in the nature of a revolution. It was an evolution. My husband was the one who started me off on this downward path—from the fireside to public life. If I have helped the cause of women he is the one to thank, not me.<sup>8</sup>

The first steps before emerging as an MP were tough as she was opposed by male candidates' opponents such as Isaac Foot (1922-1935). She believed she must win and overcome this male onslaught on her. When the results were announced, she enjoyed her political success in the election and the defeat of her male opponents. She won 5000 votes translated into 51% of the whole electorate.<sup>9</sup> As a woman, reaching parliamentary world was never an easy task for her. She described her first five years in the Commons as a “hell”<sup>10</sup> due to the fierce male reaction working with a woman. Even those who used to be her friends before her access to power turned against her in the Commons. On the other

<sup>1</sup> “Uphill All the Way: A Century of Women in Parliament”, Churchill College Cambridge <https://www.chu.cam.ac.uk/archives/events/uphill-all-way/> (Accessed November24,2021)

<sup>2</sup> “Uphill All the Way: A Century of Women in Parliament”

<sup>3</sup> “Uphill All the Way: A Century of Women in Parliament”

<sup>4</sup> “Women in Parliament: A Guide to the History of Women's Participation in Parliament and Their Representation in the Historical Collections”, Speaker's Advisory Committee on Works of Art, The Speaker's Art Fund, 25 <https://www.parliament.uk/globalassets/documents/WORKS-OF-ART/Women-in-Parliament-Catalogue.pdf> (Accessed November26,2021)

<sup>5</sup> For more details about the sent letter from Nancy Astor to Winston Churchill, see **APPENDIX B, p. 262**

<sup>6</sup> “Uphill All the Way: A Century of Women in Parliament”.

<sup>7</sup> Tara Finn, “The First Woman of British Parliament” , *History of Government Blog*, November28,2019 <https://history.blog.gov.uk/2019/11/28/the-first-woman-of-british-parliament/> (Accessed April 18,2022)

<sup>8</sup> William Safire ,*Lend Me Your Ears: Great Speeches in History* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1992) , 620-622.

<sup>9</sup> Berry-Waite, 14.

<sup>10</sup> Finn.

side, there were male MPs who welcomed her, helped her and cement political friendly relation with her.<sup>1</sup>

As an MP, she was devoted to dig deep in the issues concerned with under-privileged women and children. Her political participation did not prioritize showing-off or arrogance, her parliamentary work was pertinent with defending women's rights, supporting, and promoting women needs. She confessed "I am thinking of the women and children... I do not want you to look on your lady member as a fanatic or a lunatic. I am simply trying to speak for hundreds of women and children throughout the country who cannot speak for themselves"<sup>2</sup>

Concurrently, Nancy Astor was the first woman MP in the House of Commons to deliver her maiden speech<sup>3</sup> on February 24, 1920 in which she expressed her pride of joining men in the mother of parliaments. Through her speech, she represented herself as a powerful and a self-confident woman who spoke in a way reflecting her certainty that she would do great in parliament. Most importantly, she started directly speaking about one of negative things in England's society that needed to be fought. She started making England's people aware of the danger of "drinking". She did not start with introducing herself or celebrating her political victory, but she started with shedding light on the way for better life. In her speech she stated:

I would like to say that I am quite certain that the women of the whole world will not forget that it was the fighting men of Devon who dared to send the first woman to represent women in the Mother of Parliaments. Now, as the west country people are a courageous lot, it is only right that one of their representatives should show some courage, and I am perfectly aware that it does take a bit of courage to address the House on that vexed question , Drink.... Do we want the welfare of the community, or do we want the prosperity of the Trade? Do we want national efficiency, or do we want national inefficiency? That is what it comes to. So I hope to be able to persuade the House. Are we really trying for a better world, or are we going to slip back to the same old world before 1914? I think that the hon. Member is not moving with the times...<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Finn.

<sup>2</sup> Jennifer Scott, "What Did the First Woman in Parliament Have to Say ?" , *BBC NEWS*, February 24,2020 <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-politics-51612796> (Accessed April 18,2022)

<sup>3</sup> For more details about the first woman MP's maiden speech , see **APPENDIX F, P.273.**

<sup>4</sup> "Extract of Lady Astor's Maiden Speech in the House of Commons – 24 February 1920" <https://www.parliament.uk/globalassets/documents/upload/lady-astor-maiden-speech-in-the-house-of-commons2.pdf> (Accessed April 18,2022)

Her first speech in front of the “all-male”<sup>1</sup> colleagues owed her a good reputation for being an eloquent and self-confident woman. This speech, in addition to her admission in the House of Commons, was great milestones in her political life. Women, before Astor, were vehemently opposed to reach parliamentary world, but Astor was standing in front of men delivering her first speech and above all, considering a local matter “drink restriction”.<sup>2</sup> Astor’s early tough circumstances of living with an alcoholic father and her first husband impacted on her political views to act against alcohol drinking. She angrily recalled the unbearable misery she went through surrounded by alcoholic persons. She stated “Temperance has always been my Crusade. I knew from my own life the sadness and misery caused by drink”<sup>3</sup>.

To restrict alcohol consumption, she proposed a Private Bill in 1922. This Bill became an Act in 1923 labeled as The Intoxicating Liquor Act<sup>4</sup>. This Act had not been passed unless Astor entered parliament as MP. She was of the woman who won over men in politics through paying attention to more serious issues that were pertinent with saving the lives of people, especially children. Before Astor, no male foci were placed on restricting alcoholic consumption for adolescents under the age of 18<sup>5</sup>. The female radical changes in the light of proposed legislations were worthy of note. Restricting drinking was only one fruitful legislation put forward by the first woman MP. Other important pro-improvement legislations would be passed when Astor would be joined by other women MPs in the upcoming elections.

### 1.3 The Evolution of Female Political Representation (1922-1939)

Astor opened the gate of politics for other women to join her and join the male MPs in parliament. She made it clear “My hope is that I[Nancy Astor] may pave the way for other women who aspire to enter Parliament ...to establish the right of enfranchised

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<sup>1</sup> “Nancy Astor, Maiden Speech in Parliament, 1920”, *TBR Reading* <https://www.tbr.fun/nancy-astor-maiden-speech-in-parliament-1920/> (Accessed April 18,2022)

<sup>2</sup> Berry-Waite, 14.

<sup>3</sup> Nancy Astor Autobiography in Berry-Waite, 14.

<sup>4</sup>The Intoxicating Liquor Act stated that people should be aged 18 to drink alcohol in bars, a situation which still exists today. The Act was the first successful private members’ bill from a woman MP, Nancy Astor. Mary Takayanagi, “Astor the Fairy Godmother: “The Intoxicating Liquor Act 1923”, *Open Library of Humanities*, 2020, 01 <https://olh.openlibhums.org/article/id/4645/> (Accessed April 29,2022)

<sup>5</sup> Before 1923, a teenager could go into a pub at the age of 14 to buy and drink beer, perfectly legally. Takayanagi, 01



women not only to vote, but to sit in Parliament with lasting advantage to the nation."<sup>1</sup> Women admission to politics was slow in the coming years. Until 1922, women started joining Astor as a result of being elected in the coming general elections of 1922, 1923 and 1924. Standing as a candidate and being elected was not the end of the whole story, another goal must be accomplished. Women suffragists renewed again their demand for extending the vote on the same terms as men. Their efforts were not fruitless. In 1928, the universal suffrage was granted to women in which they started enjoying new hopes for political emancipation and political parity.

### 1.3.1 Women MPs Elected After Nancy Astor (1922-1928)

Allowing women to stand as MPs did not mean political emancipation and did not mean opening the doors of parliament for an influx of women MPs. The number of women MPs until 1928<sup>2</sup> was small if compared to their male counterparts. In this regard, the male MPs still monopolized the process of decision -making despite the presence of females. The sole obstacle impeding women's path towards an increased entry to parliament was the candidates' selection. The three main political Parties in England: the Conservative Party, The Labour Party and the Liberal Party were reluctant to accept a great number of candidates. Even the number of the accepted female candidates was small. What added insult to the injury was that even when they were accepted to stand as candidates; they were oriented towards "less winnable seats".<sup>3</sup>

Women did not like the early rising of political discrimination against them. They strove to challenge the male authority and cement their views in politics. Lina Mary Scott-Gatty (1873-1964), the Liberal candidate for Huntingdonshire stated in 1922: 'I[Lina Mary Scott-Gatty] make no apology for being a woman; I believe political life needs the high influence of woman bringing in a new point to public affairs"<sup>4</sup>. As a result, the general

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<sup>1</sup> "Part of History" [https://www.plymouth.gov.uk/sites/default/files/parliament\\_week\\_info\\_panels.pdf](https://www.plymouth.gov.uk/sites/default/files/parliament_week_info_panels.pdf) (Accessed April 18,2022)

<sup>2</sup> For more details about the women MPs elected to stand in the House of Commons after Nancy Astor (1919-1929, see **APPENDIX C , P 263.**

<sup>3</sup> Ricahrd Cracknell, "The History and Geography of Women MPs sine 1918 in Numbers", House of Commons Library , Monday, November18,2013 <https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/the-history-and-geography-of-women-mps-since-1918-in-numbers/> (Accessed April 18,2022)

<sup>4</sup> Berry-Waite.

election resulted in an electoral breakthrough for 8 elected women.<sup>1</sup> The *Aberdeen Journal* wrote “for the first time in the history of the country all parties in the State have able and capable women among their representatives in Parliament”<sup>2</sup>.

On December 6, 1923, Margaret Bondfield (1873-1953) was elected for the Labour Party, but a year later she was defeated in the General Election of 1924. She was re-elected again for Wallsend<sup>3</sup> in July 1929 to be defeated from over again in 1931.<sup>4</sup> She was the first woman appointee as a cabinet minister. She served as the first woman Minister of Labour in charge of unemployment benefits.<sup>5</sup>

Furthermore, Ellen Wilkinson (1891-1947) was another woman MP in the British Labour history. She was elected on October 29, 1924 for Jarrow (Located in Northeastern England”, but defeated in 1931. She was described as “Britain’s most important woman politician”<sup>6</sup>. Generally speaking, it was estimated that by 1924, there were 8 women MPs in the House of Commons. The figure below shows their pictures. They were as the following from “left” to “right”: Dorothea Jewson (1884-1964), Susan Lawrence (1871-1947), Nancy Witcher Astor (1879-1964), Margaret Wintringham (1879-1955), Katherine Marjory Stewart Murray (1874-1960), Mabel Russel Hilton Phillipson (1887-1951), Florence Annie Woodhouse Terrington (1889-1973) and Margaret Grace Bondfield (1873-1953).<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Berry-Waite.

<sup>2</sup> Berry-Waite.

<sup>3</sup> Wallsend is a town in Northeastern England. “Wallsend: England, United Kingdom”. <https://www.britannica.com/place/Wallsend> (Accessed November 26, 2021)

<sup>4</sup> “Women in Parliament: A Guide to the History of Women’s Participation in Parliament and Their Representation in the Historical Collections”, Speaker’s Advisory Committee on Works of Art, The Speaker’s Art Fund, 25 <https://www.parliament.uk/globalassets/documents/WORKS-OF-ART/Women-in-Parliament-Catalogue.pdf> (Accessed November 26, 2021)

<sup>5</sup> Kate Law, “Labour Women in Power: Cabinet Ministers in the 20th century”, *Women’s History*, March 19, 2019 <https://womenshistorynetwork.org/labour-women-in-power-cabinet-ministers-in-the-20th-century-dr-paula-bartley/> (Accessed March 13, 2022)

<sup>6</sup> Matt Perry, “In Search of “Red Ellen” Wilkinson Beyond Frontiers and Beyond the Nation State” *International Review of Social History* Vol 52, n°02 (August 2013): 219

<sup>7</sup> Unknown photographer, “The Eight Women MPs in Parliament by 1924”, (St Martin’s Place London, National Portrait Gallery.

<https://www.npg.org.uk/collections/search/portrait/mw300849/The-eight-women-Members-of-Parliament-Dorothea-Dorothy-Jewson-Arabella-Susan-Lawrence-Nancy-Witcher-Astor-ne-Langhorne-Viscountess-Astor-Margaret-Wintringham-ne-Longbottom-Katharine-Marjory-Stewart-Murray-ne-Ramsay-Duchess-of-?LinkID=mp50007&search=sas&sText=susan+lawrence&role=sit&rNo=0> (Accessed November 27, 2021)

**Figure 1.2:** The Eight Women MPs in the House of Commons by 1924



**Source:** Unknown photographer, “The Eight Women MPs in Parliament by 1924”, (St Martin’s Place London, National Portrait Gallery .

The female political admission following 1918 did not meet women expectation. Their political rights were still in question. In the light of successfully joining men in parliament, the electoral success through universal suffrage must be taken into consideration.

### 1.3.2 The Suffrage Question from Over Again

Although the 1918 Representation of people Act brought a limited suffrage to women, gender electoral equality was still a dream to be fulfilled because millions of women found themselves deprived from taking part in parliamentary elections. Women, in England, could not accomplish an electoral equality with men until 1928 through gaining the universal suffrage The British politician Ray Strachey pointed out: “With the passage of this Act the last glaring inequality in the legal position of women was abolished”<sup>1</sup>. Furthermore, the act extended voting rights for women on the same terms as men and lowered voting age to 21. In this vein, the number of women on the electorate increased.

<sup>1</sup> Ray Strachey, *The Cause”: a Short History of the Women's Movement in Great Britain* (London: Virago, 1978), 384.

Five million women were added to the electoral roll due to the first acquisition of universal suffrage.<sup>1</sup>

The Act was not passed easily overnight. The parliamentary discussions of whether enfranchising women similarly as men or not started in 1919 shortly after the limited suffrage being granted to women. Through presenting the first pro- equal suffrage Bill by the male Labour MP Benjamin Spoor (1918-1928). Several bills followed later yearly until 1928. Claiming for equal franchise dated back to 1919

**Table 1.2. Equal Franchise Bills (1919-1928)**

Session	Bill Title and Presenter	Parliamentary Progress
1919	Women's Emancipation bill (HC Bill 38). Presented by Benjamin Spoor (Labour).	Passed through Commons. Division at 3rd reading passed 100 to 85. Fell at second reading in Lords.
1920	Representation of the People bill (HC bill 7). Presented by Thomas Grundy (Labour).	Passed second reading 122 to 38. Bill abandoned in standing committee on grounds that bill had no chance of passing into law.
1921	Representation of the People bill (HC bill 9). Presented by Walter Smith (Labour).	No second reading
1922	Representation of the People bill (HC bill 37). Presented by Walter Smith (Labour).	No second reading.
1923	Women's Enfranchisement bill (HC bill 102). Presented by Isaac Foot (Liberal).	Motion passed under Ten Minute Rule. No division.
1924	Representation of the People bill (HC bill 4). Presented by William M Adamson (Labour). Standing Committee A report (HC 104), bill reprinted after committee stage (HC bill 173).	Passed second reading; an amendment asking for a conference defeated 288 to 72. Passed committee stage and government gave support, but ran out of time before government fell.
1925	Representation of the People bill (HC bill 24). Presented by William Whiteley (Labour).	Fell at second reading, deemed too early in the new Parliament to alter franchise. Division lost 153 to 220
1926	Equalisation of the Franchise bill (HC bill 34). Presented by William Wedgwood Benn (Liberal, joined Labour March 1927).	No second reading
1927	Representation of the People bill (HC bill 12). Presented by Mr Haden Guest. (Labour, though left party Feb 1927)	12). Presented by Mr Haden Guest. (Labour, though left party Feb 1927). No second reading
1928	Equal Franchise bill. Conservative government bill presented by the Home Secretary, Joynson-Hicks.	Passed as Equal Franchise Act

**Source:** Takayanagi, "Parliament and Women, c.1900-1945," 104-105

<sup>1</sup> Conal Kelly, "The 1929 Westminster Elections in Northern Ireland" , October 2007  
<https://www.ark.ac.uk/elections/fw29.htm> (Accessed November 12, 2021)

As shown in the table, all the pro-equal suffrage bills were introduced by male MPs to the leading Prime Ministers. This male continued interest in bringing the equal franchise to women revealed the male support to women in parliament and reflected the second characteristics of male-female relations in parliament. Supporting a woman to vote on equal footing with men was not done all male MPs. Only those who believed in the power of women in politics and the female capabilities offered help.

The Labour MP Thomas Walter Grundy (1918-1935) through his 1920 Bill, for example, insisted in parliament that women should be equally enfranchised and he based his claim on the important role women played during WWI. Grundy used multiple ways to convince the David Lloyd George and other MPs extending the franchise to women. One of the important ways was the presence of the first woman MP Nancy Astor during the parliamentary discussion of 1920 Bill. He suggested that she was representing all women; it was a shame to humiliate the only women attending with men and rejecting women's claims in front of her. He told them "The women have sent at least one Member into this House, and I am positively sure that her presence adds grace and charm to this assembly"<sup>1</sup>.

Any presented bill was defeated in the House of Commons. It is of a great significance to note that the rejection of the equal franchise bills was not dictated solely by male Prime Ministers and male MPs, but even some women MPs were against the idea of the equal franchise for women. One of them was the anti-feminist<sup>2</sup> Katharine Stewart-Murray (1874-1960) known as Duchess of Atholl. She was the only woman MP (1923-1938) who opposed the 1924 Bill presented by the male MP William Adamson (1910-1931). Each time, the Prime Ministers found an alibi to postpone the equal franchise question, but promised they would take it into account. In 1927, no progress had made and no bill was approved. Nancy Astor angrily stated "I[Nancy Astor] believe in the Government; but I must say I am growing a little suspicious"<sup>3</sup>. She believed she must act on behalf of all women in England.

On March 8, 1927, Nancy Astor firstly formed a committee called "The Equal Political Rights Campaign Committee"<sup>4</sup> to urge the cabinet ministers to consider the equal

<sup>1</sup> HC Deb 27 Feb 1920 vol 125 c2071, Thomas Grundy

<sup>2</sup> Takayanaji, 113.

<sup>3</sup> HC Deb 9 Feb 1927 vol 202 cc204-207, Nancy Astor

<sup>4</sup> WL, 2NSE/C/10, NUSEC Annual Report 1927

franchise question in the cabinet meeting of April 12, 1927. Astor's organized reaction was fruitful. On April 13, following the cabinet ministers meeting, the final parliamentary acceptance of the franchise extension to women was announced by Conservative Prime Minister Stanley Baldwin (1867-1947)<sup>1</sup>. During the meeting, he declared "the position with regard to our pledges on the women's vote .... the only thing we could do was to give it all round at 21"<sup>2</sup>. Women's political participation did not only serve those women MPs, but sometimes it saved and served women in general. Without the Astor's Committee, the equal franchise used to be postponed for other more years.

The plea for the equal suffrage was dual. The male-female cooperation in parliament characterized the debates over the equal suffrage cause. Women MPs, supported by their male colleagues, played a pivotal role in the suffrage debates. Although they were already admitted into parliament, the limited suffrage remained a nightmare. Margaret Benfield said, 'Since I have been able to vote at all, I have never felt the same enthusiasm because the vote was the consequence of possessing property rather than the consequence of being a human being'<sup>3</sup>

The Representation of the people Act also called the Equal Franchise Act received the parliamentary approval on February 7, 1928. It reached its second reading on March 29, 1928 with 367 votes to 10<sup>4</sup> and finally received royal assent on July 2, 1928. Chapter 12 of the 1928 Act enfranchised women on the same terms as their male counterparts. It was stated "for the purpose of providing that the parliamentary franchise shall be the same for men and women."<sup>5</sup>

Among those ten male MPs who opposed the bill Frederick Hall (1905-1933) and Charles Oman (1919-1935). They justified their opposition based on the principles of the past when decision making was a male concern only. Giving millions of women the right to vote was pertinent with spoiling the gist of parliamentary work. They commented "As was the case prior to 1918, the country should be represented in this House by the male sex. Some hon. Members may think that is a rather surprising view to take, but that had

<sup>1</sup> Stanley Baldwin served as Prime Minister on three occasions (1923-1924/ 1924-1929/1935-1937). "Stanley Baldwin", *Britannica* <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Stanley-Baldwin> (Accessed may 14, 2022)

<sup>2</sup> John Barnes and David Nicholson, *The Leo Amery diaries* Vol 1, 1896-1929 (London: Hutchinson, 1980), 504.

<sup>3</sup> HC Deb 29 Mar 1928 vol 215 c135, c1415, Margert Bonfiled.

<sup>4</sup> Takayanaji, 131.

<sup>5</sup> Equal Franchise Act (1928), Chapter 12 Parliamentary Archives, HL/PO/PU/1/1928/18&19G5c12.

been the practice and the recognized custom during hundreds of years of Parliamentary government”<sup>1</sup>. The majority of male MPs approved the full enfranchisement of women. The parliamentary statistics revealed a remarkable surge in the number of women voters. It was estimated that:

Of 5,250,000 such women, a large number - 1,800,000 - were already over age 30 and nobody would deny them their right; a further 1,700,000 were married women aged 21-30 and therefore responsible people; another 1,477,000 were single women earning their own living, working side by side with men. The remaining small but worrisome category of unoccupied single women was further broken down to show that 175,000 were aged 25-30, and the potential 'flapper' vote aged between 21-25 consisted of only 216,000.<sup>2</sup>

The 1929 General election remained a turning point in women's electoral agenda. It strengthened the female political public persona through maximizing the democratic principles. If women had not acquired the universal suffrage, their political emancipation would have been ceaselessly an unreachable quest. The female candidates elected in the general election of 1929 would undisputedly, compete with male MPs and contribute to plenty of legislations interlinked with women and children issues. The women's competence with men was dual; from competing over attracting a great number of voters into competing over accomplishing the promises uttered during election campaigns.

### 1.3.3 Climbing the Ladder of Gender Electoral Equality (1929)

The Election of May 1929 was the first one in which women voted on an equal footing with men regardless their age, class or property ownership. It was held on Thursday, May 30, 1929. It was dubbed “the flapper<sup>3</sup> Election”<sup>4</sup> and “petticoat Vote”<sup>5</sup>. The “flapper election” was a derogatory term to describe women reaching the age of 21 and

<sup>1</sup> HC Deb 29 Mar 1928 vol 215 c1431, Oman; c1443, Hall.

<sup>2</sup> HC Deb 29 Mar 1928 vol 215 c1369, Joynson-Hicks

<sup>3</sup> The word “flapper” refers to women of 1920's who were fashionable enjoying themselves and flouting conventional standards of behavior. “Flapper”, *Oxford Reference*, Oxford University Press, 2021 <https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/oi/authority.20110803095822680?rskey=pcfBMC&result=19> (Accessed November 12, 2021)

<sup>4</sup> “From Cradle to Old Age 1929”, *People's History of the NHS* <https://peopleshistorynhs.org/museumobjects/from-cradle-to-old-age-1929/> (Accessed November 12, 2021)

<sup>5</sup> Jo Fidgeon, “The Petticoat Vote”, February 2015 <https://www.bbc.co.uk/mediacentre/proginfo/2015/09/the-petticoat-vote> (Accessed November 12, 2021)

above being granted the equal suffrage.<sup>1</sup> In 1929, women represented the majority of the electorate in which the number of female voters outnumbered the number of male electors.<sup>2</sup>

In fourteen London districts women will outnumber the men voters by 75,567, in Liverpool by 28,864, in Manchester by 26,832, in Leeds by 24,480 and in Bradford by 21,884. The increase in the number of persons eligible to vote is generally regarded as a factor more favorable to the Labour party than to the Conservatives, although the “flapper vote” was granted by the present Conservative administration.<sup>3</sup>

They made the move to the polling-booths to choose, to decide and, above all, to echo their voices as electors and individuals. Not only their voices would be heard, but the seeds of electoral equality would prompt a radical change in their political life.

David Jarvis emphasized the contribution of the universal suffrage in fostering and cementing women electoral and political equality with men. He wrote “In 1929, women had secured formal political equality, with profound implications for a political world defined to a large extent by male values”<sup>4</sup>. The same year, one of the eminent female political figures, Margaret Bondfield (1873-1953, already been politically active in the Labour Party starting from 1923, became a Cabinet Minister in the Labour Party in the House of Commons. She was the first woman to be granted such rank as a cabinet minister as a Minister of Labour.<sup>5</sup>

Another woman, one of the nine<sup>6</sup> Labour women elected in 1929, was Mary Agnes Hamilton (1882-1966). She was one of the pioneering women MPs in the House of Commons where she was warmly welcomed by her male colleagues. She stated “[O]ne of the best features of the House of Commons in my day was that it accepted no sex

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<sup>1</sup> “Flapper”, *Oxford Reference*

<https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/oi/authority.20110803095822680?rskey=pcfBMC&result=19> (Accessed November 12, 2021)

<sup>2</sup> Fidgen

<sup>3</sup> “The British General Election of 1929”, CQ Researcher Archives

<https://library.cqpress.com/cqresearcher/document.php?id=cqresre1929050600> (Accessed April 19, 2022)

<sup>4</sup> David Jarvis, “Mrs Maggs and Betty: The Conservative Appeal to women Voters in the 1920’s” *Twentieth Century British History* Vol.5, n°2 (1994):129 <https://doi.org/10.1093/tcbh/5.2.129>

<sup>5</sup> “Margaret Bonfield: British Labour Leader” <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Margaret-Bondfield> (Accessed November 13, 2021)

<sup>6</sup> “Uphill All the Way: A Century of Women in Parliament”.



distinction; there, if nowhere else, one was treated simply as a member: the qualifying noun was no part of the atmosphere of the place.”<sup>1</sup>

Put simply, Jennie Lee (1904-1988) was another female MP politically active in the Labour Party from North Lanarkshire. She was elected on the first election in British history when all women over the age of 21 went to vote. She won a seat in the House of Commons on March 21, 1929 at the age of 24. She was the “youngest”<sup>2</sup> MP in the Commons. In this vein, the political emancipation granted to women, despite gender disparity in parliament, was not limited by age. This portrayed the fact that women could be political managers even though they were young. Lee was one of the women MPs who were “very” audacious with men unveiling the truth even if it was bitter. This revealed the political power women enjoyed at the beginning of their political journey. In her maiden speech, she accused publicly Winston Churchill of “cant, corruption and incompetence”.<sup>3</sup>

Moreover, one of the women politicians elected in 1929 was the Australian Marion Phillips (1881-1932). She gained a leadership role in the Labour Party. She was described as “the most important and most talented [woman] in the Party”<sup>4</sup>. Moreover, the daughter of Prime Minister David Lloyd George Megan Lloyd George and Eleanor Rathbone (1872-1946) represented the influential figures elected in 1929.

More significantly, the surge in women electors had a detrimental effect on the Conservative Party. The landslide victory that the Labour Party accomplished in the election of 1929 was due to the majority of women new electors voted for the Labourites and the Liberals.<sup>5</sup> Ramsay MacDonald (1866-1937) became Prime Minister defeating Stanley Baldwin. Ramsay MacDonald was the first Labour Prime Minister serving from 1929 to 1931. The table below shows the results of the 1929 General Election in England including the number of candidates, the vote share and the seats won.

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<sup>1</sup> “Uphill All the Way: A Century of Women in Parliament”.

<sup>2</sup> “Women in Parliament: A Guide to the History of Women's Participation in Parliament and Their Representation in the Historical Collections”, Speaker's Advisory Committee on Works of Art, The Speaker's Art Fund, 28 <https://www.parliament.uk/globalassets/documents/WORKS-OF-ART/Women-in-Parliament-Catalogue.pdf> (Accessed November26,2021)

<sup>3</sup> “Women in Parliament: A Guide to the History of Women's Participation in Parliament and Their Representation in the Historical Collections”.

<sup>4</sup> [Natasha Lehrer](#), “Marion Phillips”, *Shalvi/Hyman Encyclopedia of Jewish Women*, Jewish Women's Archive, December31,1999 <https://jwa.org/encyclopedia/article/phillips-marion> (Accessed November26,2021 )

<sup>5</sup> “The British General Election of 1929”, A Report from the CQ Researcher Archives. Editorial Research Reports Vol II, 1929 <https://library.cqpress.com/cqresearcher/document.php?id=cqresrre1929050600> (Accessed May16,2022)

**Table 1.3. The Number of Candidates, votes and Seats Won in the General Election of 1929 in England**

	<b>Conservative Party</b>	<b>Labour Party</b>	<b>Liberal Democrats</b>	<b>Others</b>
<b>Candidates</b>	469	467	422	30
<b>Votes (Millions)</b>	7.18	6.85	4.34	0.13
<b>Share of Vote (%)</b>	38.8	36.9	23.6	0.7
<b>Seats Won</b>	221	226	35	3

**Source:** Pilling and Cracknell, 20-21

The Labour Party, successfully, attracted the attention of women to increase their electoral support during the electoral campaign. The Labourites , to effectively, attract women to support their cause , repeatedly reminded women “ advocating the cause of Equal citizenship when the Tory and Liberal parties were either utterly hostile or hopelessly divided on the question”<sup>1</sup>.

#### **1.4 Women’s New Political Experiences (1931-1945)**

Women MPs in parliament were few after the general election of 1929. Their electoral involvement reached its zenith, but their parliamentary integration was gradual and the number of women candidates did not exceed their male counterparts. Till the end of the Second World War (WWII), women MPs remained an underrepresented group despite their endeavours, their crowning contribution to politics and their devotion to their political tasks.

##### **1.4.1 Women Voters and Political Participants (1931-1935)**

In 1931, another general election was held in England. It was another political opportunity for women to vote similarly as men regardless their age. The election opened new horizon for the election of other political ladies to the House of Commons. The electoral equality in this election did not go in tandem with equality of political representation. Women represented only a tiny percentage of parliamentary membership.

It was recorded that 15 women MPs<sup>2</sup> were elected in the 1931 general election. The majority of them were married. In this regard, women were totally devoted to their political

<sup>1</sup> “The Labour Party”, 1929

<sup>2</sup> Jrgen S.Rasmussen, “Women’s Role in Contemporary British Politics : Impediments to Parliamentary Candidature” *Parliamentary Affairs* Vol36,n°1(1983):300

work despite the myriad of responsibilities at home. They proved them themselves qualified for politics and able to compete with men. Among the leading women MPs in the House of Commons elected in 1931, it can be listed: Mrs Leah Manning (1886-1977), Mrs Ida Copeland (1875-1964), Miss Marjorie Graves (1884-1961), Mrs Norah Runge (1884-1978) , Florence Horsburgh (1889-1969), Mrs Helen Shaw (1889-1969 and Mrs Irene Ward (1895-1980).

First and foremost, despite the small percentage of women in parliament, they did great and fruitfully contributed to political management of the local affairs of England. Mrs Ida Copeland was described as “A woman in a man’s world, she was a great honour”<sup>1</sup>. Ida Copeland, at the very beginning of her political career in parliament in 1931, she started working on the adjustment of those neglected things which were very important to England’s economy. She, publicly, stressed the importance of “pottery industry” the first moment she delivered her maiden speech. She, like other women MPs, did not devote her first speech to introduce herself or express the pride in her political admission. The gist of her speech carried the beginning of a political achievement. In her speech, she stated:

In rising to make my maiden speech, I claim the indulgence of this House, an indulgence that I know is always graciously accorded to a new Member. I should also like to take this opportunity of thanking hon. Members of all parties for the kindness that they have extended to all of us women Members.... I wish to speak entirely from the point of view of the pottery industry, which is one of the oldest in this country. It employs some 70,000 people in North Staffordshire. "It is not a large industry," you will say, but it is one which has helped to make England great<sup>2</sup>

Another female doughty political icon was Norah Runge described as “an exceptional woman in any age”<sup>3</sup>. She tremendously campaigned in the streets convincing people to elect her. Norah Runge succeeded in defeating the male MP Ben Smith by 130 votes.<sup>4</sup> She was one of the female MPs who, the day, of the election, defeated male MPs. this told a lot about the political breakthrough of women over men. In her maiden speech

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<sup>1</sup> Mark Pugh, “Introducing Ida : A Biographical Account of Ida Copeland”, 2017

<https://nt.global.ssl.fastly.net/trelissick/documents/introducing-ida.pdf> (Accessed April20,2022)

<sup>2</sup> “Mrs Ida Copeland”<https://www.theyworkforyou.com/debates/?id=1932-05-04a.1204.0> (Accessed April 20,2022)

<sup>3</sup> “Norah Runge : The Exceptional Woman”, *UK Vote 100*, September27,2018

<https://ukvote100.org/2018/09/27/norah-runge-mp-an-exceptional-woman/> (Accessed April 20,2022)

<sup>4</sup> “Norah Runge : The Exceptional Woman”, *UK Vote 100*, September27,2018

on April 13, 1932, she stressed the importance of opening cinemas on Sundays. This seems useless, but she was caring for the poor people who were deprived from any source of entertainment. She, bravely, commented on the issue

Now let me turn to the conditions of the poor. They live in streets of small houses, with large families often crowded together in one room. If this Bill is rejected those people will be deprived of something to which they have become accustomed and nothing will be offered to them in its place. We shall not only deprive the children of their entertainment, but also the fathers, and in particular the mothers. You may say that fathers and mothers do not go to the cinemas. But they can send their children and thereby gain a little rest themselves...<sup>1</sup>

Each woman contributed differently to politics. Each one of them set foot in parliament with a principle in mind; to make a change and to leave her own fruitful touch. Irene Ward, known as “Dame of the British Empire”<sup>2</sup>, was the longest serving female MP. She would remain as an MP until 1974. In parliament, she was concerned with women rights at home. She campaigned also for increasing wages and improving working conditions for women.

The female political representation, during the period extending from (1931-1935), did not improve and no political progress was made as far as the women's increased entry to the House of Commons. The most important political democratic breakthrough for women was their ability to vote similarly as men. Women were allowed to choose their representatives in the Lower House, but they were highly impeded to, increasingly, join men as representatives themselves. Starting from 1935, women MPs readied themselves to make from their political integration a fruitful one. They worked on debating political remedies for the hurdles women were encountering in England. Needless to say, they thrived to speak up for those women who were denied the right to stand as candidates and represent all women.

### 1.4.2 Women Trailblazers Surmounting Gender Disparity (1935-1939)

Women continued to represent the elite in the “Men's House” due to the governmental impediment to maximize their political presence in the House of Commons

<sup>1</sup> [HC Deb 13 April 1932 Vol 264 c 883-5](#)

<sup>2</sup> “Irene Ward”, *Encyclopedia.com* <https://www.encyclopedia.com/women/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/ward-irene-1895-1980> (Accessed September28,2018)

(1935-1939). The number of women candidates and women elected MPs differed from one general election into another. However, their political status was overshadowed by one sole characteristic which was underrepresentation. In the 1935 General Election, women candidates represented 5%<sup>1</sup> of the entire number of all candidates. The election resulted in the appointment of 09<sup>2</sup> women MPs only. This small number represented 01%<sup>3</sup> of the whole membership of the Commons. The real impediment for women to rise into candidacy was the governmental procedures to accept a great number of women candidates. Those who were accepted enjoyed certain privileges were either popular or shared a familial tie with male MPs.

In 1937-1938, four women MPs were admitted into the House of Commons plus five women already elected in 1931. They were Frances Davidson(1894-1985), Agnes Hardie (1874-1951), Edith Summerkill (1901-1980) and Jennie Adamson (1882-1962). Only few women were politically engaged. Edith Summerkill, in her autobiography entitled "*The Woman's World*" (1967), claimed that even parliament was already opened for women since 1918, the female increased integration remained in question. She wrote "Parliament, with its conventions and protocol, seemed a little like a boys' school which had decided to take a few girls."<sup>4</sup> What strengthened women MPs in the 1930's was their cooperation. They were united with each other, helping each other, consulting each other, and most significantly campaigning together. They shared the same interest in campaigning for the equal pay.

Those women MPs acted on behalf of all women in England. They proposed bills that all of them were concerned with women rights. In 1936, the woman MP Ellen Willkinson (1891-1947) proposed an amendment to a bill stating the equal pay for women similarly as men. The amendment stated "“whether women in...the Civil Service should be paid an equal rate of wages with men for what is admitted to be equal work”<sup>5</sup>. Jennie Adamson shared the same view of defending women and guaranteeing gender equal pay. She pointed out "My mother was left a widow with six young children and the

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<sup>1</sup> Rasmussen, 300.

<sup>2</sup> Rasmussen, 300.

<sup>3</sup> Rasmussen 300.

<sup>4</sup> Edith Summerkill Autobiography in "Women MPs: 1931-1945", *UK vote 100*, August 31, 2020 <https://ukvote100.org/2020/08/31/women-mps-1931-1945/> (Accessed April 20, 2022)

<sup>5</sup> *Official Report*, 1 April 1936; Vol. 310, c. 2017.

impressions left on me by my young life have never been removed by the passage of time. I feel it my duty to plead the cause of the widows... for adequate pensions”<sup>1</sup>

Women MPs campaigners for equal pay believed that both genders should be paid equally to overcome the negative stereotype of women's subordination to men. They believed that , women in parliament were dependent on men, but in society they must be financially independent from men. Women MPs and all the feminists considered “equal pay to be a gender rather than a wage issue. They viewed sex-differentiated pay both as a symbol of female subordination and as a means by which women were kept dependent upon men. Gendered pay conveyed a powerful message of female inferiority and was part of a larger system of gender relationships”<sup>2</sup>

Gender inequality in the House of Commons was the defining criterion. Male-female relations were stable during this period, but women MPs triggered a kind of male opposition due to their rising hostility during election's campaigns. During the inter-war period (1918-1939), women's political participation did not reach its pinnacle. Male Prime Ministers remained reluctant in increasing the female political integration. Moreover, male MPs played a significant role in collaborating with women. With the outbreak of WWII, women in England in general and all the women MPs were ready to support the war efforts.

### 1.4.3 Women of the Second World War (1939-1945)

The Second World War flared up in 1939. Not only men bore arms and ready themselves to defend their country, but even women represented themselves as vital participants in the home front. Women whether married, widowed or single devoted their time and their energies to protect England, serve its people and replace the male soldiers in their vacant jobs. This support was not only societal, but even political. Women MPs were devoted to support the home front and to propose more effective legislations that would serve the English men and women.

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<sup>1</sup> “Agnes Hardie and Jennie Adamson”, *UK vote 100*, December 21, 2020  
<https://ukvote100.org/2020/12/21/agnes-hardie-and-jennie-adamson/> (Accessed April 20, 2022)

<sup>2</sup> Harold L. Smith, “British Feminism and the Equal pay Issue in the 1930's” *Women's History Review* Vol 5, n°1 (2006): 98

### 1.4.3.1 Women War Workers

Women joined War efforts in December 1941 and their conscription was unavoidable. There was not another way, but to be mobilized for the war because men left England to take part in the battlefields launching armed attack on Germany. The female involvement in war works escalated through a range of duties. Women worked as nurses, drivers of ambulances, fire engines, trains and trams, shipbuilders, fire officers, engineers, in munitions, in factories and in the farms.

Government figures show that women's employment increased during the Second World War from about 5.1 million in 1939 (26%) to just over 7.25 million in 1943 (36% of all women of working age). Forty six percent of all women aged between 14 and 59, and 90% of all able-bodied single women between the ages of 18 and 40 were engaged in some form of work or National Service by September 1943<sup>1</sup>

At the beginning of the war, only single women aged 20-0 were needed to support the home front, but from 1943, the married women were urgently needed to work.<sup>2</sup> The single women's war work was officially demanded from parliament through the parliamentary enactment of the National Service Act in December 1941. This act, in turn, obliged single women aged 20 to 30 to join women war corps<sup>3</sup>.

To divide and organize the work, women joined auxiliary organizations namely Auxiliary Territorial Service (ATS), the Women's Auxiliary Air Force (WAAF), the Women's Royal Naval Service (WRNS) and Women's Transport Service (WTS), Women's Voluntary Service (WVS), Special Operations Executive (SOE) and Women's Land Army (WLA) plus their brave involvement in metal and chemical industries.<sup>4</sup>

Through the umbrella of those organizations, statistics of women war workers during the era (1943-1945) revealed that "there were 3200 women serving in the SOE, 1.050.000

<sup>1</sup> "World War II: 1939-1945" <https://www.striking-women.org/module/women-and-work/world-war-ii-1939-1945> (Accessed May17,2021)

<sup>2</sup> "The Women of the Second World War", *GOV.UK*, April 16,2015 <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/the-women-of-the-second-world-war#:~:text=With%20thousands%20of%20men%20away,food%20in%20allotments%20and%20gardens>. (Accessed April 20,2022)

<sup>3</sup> "Auxiliary Territorial Service" <https://www.forces-war-records.co.uk/units/131/auxiliary-territorial-service/> (Accessed November 22,2020)

<sup>4</sup> "WWII : Did the War Change Life for Women", *BBC*, 2022 <https://www.bbc.co.uk/teach/did-ww2-change-life-for-women/zbktwtv> (Accessed May2,2022)

in the WVS, 212,500 in ATS, 80,000 in WLA, 180,300 in WAAF, 74,000 in WRNS plus 1,930,000 who served as Metal and Chemical Industries workers".<sup>1</sup> Women's represented themselves as ATS employers through being cooks, clerks and store keepers and telephonists. At the dawn of its establishment, the ATS included women without uniform and without training holding simple and easy, but later they were trained and performed other new difficult tasks. It was estimated that 65,000 women were members by September 1941<sup>2</sup>.

The Women's Royal Naval Service (WRNS) formed in 1939. It called up women to join the royal navy. The WRNS had their own slogan. They believed that they had to replace men in the navy to take part in the armed forces and in the battlefields. It was ingrained in their slogan "Join the Wrens today and free a man to join the Fleet."<sup>3</sup> Their tasks in the WRNS were different. Their activities included driving, cooking, clerical work, radar operations and the management of the communication equipment on the one hand. On the other hand, they provided weather forecasts, censor officers and worked also in mobile units.<sup>4</sup> The WRNS female members, additionally, trained as pilots and worked in the different branches of the royal navy.

Last but not least, the all-female organization is labeled First Aid Nursing Yeomanry (FANY). This patriotic voluntary organization was devoted to the transport of the wounded soldiers in the battlefield to military hospitals then to home as ambulance drivers. Its female members were also nurses and worked in canteens, hospitals, and military headquarters. Nursing and helping the injured soldiers to recover was considered an important female direct way to defend Britain in such chaotic era.

It is of great importance to point out that women, during the war, did not only support the war efforts through being involved in a range of patriotic tasks, they were also ready to protect parliament from any attack. "Parliament was a particular target for bombing, and more than 40 women worked in a munitions factory underneath Central

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<sup>1</sup> "WWII : Did the War Change Life for Women".

<sup>2</sup> "Auxiliary Territorial Service" <https://www.forces-war-records.co.uk/units/131/auxiliary-territorial-service/> (Accessed November 22,2020 )

<sup>3</sup> "Auxiliary Territorial Service"

<sup>4</sup> "Fact File: The Women's Royal Naval Service, An Archive of World War Two Memories", October 15, 2014 <http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/ww2peopleswar/timeline/factfiles/nonflash/a6650048.shtml> (Accessed November 22,2020 )



Lobby at the very heart of parliament”<sup>1</sup>. They worked also as fire watchers in the Home Guard. Since wars are periods of destruction, the British Parliament could be bombed and attacked at any moment. Women united themselves to protect the place from where England is governed. Their “new” job as fire watching played a focal role during the war. The Parliamentary Fire Committee (PFC) was established in 1941 and the National Home Guard was founded in 1940.<sup>2</sup>

By 1943, the female intervention in the war workforce had increased by 1.500.000 if compared to 1939<sup>3</sup> and the number of women in the military increased to 470,700 in 1943.<sup>4</sup> In the light of the female engagement to support the warfare locally and replace men in their difficult tasks, women proved themselves as “heroines” of their time. It can be said that heroism is not solely linked with the male combat, but the female valuable sacrifices were also a symbol of heroism.

The idea of heroism was no longer limited to the singular courageous act; it became a generalised quality of all those who endured the deprivations and dangers of both combat and the home front. Once courage had become de-militarised and hence, to a certain extent, de-mythologised, it was found amongst people of all walks of life: men and women who laboured in factories and mines; hospital staff without proper facilities; the rescue services working round the clock, and many others who steadfastly served the community without questioning the dangers and risks...<sup>5</sup>

WWII was not only an era when men exhibited their physical power and performed masculine duties through combat. It was also a very important phase when women proved themselves as brave and powerful. This was mirrored in the light of their engagement in war activities previously performed solely by men. Most importantly, in this anarchical era, both genders showed their strong and fascinating capabilities. Author of ‘Women Heroes of World War II’, Kathryn J. Atwood makes it clear:

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<sup>1</sup> Mari Takayanagi, “The Home Front in the ‘Westminster Village’: Women Staff in Parliament during the Second World War”, *Women's History Review* Vol26,n°04 ( March 2016): 610

<sup>2</sup> Takayanagi, “The Home Front in the ‘Westminster Village’”, 610

<sup>3</sup> Mark Donnelly, *Britain in the Second World War* (New York: Routledge Ltd,1999),39.

<sup>4</sup> Beate Fieseler, M. Michaela Hampf and Jutta Schwarzkopf “ Gendering Combat: Military Women's Status in Britain, the United States, and the Soviet Union during the Second World War” *Women's Studies International Forum* 47 (2014): 116.

<sup>5</sup> David Morgan and Mary Evans, *The Battle for Britain: Citizenship and Ideology in the Second World War* (New York: Routledge, Chapman and Hall, Inc., 1993),16.

...Most of these women - the famous and the obscure - had one thing in common: they did not think of themselves as heroes. They followed their consciences, saw something that needed to be done, and they did it. And all of them helped win a war, even though many of them paid the ultimate price for their contribution.”<sup>1</sup>

The Second World War is described as “a gendering activity”<sup>2</sup> because it demarcated the unavoidable responsibilities of both genders through which women indirectly echoing the reality that they were not only “Angels in the House”<sup>3</sup> but, above all, “angels” in the male sphere.

### 1.4.3.2 Women MPs during WWII

Women parliamentarians, unlike other women who embarked on millions of male vacant jobs, were also ultimately devoted to serve the war, but differently. By 1940, there were 12 women MPs in Parliament namely Nancy Astor, Ellen Wilkinson, Jennie Lee, Megan Lyold George (1902-1966)<sup>4</sup>, Eleanor Rathbone, Florence Horsburgh, Mavis Tate, Irene Ward, Frances, Viscountess Davidson, Mrs Agnes Hardie, Mrs Jennie Adamson, and Edith Summerskill.<sup>5</sup>

WWII represented a turning point in women's political agenda. Their political performance increased since men were busy with the war issues. One of those women who made political strides during those wary circumstances was Florence Horsburgh who was appointed by Winston Churchill as a Parliamentary Secretary for the Ministry of Health (1939).

<sup>1</sup> “The Women of the Second World War”, *GOV.UK*, April 16, 2015

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/the-women-of-the-second-world-war> (Accessed November 22, 2020)

<sup>2</sup> Janet Lee, “The First Aid Nursing Yeomanry (FANY) and Negotiation of Gender and Class Relations, 1907-1918” *NWSA Journal* Vol19, n°2(2007):138

<sup>3</sup> “Angel in the House” is a title of a poem written by the English poet and literary critic Coventry Patmore (1823-1896). It was written in 1854 describing his angel-wife as a role model for all women. The title became a used expression to glorify the role of the ideal Victorian woman in the private sphere (House). Sarah Kuhl, “The Angel in the House and Fallen Women: Assigning Women Their Places in Victorian Society”, 172

[https://open.conted.ox.ac.uk/sites/open.conted.ox.ac.uk/files/resources/Create%20Document/The%20Angel%20in%20the%20House%20and%20Fallen%20Women\\_Sarah%20Kuhl.pdf](https://open.conted.ox.ac.uk/sites/open.conted.ox.ac.uk/files/resources/Create%20Document/The%20Angel%20in%20the%20House%20and%20Fallen%20Women_Sarah%20Kuhl.pdf) (Accessed May 12, 2022)

<sup>4</sup> Megan Lloyd George was the third daughter and the fifth child of the Prime Minister David Lloyd George (1916-1922). Graham Jones, “Megan Lloyd George, 1902-1966”, *Liberal History* <https://liberalhistory.org.uk/history/lloyd-george-megan/> (Accessed May 15, 2022)

<sup>5</sup> “Women in Parliament: A Guide to the History of Women's Participation in Parliament and Their Representation in the Historical Collections”.

Women MPs were united<sup>1</sup> during the war, they formed groups concerned with discussing several issues concerned with women lives. As an example, the conservative ladies Thelma Cazalet-Keir (1899-1989), Irene Wad, Nancy Astor and Mavis Tate joined by the Labour ladies Megan Lloyd George, Elenor Rathbone, Edith Summerkill, Agnes Hardie, Jennie Adamson and Beatrice Wright (1910-2003) formed their own group to debate improving the lives of women during the war since women were contributing, to a large extent, to the warfare.<sup>2</sup> They discussed several important issues. Among them women's wages' increase, working conditions and training facilities. This group was known as Women's Power Committee. It was established in 1940. The Committee was chaired by Irene Ward who was aided by Ethel Wood as her Secretary.

The Women's Power Committee (WPC) worked in collaboration with other women organizations that were considered as a liaison between society and parliament. Women of those organizations listed all the problems encountered by women and brought them to women MPs.<sup>3</sup> The latter were devoted to debate those problems and suggesting solutions. Thus, the bulk of women MPs' work during the war considered the status of women and England trying to generate a betterment of their employment. The objectives of women MPs through their newly formed committee are summarized as the following:

- (1) To further the fullest utilization of womanpower in the war effort and secure equitable treatment of women workers.
- (2) To collect and consider facts concerning any matter influencing the use of womanpower.
- (3) To make formal representations to appropriate authorities where action was necessary on women's problems.
- (4) To prepare statements for the press with regard to the use of womanpower.
- (5) To cooperate with other societies on special aspects of recruitment, employment, and working conditions of women.
- (6) To press for inclusion of trained and experienced women in all the stages of the war effort, from policy-framing downward.<sup>4</sup>

For propaganda purposes, the committee resorted to pamphlets, journals, newspapers and radios to make the "Woman Question" during the war a public issue starting from

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<sup>1</sup> G.E. Maguire, *Conservative Women: A History of Women and the Conservative Party, 1874-1997* (London: Macmillan Press Ltd, 1998), 109

<sup>2</sup> G.E. Maguire, *Conservative Women*, 109

<sup>3</sup> "Womanpower Committees during World War II: United States and British Experience", Women's Bureau Bulletin 244, Department of Labor United States of America, 1953, 50

[https://fraser.stlouisfed.org/files/docs/publications/women/b0244\\_dolwb\\_1953.pdf](https://fraser.stlouisfed.org/files/docs/publications/women/b0244_dolwb_1953.pdf) (Accessed April 20, 2022)

<sup>4</sup> "Womanpower Committees during World War II: United States and British Experience", 50

1943. Moreover, they suggested for film directors to consider the idea of admitting women in more skilled works during the war and most importantly, they drafted their own reports that ingrained a detailed explanation of hurdles and unbearable problems thwarting women's progress in their work.<sup>1</sup> They entitled their first report "Mainly to Men"<sup>2</sup> as an indirect message for the male cabinet ministers and the MPs in the Ministry of Labour to work on improving women's employment and rewarding them for their doughty intervention in dangerous works left by men.

The pivotal issue that required to be urgently considered was the equal compensation of the injured men and women. The woman MP Mrs. Mavis Tate (1893-1947) assumed this responsibility of campaigning for equal compensation. The event that triggered the campaign for equal compensation took place on Saturday, September 20, 1941 when a girl named Muriel Smart aged 19 years old was terribly injured in a factory where she worked as "A War Worker". Paula Bartley provided a detailed description of the way Muriel Smart was injured. She wrote "She had lost both eyes, injured her legs, fractured her jaw when the factory in which she worked was bombed".<sup>3</sup> Muriel Smart was very angry tasting the bitter seeds of inequality against women. If a man suffered the same injury, he would be compensated more than Muriel. Her only sin "she was a woman". Muriel decided to fight for equal compensation even if her personal devotion to the campaign would cost her life. She was, then, supported by a woman MP Mavis Tate.

Mavis Tate discussed the idea with the Minister of Pensions Walter Womersley (1939-1945) through proposing an amendment to the War Injuries Act on November 25, 1942. Mavis Tate stated "It was not a party issue; it is not an issue between the sexes. It is an issue that is confined to justice".<sup>4</sup> Walter Womersley explained that it would be impossible to equalize the compensation for war injuries of both sexes. Mavis Tate did not forget to officially consider the married women workers' rights.

<sup>1</sup> "Womanpower Committees during World War II: United States and British Experience", 52

<sup>2</sup> "Womanpower Committees during World War II: United States and British Experience", 52

<sup>3</sup> Paula Bartley, *Women's Activism in Twentieth Century Britain: Making A Difference Across the Political Spectrum* (Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2022), 126

<sup>4</sup> *Daily Mirror*, November 22, 1968, 23 in Bartley, *Women's Activism in Twentieth Century Britain*, 127.

Mavis Tate suggested a financial compensation of the married women; money would be given to them not to their husbands.<sup>1</sup> Unfortunately, equalizing the financial compensation between the two sexes was defeated at parliament by male MPs. 95 agreed on the idea whereas the majority of 229 male MPs opposed it in November 1941.<sup>2</sup> The male MPs did not welcome those suggestions put forward by the female members of Woman Power Committee based on one reason. The committee was not an official and governmental body. Women MPs did not give up until the governmental approval of equal compensation on April 7, 1943.

From Equal compensation, women MPs shifted their attention to equal pay for women. They formed Equal Pay Campaign Committee (EPCC) in 1943 by Mavis Tate and Ellen Summerskill. In 1944, the Conservative woman MP Thelma Cazalet-Keir seized the opportunity of the parliamentary passage of the Butler Education Act<sup>3</sup> and she proposed an amendment to it stating equal pay for women teachers.<sup>4</sup> Winston Churchill and the Labour male MP Ernest Bevin (1922-1951), harshly, opposed this amendment.<sup>5</sup> They did not reject the amendment for granted, they wanted to avoid trade unions' and male teachers' strike that would start if women teachers would be paid similarly as men.<sup>6</sup> The male defeat of the amendment jeopardized gender relations in the House of Commons. Women MPs grew hostile.<sup>7</sup> In this regard, women MPs sole interest, during the war, was their readiness to defend other women who were scarifying their lives for the safety of England.

Unlike the female participation in WWI, their support to war efforts did not bring sweeping changes during the war. The female war workers endangered their lives through being involved in tough male jobs, but their rights and the series of rewards expected to meet in the war witnessed a tremendous marginalization. Women MPs, additionally, thrived to better represent women and fight for their rights, but in vain. Whenever a given

<sup>1</sup> Womanpower Committees during World War II: United States and British Experience, 55

<sup>2</sup> Womanpower Committees during World War II: United States and British Experience, 56

<sup>3</sup> The Education Act of 1944 was steered through Parliament by the Education Minister, R.A. Butler. The Act provided free secondary education for all pupils. "The Education Act of 1944", UK Parliament <https://www.parliament.uk/about/living-heritage/transformingsociety/livinglearning/school/overview/educationact1944/> (Accessed April 20,2022)

<sup>4</sup> Maguire, *Conservative Women*, 110.

<sup>5</sup> Maguire, *Conservative Women*, 110.

<sup>6</sup> Helen Jones, *Women in British Public Life, 1914-1950: Gender, Power and Social Policy*(Taylor and Francis, 2000),199.

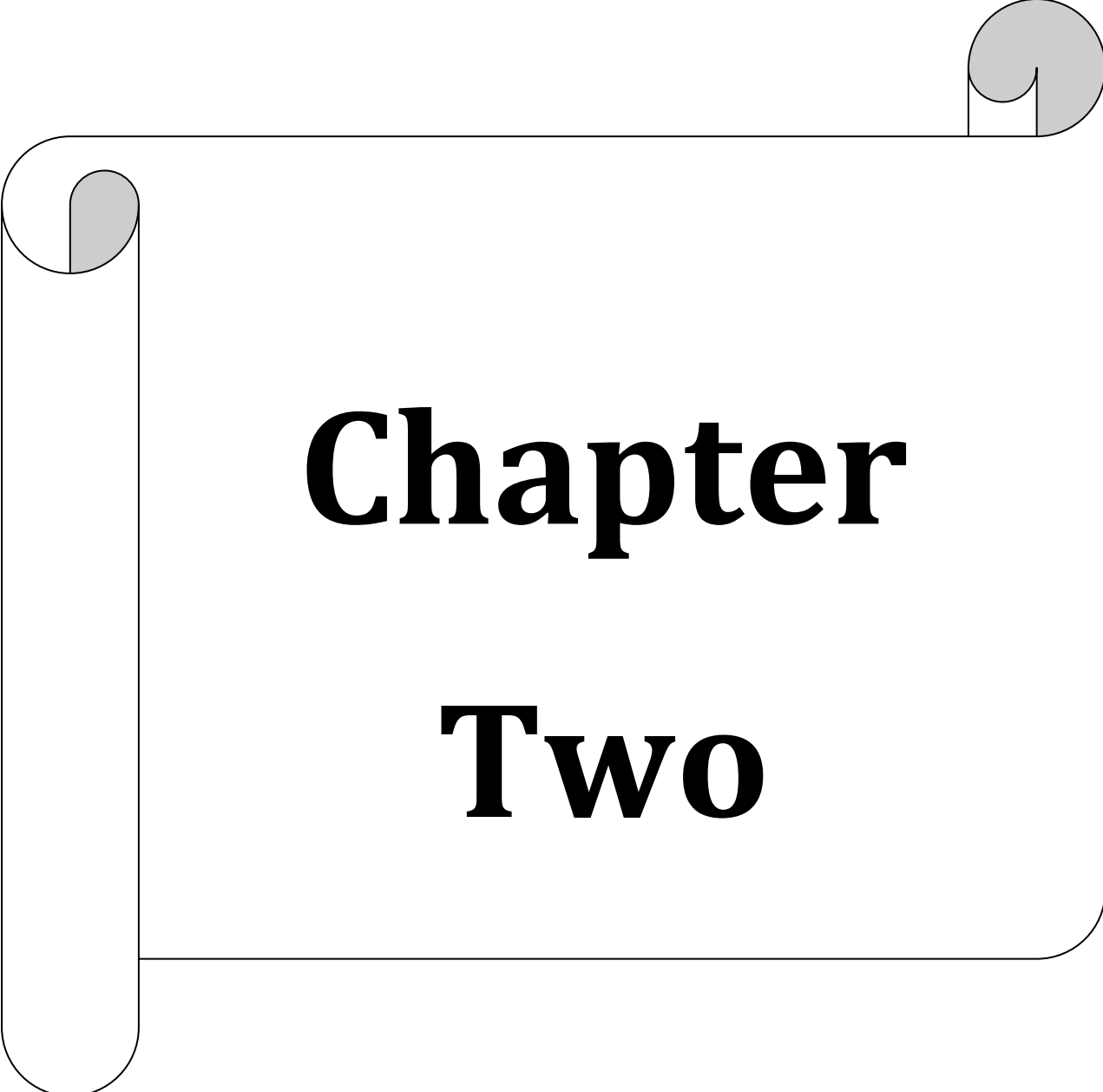
<sup>7</sup> Maguire, *Conservative Women*, 110.

legislation was proposed for the sake of improving the work conditions of women war workers, those suggested legislations were either opposed by male MPs or finally rejected. WWII was a golden opportunity for women MPs, despite the fruitless results, proved to be able to politically intervene, to set up a legislation and to better represent women in the “Men’s House”.

### 1.5 Conclusion

To wrap it up, the female political admission was not granted overnight. It was preceded by the female campaign for the franchise in the nineteenth century. After women attained the partial enfranchisement in 1918, another political breakthrough was experienced. It was the first governmental overnight passage of an Act that allowed all women ageing 21 to stand as candidates. It is concluded that women never demanded the admission into the parliamentary world, what was really urgently needed was the franchise on the same terms as men.

The female political integration in the Men’s political world started in 1918 when the process of decision-making became a “mixed-sex mission”. For women in England, the political admission was not that important than the universal suffrage. Choosing a representative was more democratic than being a representative. The continued desire for voting on the same terms as men persisted until it was accomplished in 1928. The female entry to parliament demarcated two aspects of male-female relationships. Those political ties were an amalgam of male support and male opposition. All in all, WWII was an opportunity that revealed the strengths and the weakness of women MPs. More clearly, women MPs, until 1945, contributed fruitfully and fruitlessly according to the nature of their political task. So, how did the female support of war efforts impacted on their political journeys in post-war era?



# **Chapter**

# **Two**

**Chapter Two  
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(1945-1979)**

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## **2.1 Introduction**

The partial and the equal enfranchisement of women in England were milestones in the history of women parliamentary political participation. They campaigned for change and still campaigning for political equality. Being granted a golden opportunity to vote and stand as candidates, and above all to become MPs , brought women voices into governmental agenda.

After WWII, women employment opportunities increased, but the increased political integration was still a challenge. Although women were highly welcomed in the public sphere of paid employment, their political immersion was two-fold. On the one hand, women political participation reached the zenith when a number of women scored high appointive leadership roles and cabinet ministers. Additionally, women's presence in parliament was maximized through being given an opportunity to stand in the House of Lords firstly in 1958. On the other hand, the majority of female MPs were appointed to hold low political positions. Whatever their political breakthrough, they remained a minority in parliament overshadowed by male control and domination.

Reaching the parliamentary arena, already reserved solely for men, was not an easy mission for women. They found themselves bearing another type of heavy burden. Although co-existing with men in parliament, gender disparity, gender discrimination and the female underrepresentation became key characteristics of “gendered politics” in England. They faced a myriad of challenges that hampered their political performance in the House of Commons and the House of Lords<sup>1</sup>. Thus, the male-female political equality remained one of the unfulfilled aims that women strived to achieve.

The bulk of this chapter is to dig deep in the female political involvement in parliamentary politics after WWII (1945-1979) and to expound the political parties' quest for either the admission or the marginalization of women MPs in the House of Commons and the House of Lords. Last but not least, it attempts to examine the barriers that

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<sup>1</sup> The House of Lords or simply the Lords is the Upper House in the British parliament. The choice if its members relied on appointment. It was a non-representative and a non-elected body. It is independent from and complemented the work of, the elected House of Commons. Its members were called “peers”. Gerard Blamont and Anne Paquette, *Les Clés de la civilisation Britannique* (Paris: Ellipsis Edition Marketing, 2000), 68

threatened the female political status and strengthened their underrepresentation in parliament.

## **2.2 Gender, Women and Politics (1945-1979)**

After the end of WWII, the female participation in the war had a positive impact on their employment opportunities. Women were granted a myriad of opportunities to join the labour force. Politics became a field where both men and women managed and, above all, it became a domain of gender competition. Yet, even welcomed in a “male sphere”, women encountered different male attitudes and reaction after WWII. The male limited support to women plus gender segregation were the defining features of women political journey with their male colleagues after the war. Political equity, in this vein, remained a dream to be realized.

The political marginalization did not characterize the political status of women out of vacuum, but there were plenty of reasons that always glorified the role of men in politics and deteriorated women capacities. Although they were marginalized and their number was repeatedly low if compared to their male counterparts, the female elite and the women eminent pioneers represented all women in the “Men’s House”. Some Prime Ministers such as Harold Wilson, Harold Macmillan and Anthony Eden granted women positions always previously reserved for men. The post WWII era until the emergence of Margaret Thatcher (1979-1990) as Prime Minister, women started to enjoy the seeds of emancipation in different fields. When it comes to politics, they did not accomplish significant strides, but at least they accompanied men as MPs in “gender politics”<sup>1</sup>. Gender played a focal role in demarcating the responsibilities, gender roles<sup>2</sup> and the political mission men and women had to fulfill. In parliament (1945-1979), the number of male MPs always exceeded the number of women. Despite the fruitful achievements of women in parliament, the problem of underrepresentation was inevitable.

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<sup>1</sup> Mona Lena Krook and Fiona Mackay, *Gender , Politics and Institutions: Towards a Feminist Institutionalism* (UK: Palgrave Macmillan,2011), 07

<sup>2</sup> The term “gender role” was firstly coined by the leading New Zealand-American sexologist, psychologist and author John Money (1921-2006). Rachel Giese and Chris Wodskou, “The Story of John Money: Controversial sexologist grappled with the concept of gender”, *CBC*, July5,2015 <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/the-story-of-john-money-controversial-sexologist-grappled-with-the-concept-of-gender-1.3137670> (Accessed April 30,2022)

### 2.2.1 Gender versus Sex

The terms “sex” and “gender” are used interchangeably, but there is a difference between them. First and foremost, sex refers to the biological and physical composition of the body when firstly born whether male, female or intersex<sup>1</sup>. The assigned sex from the time of birth is known as “natal sex”<sup>2</sup>. The Canadian Institute for Health Research provides a detailed overview about sex. . The latter is defined as “a set of biological attributes in humans and animals. It is primarily associated with physical and physiological features including chromosomes, gene expression, hormone levels and function, and reproductive/sexual anatomy”.<sup>3</sup>

Gender, in turn, refers to the state of how male and female persons identify themselves in society whether feminine, masculine or androgynous<sup>4</sup>. Thus, gender encapsulates external factors that reflect their sex including behaviours, thoughts, roles and manners. It is a cultural and social construction and presentation. “Gender is not something we are, rather it is something we do”<sup>5</sup>. Put simply, gender is not a biological attribute, it is a social outcome that keeps characterizing men and women. It is not always a man behaves in a male way and it is not always a woman behaves in a female way. Society demarcates gender. The latter drew the roles that men and women play. Gender is defined:

Gender is a socially constructed roles, behaviours, expressions and identities. It influences how people perceive themselves and each other, how they act and interact. Gender identity is not confined to a binary (girl/woman, boy/man) nor is it static; it exists along a continuum and can change over time.<sup>6</sup>

Sex remained the only factor that represents gender. A man has his own way of performance, thoughts, deeds ... and the same for a woman, let alone the reversed roles of

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<sup>1</sup> Intersex is a general term used for a variety of situations in which a person is born with reproductive or sexual anatomy that doesn't fit the boxes of “female” or “male.” Sometimes doctors do surgeries on intersex babies and children to make their bodies fit binary ideas of “male” or “female”. “What Is Intersex?”, *Planned Parenthood* <https://www.plannedparenthood.org/learn/gender-identity/sex-gender-identity/whats-intersex> (Accessed April 30,2022)

<sup>2</sup> “Sex and Gender : What Is the difference ?”, *Medical News Today* <https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/232363#identity-and-expression> (Accessed September 26,2021)

<sup>3</sup> “What Is Gender, What is Sex”, Canadian Institutes for Health Research <https://cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/48642.html> (Accessed September26,2021)

<sup>4</sup> Being Androgynous is having the characteristics or nature of both male and female at the same time. “Androgynous” <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/androgynous> (Accessed April 30,2022)

<sup>5</sup> West and Zimmerman, in *Gender, Nature and Nurture*, 2nd ed. Richard.A.Lippa (New York : Psychology Press, 2005), 115

<sup>6</sup> “What Is Gender, What is Sex”, Canadian Institutes for Health Research <https://cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/48642.html> (Accessed September26,2021)

the two sexes. Politics in general and parliament in particular mirrored the interaction of men and women through their masculine and feminine qualities.

## 2.2.2 Social Role Theory and Gender Stereotypes

Men and women occupy totally different roles in society and even in the same place; the responsibilities they ought to assume are different. For example, in the family, the mother is responsible for child care and the father as a bread-winner. In politics, men and women co-exist, but the gist of their political mission is also different. Alice Eagly<sup>1</sup> put forward a theory in 1987 she called “Social Role Theory”<sup>2</sup>. The latter is coincided with sex-based divisions of labour and the established gender roles in society. The kernel of this theory is that the physical difference between men and women means a difference in the way they behave, act, think, and perform a given task. Politics, starting from 1918, became a gendered field where men and women exhibited different political performance.

Eagly's Social Role Theory portrays the fact that gender is a driving force in shaping social behaviour. The way, women and men act, hinged on a series of gender stereotypes. The way of acting refers to the social behaviour of men and women. The remarkable change in gender stereotypes originated in women's fight to reach the male world of outside work.

The contemporary interest in the psychology of gender reflects its centrality in the understanding of social behavior. Gender continues to be a driving force in world politics and economics, as evident in the struggles of women to attain parity in political and economic institutions, the transformative impact of the #me-too movement, and the falling birthrates in many nations as women opt for careers instead of large families. In addition, binary gender itself is facing challenge as the two primary sex categories of female and male yield to accommodate multiple gender and sexual identities, including non-binary identities and transgender status.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Alice H. Eagly (born December 25, 1938 in Los Angeles) is a [professor](#) of [psychology](#) and of [management](#) and organizations at [Northwestern University](#). “Alice Eagly”, *Psychology's Feminist Voices* <https://feministvoices.com/profiles/alice-eagly> (Accessed April 30,2022)

<sup>2</sup> A.Lippa, *Gender, Nature and Nurture* 2<sup>nd</sup> ed, 113.

<sup>3</sup> Alice H.Eagly and Sabine Sczesny, “Gender Roles in the Future? Theoretical Foundations and Future Research Directions” , *Personality and Social Psychology*, September4,2019 <https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fpsyg.2019.01965/full> (Accessed September26,2020)

It is important to mention that there are six types of occupations: realistic, investigative, artistic, social, enterprising and conventional.<sup>1</sup> Being a minister or a politician is classified as a social occupation. The nature of social occupations ingrained developing, counseling, managing, teaching and directing other people.<sup>2</sup> Women, to a large extent, prefer social works such as being a minister and manager<sup>3</sup>. Despite the female ability to manage and to politically involve in decision-making, gender roles differed in parliament and men always got the lion's share of political management.

Thus, gender roles differed from the past to the present and the stereotypes altered through time in the light of the social, political and economic emancipation women started to enjoy over time. In the eighteenth century, for example, women's only sphere where to perform her daily tasks was the home. The nineteenth century, things started to change and women started to be involved in the public world of paid employment. The twentieth century, the female increased presence in the male-sphere of work and politics escalated. The full enfranchisement of women and allowing them to stand as candidates marked a watershed in gender roles in politics plus the myriad of opportunities granted to women in the workforce.

Gender roles did not remain fixed. Women were no longer home makers and men were not the sole members devoted to bread-winning. Through time, women became involved in every task available to share a similarity with men as bread winners.

### **2.2.3. Positive and Negative Attitudes Towards Women in Politics**

As previously mentioned, gender roles differ in society in different fields. Men and women can meet together in different public institutions in which they could exhibit different similarities and differences. One of those fields is politics. The latter is managed by men and women. In earlier centuries, politics was a male domain in which women had not the right to intervene. The political recruitment of women in parliament is a debatable topic. There were views that advocated the female entry to politics. On the other side, there

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<sup>1</sup> John Holland, *Making Vocational Choices*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed (Odessa : Psychological Assessment Resources, 1992)

<sup>2</sup> Holland, *Making Vocational Choices*.

<sup>3</sup> Holland.

were views that denied women the right to politically manage a country and have a hand in the process of decision making. Some anti-feminists claimed that voting and the political management of a country would undermine the real role of woman. Politics would “make women unfeminine and undomestic”<sup>1</sup>.

Thus, the female political participation is a double-edge sword. It may positively serve their political mission and it could make from them an opportunity for negative criticism and gender roles imbalance. Women, going beyond their own sphere (home) and setting foot in parliament which was traditionally reserved solely for men can create negative reactions whether inside parliament or outside. Even if women would achieve an incremental progress in parliament, gender segregation in parliament would persist. If the latter occurred, the political equity between the two genders would remain always an unreachable quest.

### **2.2.3.1. The Positive Attitudes**

The female political participation in England dating back to 1918 was seen by feminists who favoured the female presence in parliament as a good and fruitful step that contributed in creating effective decisions since the two genders would interact, cooperate and set laws. Those positive attitudes that strengthened the female role in politics culminated in outstanding political gains in parliament especially in the House of Commons. Sarah Delis, in her booklet *Women and Political Representation* (2014), stressed that excluding women from politics was and would be a loss itself since parliamentary decisions would miss the feminine touch. “Women represent half the potential talents and skills of humanity and their underrepresentation in decision-making is a loss for society as a whole.”<sup>2</sup>

First and foremost, the political participation of women is not a trivial issue, but one of their pivotal rights that they had to enjoy by hook or by crook. Their political

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<sup>1</sup> William E. Burns, *A Brief History of Great Britain* (New York: Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data, 2010), 175.

<sup>2</sup> “The First European Summit on Women in Decision Making” in *Women and Political Representation: Handbook on Increasing Women's Political Participation in Georgia*, ed. Sarah Delis (Georgia: Fountain Printing House, 2014), 05.

engagement represented their democratic principles. Since women comprise half of the world's populations<sup>1</sup>, they needed to have their voice heard and their efforts exploited to serve their country. It is argued that the male-female intervention in the public affairs (politics as a case study) is one of the best ways to eliminate gender discrimination.

The equal participation of women and men in public life is one of the cornerstones of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) adopted by the United Nations (UN) General Assembly in 1979..... The slowly changing face of parliamentary representation was not an inevitable consequence of the broadening of the political space in democratization processes”<sup>2</sup>

Add to this, Tiffany D. Barnes and Emily Beaulieu<sup>1</sup> (2018) described women as “honest” when it comes to their job as politicians. In a number of studies conducted about the illegal use of a political position for private gain through corruption, the results had shown that women were less likely than male politicians to be involved in illegal practices and they are described as “less corrupt and are less likely to condone bribe taking”<sup>3</sup>.

Furthermore, it was pointed out that women had the right to be involved in the process of policy-making in England since the latter was one of the countries that favoured “representative democracy”<sup>4</sup>. It would be unjust practice denying women their political rights. Since they could vote choosing their representatives, their political rights would be ceded to them through maximizing their own political representation. Their voice should be heard and their role to represent should be fostered.

Put simply, since they were granted a range of employment opportunities in different fields after WWII especially from 1945 to 1950's, why would politics remain a solely-male field? Women had to enjoy their political activism and, above all, had to represent women in parliament. Women, in the light of representative democracy, did not enter parliament to interrupt but to represent. They did not become MPs just for granted

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<sup>1</sup> Julie Ballington and Azza Karam, *Women in Parliament: Beyond Numbers* (International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, 2005), 24

<sup>2</sup> Ballington and Karam, 25-26

<sup>3</sup> Tiffany D. Barnes and Emily Beaulieu<sup>1</sup>, “Women Politicians, Institutions, and Perceptions of Corruption,” *Comparative Political Studies* Vol.52 ,n° 1 (2018) , 139

<sup>4</sup> Joan Jones, *Gender and Political Participation*, 13

and overnight, but they were elected by citizens; they were voluntarily chosen to become MPs. Their political empowerment should be made a reality because whenever they were empowered, it would be fruitful for the whole society. "When women are empowered, all of society benefits"<sup>1</sup>

Concurrently, it was argued that since women all over the world were socially and economically emancipated, their political integration should be encouraged and the opportunities of their political inclusion should not be seen from a negative angle. Their educational progress can positively impact their political activism. Their developed capabilities in education and in a range of employment opportunities can be invested in their political mission. Women's ability to take part in the global workforce would strengthen and diversify their abilities as politicians.

Many authors like Michael Saward, Sarah Childs, Mona Crook and Zeena Didi, claimed that the female representation in politics is "necessary". Michael Saward in his article "The Representative Claim" published in 2010 makes it clear that if women were fully excluded from parliament, all women in society will suffer the burden of non-representation and their interests would be lost. Women in parliament came to represent women. They did not include themselves in the political contest for granted. Instead of policy-making, he called the female mission in politics as "claims- making". Women would serve as a liaison between the female population and government.<sup>2</sup>

The professor of Politics and Gender in London's University Sarah Childs and the professor of Political Science in Rutgers University Mona Krook called politicians whether men or women "critical actors" believing that it not a matter of being a woman or man, but the focal point lies in whether be able to make a change and positive impact or not. Introducing reforms and putting forward legislation is not the creation of men only.<sup>3</sup> Another historian Brookes claimed that when assessing the work of men and women in parliament, there was no difference despite the female inexperience in politics. She wrote

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<sup>1</sup> Ruth Indiah Rahayu, *The Success and the Barriers to Women's Representation in Southeast Asia Between State Policies, Political Parties and Women's Movement* (Jakarta: Kemitraan Partnership, 2014), III

<sup>2</sup> Michael Saward, "The Representative Claim," *Contemporary Political Theory* Vol. 5, n<sup>o</sup>3, (2006), 305-306.

<sup>3</sup> Sarah Childs & Mona Lena Krook, "Analyzing Women's Substantive Representation : From Critical Mass to Critical Actors," *Government and Opposition* Vol. 44, n<sup>o</sup>2, (2009), 145



“women’s work did not differ radically from that of men....women have had a contribution to make on nearly every major issue before Parliament”<sup>1</sup>

The above mentioned positive views that are considered as a backbone to encourage women political participation were not put forward from scratch. Any positive belief in opening new horizons for women to be increasingly present in parliament stemmed from a series of arguments. To support or fail to support any idea or issue, the arguments are always needed. Sarah Delys listed the arguments that supported and stated the importance of opening the gate of politics to women. She explained in her book *Women and Political Representation* that there are six arguments for the female political immersion<sup>2</sup>.

First of all, the justice argument that stated since women formed a part of the population, they must have a word in the local management of their country. Secondly, the experience argument which refers to the fact that women had several experiences in life and the first experience of responsibilities already started at home plus the societal experiences they gained in other jobs. Add to this, the interest argument is of a paramount importance. It has to do with the view that men and women have different interests. The female interests cannot be represented by men. In this vein, women are in an urgent need to represent themselves and represent the interests of all women in society. Besides, the symbolic argument played a pivotal role. Any woman politician is a role model for other women. Furthermore, the critical Mass argument which goes in tandem with the idea that women are able to achieve abundant purposes through representing other women. Finally, the democracy argument is another argument justifying the female appropriateness for politics.

The crux of this argument is that in a democratic country, people must be equal and a “democratized” government must be enhanced through giving women a chance to share governing a country they live in.<sup>3</sup> Zeena Didi shared the same belief in the interrelation between better representation and democracy. She stated “The full and active participation

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<sup>1</sup> Brookes, *Women at Westminster*, 239.

<sup>2</sup> Delis, *Women and Political Representation*, 07

<sup>3</sup> Delis, 07

of women in legislatures, equal to men, is not just a goal in itself, but central to building and sustaining democracies”<sup>1</sup>

Based on those arguments, women deserved to be political participants. They proved themselves capable of assuming male responsibilities during wars and even in the non-political employment institutions. Their admission to parliament and their experiences there would be a catalyst for change. Their contribution to the world of parliamentary legislations would be of paramount importance. On the opposite sides, those positives attitudes were not shared by all people. There were also negative attitudes that really impeded women political increased representation.

### **2.2.3.2. The Negative Attitudes**

Much ink had been spent on the bad effects and the political fiasco women would provoke through their direct intervention in parliament. The latter was firstly established by men, organized by men and its internal principles were drafted by men. Women, joining men in setting up decisions, would ruin what men already put forward. The female continued underrepresentation was based on negative views. There were billions of arguments that stated denying political emancipation for women. It was historically argued that women and politics were “antithesis”.<sup>2</sup>

If compared to male politicians, women did not have enough knowledge about how politics functions and what added insult to the injury they were not experienced since parliamentary politics used to be a male domain in earlier centuries<sup>3</sup>. Older women, in fact, lacked the educational backgrounds. The lack of occupational experience and knowledge were not the lone factors that stated depriving women from political participation. The lack of awareness also mattered. They were not aware of the most effective remedies when encountering a problem in parliament.

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<sup>1</sup> Zeena Didi, “Why We Need More Women in Politics”, King’s College , May2020  
<https://www.kcl.ac.uk/news/why-we-need-more-women-in-politics> (Accessed on November2,2021)

<sup>2</sup> Michela Insenga MA , “An Analysis of the Representation of Female Members of United Kingdom Parliament in the British Press,” *European Scientific Journal* Vol02 (September2014): 183

<sup>3</sup> Insenga , “An Analysis of the Representation of Female Members of United Kingdom Parliament”, 183

The political experience gained through time was of a great importance. It played a leading role in quickly finding effective solutions in times of any kind of crisis or temporary problem. Annabelle Sreberny and Liesbet Van Zoonen in their book *Gender, Politics and Communication*(2000) pointed out that it would be a great mistake of involving women in politics alongside men. They refer to politics as “dirty business”<sup>1</sup> that women must remain far from. Since politics was referred to as “dirty”, it was pointed out by William .E.Burns in his book *A Brief History of Great Britain* (2010) that allowing women to vote in general and take part in the political contest alongside men would make from women “unfeminine” and from men “effeminate”<sup>2</sup>

Those who denied political participation for women believed that women did not have enough time for home and work in parliament. Time would not be enough to assume the responsibility at home and outside. Women's dual role as a mother and politician would undermine her capabilities in politics. Thus, gender equality in politics would never be a reality since women lack abundant conditions that men enjoy. It is of great significance to point out that the marital status of women was never a hurdle impeding them from participation in the political world, but it was a factor leading to less women involved in politics than men.<sup>3</sup> Politics was described as an “odd place”<sup>4</sup> for women where they were given an opportunity to have a hand in managing England; a task that they had never attempted to be involved in. Being immersed in parliament surrounded by men made from women “un-feminine” and they were described as “honorary men”<sup>5</sup>. Political integration, in this case, deprived women from their femininity and their virtues.

Most importantly, one of the pivotal arguments for the necessity to exclude women from politics was the nature of their personality and the set of characteristics that

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<sup>1</sup> Annabelle Sreberny and Liesbet Van Zoonen , *Gender, Politics and Communication* (New Jersey: Hampton Press,2000), 01

<sup>2</sup> .E.Burns, 175

<sup>3</sup> Joan Jones, “Gender and Political Participation”, Research Report, UK, The Electoral Commission, April 2004, 39

[https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/sites/default/files/electoral\\_commission\\_pdf\\_file/Final\\_report\\_2704\\_04\\_12488-9470\\_E\\_N\\_S\\_W\\_.pdf](https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/sites/default/files/electoral_commission_pdf_file/Final_report_2704_04_12488-9470_E_N_S_W_.pdf) (Accessed May16,2022)

<sup>4</sup> Sreberny and [Van Zoonen](#), *Gender, Politics and Communication*, 01.

<sup>5</sup> Catherine M. Watuka, “Resistance to Women's Political Leadership: Problems and Advocated Solutions” ,03[https://www.iknowpolitics.org/sites/default/files/resistance\\_to\\_womens\\_political\\_leadership\\_problems\\_a\\_nd\\_advocated\\_solutions\\_by\\_catherine\\_watuka.pdf](https://www.iknowpolitics.org/sites/default/files/resistance_to_womens_political_leadership_problems_a_nd_advocated_solutions_by_catherine_watuka.pdf) (Accessed November2,2021)

overshadowed them as individuals. Compassion, empathy, and passivity are female attributes that did not favour women to be political participants. Being too emotional would bring politics upside down and undermine the parliamentary authority. If light is shed on the male characteristics, they were more qualified to be political participants. Those characteristics and behavioral traits encapsulated ambition, selfishness, toughness, aggressivity, assertiveness and competitiveness. Those male features were perceived as more adequate to be an “ideal” politician.<sup>1</sup>

The predictors, required to be immersed in public or civic life, are labeled by Joan Jones in his article “Gender and Political Participation” (2004), “resources”<sup>2</sup>. The most important ones refer to structural resources. He listed the structural resources needed to be successfully and effectively involved in public life in general and politics in particular. Most importantly, not all women meet those characteristics. This fact paved the way for gender inequality and created a negative gap in politics<sup>3</sup>.

The structural resources emphasize how the social background of a citizen accounts for their civic participation. These accounts emphasize that educational qualifications, social-economic status and income lead to inequalities in other civic assets – such as skills, knowledge, experience, time and money”<sup>4</sup>

Those positive and negative attitudes towards whether including or excluding women from politics were workable to the extent that the number of women increased in parliament on the one hand. On the other hand, women in politics were ceaselessly enduring “underrepresentation” if compared to their male counterparts.

#### **2.2.4. The Impact of Negative Stereotypes on Women's Political Performance**

Positively speaking, allowing women to become MPs and participants in the process of decision-making was not a random step. Perceiving the focal role, women could play in

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<sup>1</sup> Insenga , “An Analysis of the Representation of Female Members of United Kingdom Parliament in the British Press”, 183.

<sup>2</sup> Insenga ,36.

<sup>3</sup> A negative gap when we have less active women than men in work. The positive gap when we have more men than women in any activity they are engaged. Jones, “Gender and Political Participation”, 17

<sup>4</sup> Insenga, 36

politics, paved the way for granting opportunities, although limited, to women for the sake of sharing the task of locally managing England.

Although welcomed to become MPs, women endured plenty of hurdles that impeded their full political integration. One of the main hurdles was underrepresentation. The latter was the outcome of abundant negative stereotypes stating that women cannot be political managers. The bad image stamped in minds about the negative role women played in politics went in tandem with the repeated exclusion of women from fully integrated into politics. The old stereotype stated that politics is a male domain. In the light of deviating from one sphere to another; from home to politics, those negative stereotypes undermined not only the female full representation in politics, but even their political action and performance. Steele Claude M introduced the term “stereotype Threat”<sup>1</sup> as:

The social-psychological threat that arises when one is in a situation or doing something for which a negative stereotype about one's group applies. This predicament threatens one with being negatively stereotyped, with being judged or treated stereotypically, or with the prospect of conforming to the stereotype. Called stereotype threat, it is a situational threat--a threat in the air--that, in general form, can affect the members of any group about whom a negative stereotype exists. Where bad stereotypes about these groups apply, members of these groups can fear being reduced to that stereotype. And for those who identify with the domain to which the stereotype is relevant, this predicament can be self-threatening. Negative stereotypes about women.....<sup>2</sup>

According to Steele, the negative stereotypes towards women in politics are considered as a setback that impeded the female full political immersion on the one hand. On the other hand, they made gender equity in politics an unaccomplished goal. He linked the “threat” with the mere reluctance to “recognize” someone or a group of people in a given place or in a given situation. He wrote “Stereotype threat, in contrast, refers to the strictly situational threat of negative stereotypes, the threat that does not depend on cuing an internalized anxiety or expectancy. It is cued by the mere recognition that a negative group stereotype could apply to oneself in a given situation. How threatening this

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<sup>1</sup> Steel Claude M, “A Threat in the Air : How Stereotypes Shape Intellectual Identity and Performance”, *American Psychologist* , June1997 [https://users.nber.org/~sewp/events/2005.01.14/Bios+Links/Krieger-rec5-Steele\\_Threat-in-the-Air.pdf](https://users.nber.org/~sewp/events/2005.01.14/Bios+Links/Krieger-rec5-Steele_Threat-in-the-Air.pdf) (Accessed October29,2021 )

<sup>2</sup> Steel Claude M, 614 .

recognition becomes depends on the person's identification with the stereotype relevant domain..."<sup>1</sup>

Most importantly, the negative stereotypes ingrained in voters' minds about the unsuitability of the female presence in parliament also impacted on the female political appointment. The female candidates to stand as MPs were not highly supported by voters bearing in mind that women were not qualified for government alongside men. The voters' enough knowledge about politics, the nature of politics and the accurate way politics should function, and his/her ability to make choices and appropriate decisions when voting is referred to as "Voters' Political Literacy"<sup>2</sup> Voters, in Britain, preferred male governors. The electoral increased support to men was one of the outcomes of a strong belief in gender stereotypes.

Voters were less willing to back women for the presidency and vice-presidency because they were perceived as less competent to handle traditional male issues (war, economy, big business), while the perception that women were more competent on typical female compassion issues neither helped nor hurt their electoral chances<sup>3</sup>

One of those stereotypes was the female incompetence when compared to men's political competence and experience.<sup>4</sup> It is focal to point out that voters' inclination to support male candidates was not the only factor that led to enhancing gender political disparity and welcoming few women MPs in parliament. The male party leaders were more committed to appoint less female MPs and they thrived to keep the already male-led parliament despite the female presence.

Gender stereotypes had a destructive impact on women in politics in general and on their political behavior and political achievement in particular. One of the main repeated hurdles that women encountered in parliament was underrepresentation. The latter was and is practical in different fields. The female political underrepresentation remains one of the inevitable obstacles that hampered women's political progress.

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<sup>1</sup> Steel Claude M, 617.

<sup>2</sup> Ballington and Karam,35.

<sup>3</sup> Leonie Huddy and Nayda Terkildsen, "The Consequences of Gender Stereotypes for Women Candidates at Different Levels and Types of Office,"*Political Research Quarterly*, Vol 46,N°03 (September1993):505

<sup>4</sup> Huddy and Terkildsen, "The Consequences of Gender Stereotypes for Women Candidates", 503

### **2.2.4.1. Political Underrepresentation: General Overview**

Any definition provided to define the concept of “underrepresentation” shares in common the fact that being underrepresented in any place with any community of people means the number of people is low when compared to other groups in the same institution. The Cambridge Dictionary defines it as “ If a type of person or thing is under-represented in a group or organization, there are not enough of them in it”<sup>1</sup>. In addition, it is also defined as “a situation in which the number of women or members of a minority group within a category of civil service employment constitutes a lower percentage of the total number of employees within the employment category than the percentage women or the minority constitutes within the civilian labor force”.<sup>2</sup>

Although successfully joining men in the House of Commons in 1918, women continued to serve as a minority group during post-WWII era. The crux of the matter behind the unavoidable female underrepresentation started firstly with the candidates’ selection process. This hurdle is referred to it as “problem of supply”.<sup>3</sup> Small number of women candidates compared to male candidates was selected to guarantee that women would not exceed male MPs. It was another way for political parties’ leaders to , indirectly, saying to women “ we do not want more women in parliament”. In this regard, the female political underrepresentation was planned, it was not accidental. Gender imbalance kept characterizing the parliamentary environment. Another shortcoming of the negative stereotypes was the barriers women either encountered in parliament or impeded their political breakthrough before entering parliament.

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<sup>1</sup> “Under-represented” <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/fr/dictionnaire/anglais/under-represented> (Accessed November 2,2021)

<sup>2</sup> “Underrepresentation Definition”, *Law Insider* <https://www.lawinsider.com/dictionary/underrepresentation> (Accessed November 2, 2021 )

<sup>3</sup> Meryl Kenny, “Why Aren't There More Women In British Politics?”, Political Studies Association, September 21, 2015 <https://www.psa.ac.uk/psa/news/why-arent-there-more-women-british-politics> (Accessed April 30,2022)

#### **2.2.4.2. Barriers Leading to Women's Parliamentary Underrepresentation**

To dig deep in the obstacles impeding women's way to be fully represented in parliament, shedding light on the "demand" and "supply"<sup>1</sup> issue is very significant to scrutinize the reasons behind the unchallenged female underrepresentation in parliamentary politics. The demand issue is interlinked with the female demand to be involved in politics and the demands of political parties for women candidates. The supply issue, in fact, has to do with the available number of women and the political Parties' interest in whether accepting them or not.

Enhancing the female parliamentary representation and granting gender political equity was a debatable topic. Much ink had been spent on expounding the challenges that women candidates and MPs encountered. The accomplished breakthrough in any field went in tandem with overcoming the hurdles being encountered. The female entry in parliament did not mean full political involvement. They faced a surfeit of obstacles that impeded their way in their mission in parliament despite their co-existence with men on the one hand. On the other hand, they endured the burden of "underrepresentation". It was estimated that in the period extending from 1945 to 1959 twenty-nine Labour women (29), fifteen (15) conservative women, one (1) Liberal woman were elected to the House of Commons.<sup>2</sup>

Although the number of women MPs increased from one election into another, women were still undergoing the impeded mission of political participation. Gender discrimination in leadership roles was an example in British politics. Although being granted an opportunity to vote and to stand as MPs in parliament, gender discrimination persisted through the male overrepresentation and the female underrepresentation. The latter was not the sole hurdle women kept enduring in the political parliamentary life. Above all, they were "misrepresented". The aforementioned negative attitudes towards the female inclusion in politics plus a web of hurdles women MPs started undergoing were very important motives that strengthened the female triviality in parliament. The House of

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<sup>1</sup> Joni Lovenduski, *Feminizing Politics* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2005), 64

<sup>2</sup> Caitriona Beaumont, "The Women's Movement, Politics and Citizenship, 1918-1950'S" in *Women in Twentieth Century Britain*, ed. Zweiniger-Bargielowska, 274



Commons kept being overshadowed by depriving women from their political rights and political engagement. “If the House of Commons is serious about being truly representative of the people it seeks to represent, it must rise to the challenge of being a world leader on women’s parliamentary representation”.<sup>1</sup>

First and foremost, obtaining a political career in England was not an easy task for women. Sharing the process of decision making did not signify gender political parity. Gender was considered a factor depriving women full political integration and equal political opportunities in the light of the aforementioned arguments stating the deserved exclusion of women from holding high political positions despite their increasingly strong presence in parliament.

In their way to public office and in their path to political career, women encountered abundant obstacles that did not only deprive them of their political rights , but even as MPs, they started encountering tough hurdles in their political mission as underrepresented and misrepresented minority in parliament. In the light of highly undermining gender political equality in England, the latter was no longer an arena where “full democracy” functioned. It was a country overshadowed by a “flawed democracy”.<sup>2</sup>

#### **2.2.4.2.1. Socio-Cultural Barriers**

The story of impeding the female path to their political career started before election to parliament. The aforementioned negative stereotypes about the female perilous involvement in parliament affected women themselves and the way they thought of being unwelcomed in parliament. They hesitated to emerge even as candidates through losing the will and motivation to become politicians. The motivational factors had a huge impact on

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<sup>1</sup> Mims Davies, “Barriers for Women in Standing for Parliament”, House of Commons Library, Parliamentary Debate Number CDP-2017-0160 , September 12, 2017

<sup>2</sup> Paul Whiteley, “Is it Time to Update the Definition of Political Participation” in *Political Participation in Britain: The Decline and Revival of Civic Culture*,ed. Paul Whiteley, (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan,2012), 01

whether being involved or being afraid to be involved. “Motivational factors such as ambition, self-confidence, self-belief and dedication are also well-evidenced barriers”<sup>1</sup>

The responsibility of caring for children and doing the housework is a time-consuming task. For this reason, it was impossible to widen political participation for all women. This would thwart the stability of the family. Expanding political rights for women would undermine the familial status and spoil the feminine role in the home. By the same token, the barriers impede women's efforts to enter parliament dated back even before their election. Women had not enough time for politics and even to think to be a politician. Jullie Ballington and Azza Karam in their book entitled *Women in Parliament: beyond Numbers* (2005) referred to the two time-consuming tasks caring for the family and being busy with other salaried professional obligations “the dual burden”<sup>2</sup> that hindered women from a full political integration on the same terms as men.

In most countries women carry a disproportionate share of domestic work. Their participation in politics is constrained by poverty and lack of education and access to information...it is difficult for women to participate in political life when their major concern is survival and they have no choice but to spend much of their time trying to meet the basic needs of families ...In addition to that, however, some women may have full-time jobs as wives and mothers as well as other full-time careers (e.g. as teachers, lawyers or doctors). Becoming an MP in these conditions might then be considered a third full-time job<sup>3</sup>

The “Dual Burden” is also known as “the Double Shift”. The term was firstly coined<sup>4</sup> by Arlie Hochschild<sup>5</sup>. It refers to the amalgam of the female work inside and outside the home. It is described as a “burden” because a couple of tiring jobs are accomplished. The one in home is unpaid whereas the second one is outside the home and

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<sup>1</sup> Sue Maguire, “Barriers to Women Entering Parliament and Local Government” (University of Bath: IPR Institute for Political Research), 2018, 06-07 <https://www.bath.ac.uk/publications/barriers-to-women-entering-parliament-and-local-government/attachments/barriers-to-women.pdf> (Accessed November 3, 2021)

<sup>2</sup> Ballington and Karam, 41.

<sup>3</sup> Ballington and Karam, 41.

<sup>4</sup> The term was coined by Arlie Hochschild in her book *The Second Shift* published in 1989. Kayla Van Gorp, “The Second Shift: Why It Is Diminishing but Still an Issue,” *The Review: A Journal of Undergraduate Student Research* Vol14, Article 7 (2013):02

<sup>5</sup> Arlie Russell Hochschild (born January 15, 1940 in Boston) is an American writer, sociologist and professor in the University of California. “Hochschild, Arlie Russell 1940”, *Encyclopedia.com*, 2019 <https://www.encyclopedia.com/arts/educational-magazines/hochschild-arlie-russell-1940> (Accessed April 30, 2022)

it is paid. In other words, women were doing the domestic work at home plus being involved in part-time or full-time jobs outside the home. "Double shift is when a woman has two 'jobs', one would be their day job whether in full-time or part-time employment and then coming home to do the housework, cooking and cleaning"<sup>1</sup>. Being a worker domestically at home and outside plus the emotional role as mother gives a woman "the triple shift"<sup>2</sup>.

Put simply, the financial consideration was another barrier depriving women from standing for office. Women, who lacked financial sources from where to finance their step to stand as candidates, found it impossible to politically participate in governing England. "The lack of financial resources to support their selection and candidacy often sits alongside family commitments and, in many cases, a greater propensity to be fighting marginal seats. In effect, the risks involved in fighting parliamentary seats are often much greater for women than for men"<sup>3</sup>

The economic status of women had a direct impact on their political recruitment into parliament. The diversity of the resources required to be politically powerful were not available at any woman in Britain. Those resources encapsulated education, enjoying a membership in the labour force and meeting the needed training to be a politician.<sup>4</sup> It is noteworthy to mention that illiteracy had a destructive impact on the female underrepresentation in parliament in its both Houses (House of Commons and House of Lords)

#### **2.2.4.2.2. Political Barriers**

The masculine authority in parliament persisted even after granting women an occasion to join men in a place already reserved solely for them. It was demonstrated that to fit into the masculine sphere was not an easy task achieved overnight and without any

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<sup>1</sup> Naomi Virini, "What Is Dual Burden in Sociology?", April 14, 2020 <https://findanyanswer.com/what-is-dual-burden-in-sociology> (Accessed November 5, 2021)

<sup>2</sup> Virini, "What Is Dual Burden in Sociology?"

<sup>3</sup> Maguire, "Barriers to Women Entering Parliament and Local Government", 30

<sup>4</sup> Richard E. Matland, "Women's Representation in National Legislatures: Developed and Developing Countries," *Legislative Studies Quarterly* Vol. 23, N° 01 (1998): 109

barrier. The male dominance and authority cannot be clearly seen unless a subjugated group is available. This group is “women”. Women are being referred to as “a primary target”<sup>1</sup> over whom men exercised their own patriarchal control on the one hand.

On the other hand, “the masculine model of politics”<sup>2</sup> had a great impact on the female representation in parliament. The political arena was dominated by men, even rules and laws were put forward and finally introduced to be applied according to male norms. By the same token, the British politics was overshadowed by either being “a winner” or “a loser”<sup>3</sup>. The male politicians played a game of competition and they thrived to quench their thirst for being winners and running effective political missions.

Another political barrier hindering women from reaching parliamentary life was the lack of role models in politics. The existence of female inspirational role models in parliament was considered as a motive that contributed to their will to be politically engaged. In other words, women might be inspired to imitate those female politicians. The scarcity of women MPs was a hindrance that pushed women to be afraid of joining men in parliament. Add to this, the lack of support was one of the factors introducing women as underrepresented group in politics.

#### **2.2.4.2.3. Structural and Institutional Barriers**

This type of barriers has to do with the work of political parties, the way of selecting candidates from one general election into another (1945-1979) since it was the onus of the party to select who would stand as a candidate. Since the final decision, whether to include or exclude women lies at the hands of party leaders who did their best to marginalize women interests.<sup>4</sup>

It is very difficult for a woman to make up her mind to enter politics.  
Once she makes up her own mind, then she has to prepare her

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<sup>1</sup> Susan M.IIkan, “Moral Regulation and Microlevel Politics: Implications for Women’s Work and Struggles”, in *Women; Work and Gender Relations in Developing Countries: A Global Perspective*, eds. Parvin Ghorayshi and Claire Belanger (London:Greenwood Press,1996),124

<sup>2</sup> Ballington and Karam,35

<sup>3</sup> Ballington and Karam,35

<sup>4</sup> Ballington and Karam,35

husband, and her children, and her family. Once she has overcome all these obstacles and applies for the ticket, then the male aspirants against whom she is applying make up all sorts of stories about her. And after all this, when her name goes to the party bosses, they do not select her name because they fear losing that seat.<sup>1</sup>

The political parties, in this case, were described as “gatekeepers”<sup>2</sup>. The way women were politically selected is described as “opaque recruitment”<sup>3</sup>. The latter was enormously influential. When it comes to which Political Party favoured more women candidates, the Labour Party was the one that received more women MPs than the Conservative Party. The work of political parties, the way of selection, the way of recruitment and even gender quotas were limited when it comes to increasing the number of women. The selection and nomination process witnessed a high inclination for more male candidates whether in the Labour, Conservative or Liberal Parties in England;

While all the major parties have made efforts to increase the numbers of women candidates and MPs, the Labour Party is recognized as having implemented the most substantial changes to their recruitment of candidates in order to enhance the representation of women<sup>4</sup>

Gender quotas played a vital role in increasing the number of women to be elected, but in reality political parties did not guarantee the political success of women when elected.<sup>5</sup> Melanee Thomas, a political scientist at the University of Calgary, described women MPs in the British parliament as “sacrificial lambs”<sup>6</sup>. They gained support from political Parties to run difficult political tasks. What worsened matters was the unjust intervention of the selection committee devoted to the selection of candidates . Each constituency had its own selection committee that exercised discriminative strategies to minimize the number of women candidates.

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<sup>1</sup> Ballington and Karam,38

<sup>2</sup> Maguire, “ Barriers to Women Entering Parliament and Local Government” ,07.

<sup>3</sup> Maguire, “ Barriers to Women Entering Parliament and Local Government” ,07.

<sup>4</sup> Maguire, “ Barriers to Women Entering Parliament and Local Government” , 18.

<sup>5</sup> Maguire, “ Barriers to Women Entering Parliament and Local Government” , 08.

<sup>6</sup> Melanie Thomas in “Why Are so many Female Candidates ‘Sacrificial Lambs?’”, *CBC*,September18,2015 <https://www.cbc.ca/radio/the180/personhood-for-animals-gender-neutral-clothing-why-politicians-should-stop-talking-economics-1.3234218/why-are-so-many-female-candidates-sacrificial-lambs-1.3234608> (Accessed May17,2022)

The married women, for example, who were eager to stand as candidate were asked questions that they did not find an answer. Just to hinder their candidacy. For example, they were asked about their husbands, children and whether they would neglect their children in case they would be elected.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, the unmarried women were asked questions that pushed them to forget about the candidacy. For example, one of the questions addressed to the single women “Why aren’t you married?”<sup>2</sup>. In this vein, the local selection committee created hurdles in order not to consider married women in the candidates list. The fear of the married women’s inability to assume a dual responsibility of home and work culminated in this kind of discrimination.

As a matter of fact, the male embarrassing questions to women candidates were not the first obstacle. Women who were members in the selection committees did their best to stand as women opponents for candidacy. The female hostility towards women candidates posed several complications for women candidates. The local selection committees in England included women also in charge of candidates’ selection. Those women were jealous.<sup>3</sup> Of course, they would not allow the success of other women.

#### **2.2.4.2.4. Knowledge and Information Barriers**

Politics used to be an only-male domain in earlier centuries. It was believed that women lacked the most fundamental requirement to be politically involved. They lacked, in one way or another, political knowledge. Open access is one form of this kind of barriers. Several researches revealed that women are less likely to have access to networks and information sources than men.<sup>4</sup>

Women, in England, did not have enough contact and collaboration with women politicians and women political organizations in post-WWII era. The reason behind the rare political contact was twofold. Firstly, the lack of awareness among English women that the ceaseless contact with political members or committees would be fruitful to the

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<sup>1</sup> G.E.Maguire, *Conservative Women*, 166

<sup>2</sup> G.E.Maguire, *Conservative Women*, 166

<sup>3</sup> G.E.Maguire, *Conservative Women*, 168

<sup>4</sup> Maguire, “Barriers to Women Entering Parliament and Local Government” , 34.

extent that they were indirectly enriching their political knowledge and making themselves ready to be a politician whenever being granted an opportunity. Secondly, the lack of resources was the most effective hurdle.

### **2.2.5. Gender Relations in the Bicameral Parliament**

The process of decision -making in twentieth century Britain was not the outcome of men's lone intervention. It was the creation of male-female cooperation. The contribution of the male and female gender, already a male-led task, made from politics gender politics. Before enfranchising women and allowing them to stand as candidates to be elected members of parliament, it was labeled as "single-sex environment"<sup>1</sup>. The co-existence of men and women MPs created two types of political relations namely good and bad, stable and unstable.

The tiny percentage of women MPs in parliament, from one general election into another, aroused in them a great competence. This political competence sometimes jeopardized male –female relations in the House of Commons and the House of Lords. In gender politics, male-female relationship is not the sole point to be investigated, but even the nature of female-female relationship is of great significance in the light of the limited female adherence to politics. As far as the female-female political relationship was concerned, women were not always kind to each other, but there was sometimes a kind of hostility between the ones already holding power and the ones newly recruited in parliament.<sup>2</sup>

The male-female relations reflected a lot about the unbearable circumstances women were involved in working with men. Women through history were subordinated to men and were under male control. The same thing characterized gender relations in British politics. The female minority in politics witnessed a political patriarchy. Women MPs were not free doing whatever they wanted without being guided and controlled by male MPs. The political hostility towards women did not overshadow the entire relations, but the

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<sup>1</sup> Harrison, "Women in a Men's House", 623

<sup>2</sup> Katie Haessly, "British Conservative Women MPs and 'Women's Issues' 1950-1979," (Phd Thesis., University of Nottingham,2010), 226 [http://eprints.nottingham.ac.uk/11513/1/KHaessly\\_Thesis\\_-\\_Final.pdf](http://eprints.nottingham.ac.uk/11513/1/KHaessly_Thesis_-_Final.pdf) (Accessed May27,2021)

animosity was expressed in certain moments when men felt that women could excel over them.

This does not mean that men were ceaselessly hostile to women. They worked together to represent people and rendered from their efforts and personal commitments to politics a fruitful one. This good relation was a hint towards “gender solidarity”<sup>1</sup>. They worked together since men were experienced in politically managing England. Thus, women were, inevitably requiring male guidance and support. This male-female cooperation was not pertinent with “gender equality”. Needless to say, women were only “seat fillers”<sup>2</sup> no more no less. The good way of treating women did not reflect the male celebration of their co-existence with women in parliament, but it was only a trend and inevitable part to politically manage England.

Concurrently, fruitful political intervention and effective political management is always pertinent with good relations with the concerned members. If those members shared unstable relations and they are not united, it would be impossible to politically work together. Since women were already becoming political members and political leaders alongside men starting from 1918 and were still politically recruited (1945-1979), any change or the passage of any legislation or law would require male-female cooperation and intervention. According to Katie Haessly, the political policy was highly interlinked with good gender relations in parliament because the way each party, whether the Conservative or the Labour, hinged on the incorporation of male and female energies and views.<sup>3</sup>

In their article entitled “Incentive Systems: A Theory of Organizations”(1961) , Peter B.Clark and James.Q.Wilson shared the same idea stating that one of the focal principles that empowers a given political party and led to its flowering achievements if applied or paving the way for its debacle if neglected was solidarity and unity among its members.<sup>4</sup>They expounded the three incentives that must overshadow any organization or a party to be workable and successful. They wrote among the folding of their article “The three types of incentives as necessary for the maintenance of an organization: material or

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<sup>1</sup> Cowman, “The Political Autobiographies of Early Women MPs, c.1918–1964” ,211.

<sup>2</sup> Haessly, 226 .

<sup>3</sup> Haessly, 192

<sup>4</sup> Peter B. Clark and James Q. Wilson, "Incentive Systems: A Theory of Organizations," *Administrative Science Quarterly*, Vol. 6, No. 2 (September 1961):134



monetary; solidarity, deriving from a sense of community or belonging; and purposive, a concern with the achievement of organizational goals”<sup>1</sup>

The three main political parties mainly the Conservative, the Labour, the Liberal Party, from their establishment till the twentieth century were overshadowed by the male political patriarchy over women in parliament. Men got the lion's share of political management whereas women remained in minor positions under the guidance and control of male MPs. By the same token, men in parliament did not only help and support women to politically doing their job, but they influenced their involvement and their work. Thus, without men, women would never be able to intervene in the already single-sex field “politics” “Many women recognized that without male support and aid, they would not have reached the positions that they did...”<sup>2</sup>

If light is shed on the positions held by women after WWII, they were not prominent ones, but minor ones since it was believed that women were not experienced in the political agenda. Women, in fact, were denied ministerial positions. This idea characterized the women who held political positions in 1945 and after. However, in 1960's, women started acquiring political strides and more political positions.<sup>3</sup>

More importantly, women MPs did not set foot in parliament from scratch , but the importance of men in their lives whether husbands or fathers contributed to their political success as MPs. In this vein, the male support to women MPs started firstly outside parliament to be strengthened in practice in parliament. As an example of women whose patriarchal support paved the way for their unchallengeable entry to politics were Nancy Astor and Frances Davidson who had run their husbands' seats.<sup>4</sup>

It is significant to point out that the male support to women outside parliament was not the case for all women conservative members and, above all, does not mean that all

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<sup>1</sup> Peter B.Clark and James.Q.Wilson, “Incentive Systems: A Theory of Organizations”, in “The Conservative Party and European Integration 1945-1975, Phd Thesis, ed. Nigel Ashford (University of Warwick, Department of Politics, 1983),362. [http://wrap.warwick.ac.uk/34787/1/WRAP\\_THESIS\\_Ashford\\_1983.pdf](http://wrap.warwick.ac.uk/34787/1/WRAP_THESIS_Ashford_1983.pdf) (Accessed August21,2021)

<sup>2</sup> Clarisse Berthezène and Julie V. Gottlieb, “Considering Conservative Women in the Gendering of Modern British Politics” *Women's History Review*Vol28,n°02 (2018):189

<sup>3</sup> Berthezène & Gottlieb, “ Considering Conservative Women in the Gendering of Modern British Politics”,200

<sup>4</sup> Haessly,194.

women MPs were married. Others were either single or widowed.<sup>1</sup> As an example, Joan Vickers (1907-1994) and Irene Ward had never married. Evelyn Emmet (1899-1980) was a widow<sup>2</sup>. The single women and the widows devoted more time to politics if compared to the married ones. In the light of single women's complete devotion to their political tasks, the single women outnumbered the married ones.<sup>3</sup>

It is worthy of note that the female political success was the outcome of their male colleagues' support. The nature of the working relationship has a vital role in whether strengthening or diminishing the working results. Men contributed to the female successful presence in parliament. They did not attack women, verbally or physically abuse them and never introduced obstacles to impede their work. "The impact of men on women's careers, therefore, should not be understated and must be considered as an important influence on them"<sup>4</sup>. The male-female relationship was sometimes jeopardized when women were appointed to higher ministerial positions and they started giving instructions to men.

Women MPs were not totally humiliated by male members. On the contrary, there were women who could influence their male colleagues and convince them to accomplish several legislations or reforms concerned with women issues. Gender influence was twofold. Men influenced women and women could also influence men. Thelma Cazalet-Keir and Irene Ward were two women who are considered as an example of placing pressure on their male colleagues to have a look on the issue of equal pay. The male reactions differed. They were positive through fulfilling their demands or sometimes they remained silent<sup>5</sup>.

Women who joined ministerial positions and excelled in the political field were few. The majority were deprived from what they desired to practice in politics. Their views were rarely taken into account and they were rarely consulted when it came to serious matters. Barbara Brooke (1908-2000), the Vice-Chairman of the Conservative Party (1954-1964), stated that women's views were not important and she exemplified the total absence

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<sup>1</sup> Haessly, 195.

<sup>2</sup> Haessly, 194.

<sup>3</sup> Haessly, 194.

<sup>4</sup> Haessly, 207.

<sup>5</sup> Haessly, 210.

of women from one of the meetings with the PM Harold Macmillan (1957-1963)<sup>1</sup> “Women’s point of view seems to be neglected, disregarded or never ever sought....no woman was invited to be present at Harold Macmillan’s gathering of Ministers”<sup>2</sup>. Another example that confirmed the total neglect of the focal female contribution to politics was what happened before the election of 1964 when no woman MP was consulted about the election’s manifesto<sup>3</sup> of the Conservative Party.<sup>4</sup>

In the manifesto, Prime Minister Alec-Douglass Home (1963-1964)<sup>5</sup> wrote in the preamble of the manifesto’s text “by Sir Alec Douglas-Home. As Leader of the Conservative and Unionist Party, I[Alec Douglass Home] submit this Manifesto to my fellow countrymen and women”<sup>6</sup>. So, how can the future program of the PM be delivered to women without even taking into consideration the views of women MPs. This was one of humiliating treatment of women MPs of the Conservative Party.

The views that triggered the male hostility to women MPs in the bicameral parliament were dual. First and foremost, the male vehement belief in the unsuitability of women for politics strengthened the hostile treatment of some male MPs and even male leaders themselves. Moreover, the zeitgeist that dictated the negative prejudices against women in politics led male MPs to, sometimes, exhibit negative treatment of their female colleagues. This paved the way for injustice in parliament where the bulk of work was done by women rather than men. A great number of duties were assumed by women when men were feeling at ease. One of the women MPs Evelyn Emmet complained of the bitter

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<sup>1</sup> Harold Macmillan (1894-1986) was one of the British Conservative Prime Ministers (1957-1963). “Harold Macmillan”, *Britannica* <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Harold-Macmillan> (Accessed May15,2022)

<sup>2</sup> Barbara Brooke to Party Chairman, 21.11.1963, CCO 4/9/469, CPP.

<sup>3</sup> The 1964 general election manifesto was drafted by the Conservative Prime Minister Alec Douglas Home. He titled it as “ Prosperity with a Purpose”. “1964 Conservative Party General Election Manifesto”, Conservative Party Manifestoes <http://www.conservativemanifesto.com/1964/1964-conservative-manifesto.shtml> (Accessed May1,2022)

<sup>4</sup> G.E.Maguire, *Conservative Women*, 174

<sup>5</sup> Sir Alec Douglass Home (1903-1995). In 1931, he entered Parliament as a Scottish Unionist Party (combined with the Conservative Party in 1965) MP for Lanark. In 1959,he was appointed Foreign Secretary. He remained in the role until 18 October 1963. He did not originally seek the position of Prime Minister, but was widely respected by his party and its future leaders. Sir Alec Douglas-Home was an unexpected Prime Minister and served for only 363 days, the second shortest premierships in the 20th century (1963-1964). “Sir Alec Douglass Home”, *GOV.UK* <https://www.gov.uk/government/history/past-prime-ministers/alec-douglas-home> (Accessed May15,2022)

<sup>6</sup> “1964 Conservative Party General Election Manifesto”.

reality reflecting the sufferings of some women MPs in which gender segregation was highly practiced. She stated: "Ladies are being killed by the work that is being put upon them"<sup>1</sup>.

Women of the Conservative Party suffered politically more than women of the Labour Party. The Conservative Party glorified the female domesticity and even those who were elected were not enjoying their task as MPs due to the continued injustice and humiliation by male MPs. The same woman MP Evelyn Emmet mirrored the bitter environment women of the Conservative Party were mired in. She wrote

As far as Conservative women are concerned, there is still a lot of custom and prejudice to overcome in the House. It isn't that the men are obstructionist but they just do not remember we are there at such times! Women approach the task in a spirit of service and are perhaps not ambitious enough and dislike having continually to push. Most men who come into the House, come with definite ambitions. The Prime Ministers are reluctant to see a woman fill any place which might be theirs. In this matter, we are falling behind other countries, who recognize more generously the contribution women could make in responsible positions. Where are our women Ambassadors, High Commissioners, Governors, Cabinet Ministers? If for the good of the country, this is to be altered, and it should be, it must come through the force of Public Opinion and especially through the Women's Societies and Organizations. We Members in the House must live at peace and in harmony with our men colleagues and this could not be if we were for ever complaining<sup>2</sup>

One of the male MPs refused to shake his female colleague's hands saying " I must tell you that I disapprove of women as executives in politics.. If I had been around when they appointed you , I would have objected"<sup>3</sup>. The bad treatment was not always the case as there were women MPs whose husbands were also MPs. Those women were better treated and placed in good positions. Mrs Alspeth Howe (1932-2022)<sup>4</sup>, the wife of the male

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<sup>1</sup> Evelyn Emmet, Address to an Unknown Constituency Committee, 1945, MS. Eng. Hist. 1059, Lady Emmet Papers, Bodleian Library, Oxford.

<sup>2</sup> Evelyn Emmet, "Baroness Emmet Papers" 1961, MS. Eng. Hist. c. 1056, BLO

<sup>3</sup> G.E.Maguire, 143.

<sup>4</sup> Alspeth Howe was a British life peer and crossbench member of the House of Lords (2001–2020) who served in many capacities in public life. "Elspeth Howe", *Google Arts and Culture* [https://artsandculture.google.com/entity/elspeth-howe-baroness-howe-of-idlicote/m02\\_byx](https://artsandculture.google.com/entity/elspeth-howe-baroness-howe-of-idlicote/m02_byx) (Accessed May15,2022)

MP Geoffrey Howe, confessed “The MP’s wife’s role has been growing for sometimes. Right from the moment a candidate is selected, the wife will be asked to play a considerable part in the constituency”.<sup>1</sup>

All in all, gender politics does not deserve to be called as such. If the feminine gender was terribly humiliated and underrepresented, it is better to be called “masculine politics”. Women in politics, in general, did not enjoy their political experience to its fullest. Whenever determining a given breakthrough, other political failures and obstacles emerged from over again. Despite their staunch competition and endeavours, the male Prime Ministers were free to select the number of women they wanted and to appoint them to the positions they wanted without devoting much time to unveil women candidates’ and women MPs’ interests and disinterest.

### **2.3. Women’s Political Position after WWII (1945-1964)**

After the end of WWII, an increased improvement in the female political participation, as a reward for their war work, was expected but in vain. This does not mean that women were totally deprived from political admission. Parliament in England and parliamentary politics persisted as a male-dominated task. The political party that gained more votes and more seats after each general election was the one to play the leading role in parliament and its leader climbed the ladder of political participation as Prime Minister. The female underrepresentation continued to overshadow the female integration in politics. Gender inequality was not a random issue, but a planned one and a tactic relied on by the male leaders.

#### **2.3.1. The Impact of Women’s Participation in WWII on Their Societal Employment (1945-1951)**

World War I (1914-1918), known as “The Great War”<sup>2</sup> or “The War to End All Wars”<sup>1</sup>, was not the sole period when women proved they were qualified for assuming

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<sup>1</sup> Lady Howe, “Wives of Tory MP’s and Candidates” , November 1971, 60/4/10 CPP

<sup>2</sup> “Great War” was the most commonly used name for the First World War. As the first pan-European War since Napoleon, 'Great' simply indicated the enormous scale of the conflict, much as we might today talk of a 'great storm' or a 'great flood'. However, the term also had moral connotations. The Allies believed they were fighting against an evil militarism that had taken hold in Germany. Sean Lang, “Why Is World War I Called the ‘Great

responsibilities that men used to assume. With the outbreak of WWII, women whether married, widowed or single found themselves involved in tasks that were always reserved for men. Women served the war through a myriad of tasks they accomplished during the war.

The idea that needs to be expounded is that whether the female involvement in WWII contributed to any reward for women after the war or not. Thus, the female entry to the world of employment during the war increased because they replaced men in the most difficult vacant jobs. In the same vein, their integration in the male vacant jobs and their ability to assume masculine responsibilities met a very outstanding effect on their lives in the post-WWII era. The war's impact on their lives was twofold. On the one hand, the negative stereotypes about the female inability to be successful in the public affairs changed and reversed. On the other hand, the female presence in male difficult jobs led the male Prime Ministers to get enticed of the female ability to assume male responsibilities in the public sphere.

It is of great significance to note that rewarding or acknowledging someone or a group of people for a good thing they did appears directly after the accomplishment of the task they were bumping into. In this vein, it is essential to find out the nature of rewarding women for their mobilization to serve the war effort from (1945-1951) in which Clement Attlee (1945-1951)<sup>2</sup> served as a Prime Minister. The general election of 1945 was a total fiasco for the Conservative Party and a landslide victory for the Labour Party which got 394 seats if compared to 210 seats for the Conservative Party.<sup>3</sup> The role of women, in the war, was highly acknowledged. Historians did not solely acknowledge the role of men whether as bread-winners or military fighters, but even women.

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War'?", *The History Extra*, September 30, 2014 <https://www.historyextra.com/period/first-world-war/history-extra-explains-why-is-ww1-called-the-great-war/> (Accessed May 2, 2022)

<sup>1</sup> Lang, "Why Is World War I Called the 'Great War'?"

<sup>2</sup> Clement Richard Attlee (1883-1967) was leader of the Labour Party from 1935 to 1955, and served as Britain's Labour Prime Minister from 1945 to 1951. As Prime Minister, he enlarged and improved social services and the public sector in post-war Britain. "Clement Attlee", *GOV.UK*

<https://www.gov.uk/government/history/past-prime-ministers/clement-attlee> (Accessed May 15, 2022)

<sup>3</sup> E. Burns, *A Brief History of Great Britain*, 208.

War has traditionally been viewed as a phenomenon which concerns only men, since it is usually only men who bear arms and fight. However, in Europe, a critical look was taken at this traditional historiography, with its adoption of an elite and male viewpoint. This period was characterized both by the emergence of women's history, which aimed to reveal the women of the past and take their experiences into account, and by the strengthening of social history, concerned with society and social groups.<sup>1</sup>

Women embarked on a myriad of roles, as expounded in chapter one, to support the war efforts as combatants and local labourers in different domains. In return for the male mobilization and conscription for the war, women were ready to replace them during their absence taking part in the battlefields. Women, above all, exhibited their capacities to run "Men's Work".<sup>2</sup>

Writers and historians differed in their views whether the war had a positive or a negative impact on women's employment. Their views represented what was called "The exclusion/inclusion Paradox"<sup>3</sup>. Much ink had been spent on this issue. Some historians believed that the war emancipated women. Others went to confirm that the war entrenched the traditional roles of women. In 1951, the number of the female labourers decreased and government never supported their progress in employment. "The government encouraged a return to domesticity"<sup>4</sup>.

To a great extent, the post WWII era witnessed an increased female involvement in the workforce due to one sole reason. The latter went in tandem with the shortage of male workers. Male workers were either terribly injured or lost their lives. Most importantly, the remarkable increase of women worker after the Second World War was not a governmental reward for their participation. But welcoming more women in the world of employment was a solution to fill the still vacant jobs. Generally speaking, the war did not

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<sup>1</sup> Françoise Thébaud, "Understanding Twentieth-Century Wars Through Women and Gender: Forty Years of Historiography," *Women, Gender, History*, 39 (2014):154 <https://doi.org/10.4000/cliowgh.538>

<sup>2</sup> John David Goodwin, *Men's Work and Male Lives: Men and Work in Britain* (London:Routledge,1999),09

<sup>3</sup> "What Is the Role of Women in Post-War Times?", November25,2020 <https://erc.europa.eu/projects-figures/stories/what-role-women-post-war-times> (Accessed May22,2021)

<sup>4</sup> "WW2: Did the War Change Life for Women?" <https://www.bbc.co.uk/teach/did-ww2-change-life-for-women/zbktwty> (Accessed May21, 2021)

contribute to gender equality and endless opportunities of work, but it only altered the attitudes towards women due to their ability to be successfully involved in masculine jobs.

WWII precipitated far-reaching results contributing to the female apparent emancipation. The war, in turn, served as an “emancipator”.<sup>1</sup> It brought a spurring change through offering a range of labour opportunities to women. It was estimated that until 1978, the population of UK was 55.835.000 divided between 27.170.000 males and 28.666.000 women.<sup>2</sup> By 1951, the number of women workers escalated. It was estimated that one –third of the working population were women.<sup>3</sup> The role of working women was really acknowledged and encouraged. “Working women could help the economy of the nation and provide valuable supplement to the income of the individual family”.<sup>4</sup>

Despite the threat posed through the entry of mothers into paid labour force and despite the negative attitudes towards the negative impact of mothers’ work on their families especially children, the married women participation in paid work increased dramatically in the 1950’s.<sup>5</sup> Put simply, employment fields for women encapsulated secretarial, administrative, educational and clerical occupations. It was estimated that by 1951, one-fifth of the working population were married women.<sup>6</sup> From the entire number of working women, 44% were married.<sup>7</sup> What really led to a surge in the number of women workers was the baby boom witnessed in the post war era. More born children required more nurses and later on the need for more women teachers would be inevitable.<sup>8</sup>

The progress women had realized concerning their employment opportunities had spelled the doom already underwent during the war. Thus, the twentieth century was not only an era of emancipation for women, but an era when billions of attempts were done to strengthen equality between sexes. As participants in the war, women were granted billions of opportunities to climb the ladder of development or generally speaking quenching their

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<sup>1</sup> Mike Storry and Peter Childs, *British Cultural Identities*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (London: Routledge ,Taylor and Francis Group, 2002), 120.

<sup>2</sup> Arthur Marwick, *British Society since 1945* (Great Britain: Penguin Books Ltd, 1982), 152.

<sup>3</sup> Public Opinion Survey No. 27, April 1951, CCO 180/2/3, CPP

<sup>4</sup> G.E. Maguire, *Conservative Women*, 125.

<sup>5</sup> Storry and Childs, 120.

<sup>6</sup> Public Opinion Survey No. 27, April 1951, CCO 180/2/3, CPP

<sup>7</sup> G.E. Maguire, *Conservative Women*, 126.

<sup>8</sup> G.E. Maguire, *Conservative Women*, 126.



desire for emancipation whatever its type. "Their participation as workers in the war effort 'can be seen at work everywhere in further developments in the status of women'.<sup>1</sup>

Although they were granted myriad opportunities to be recruited in the paid employment, women's position in employment had not been equalized with their male counterparts. Their work was characterized by being low-paid, their involvement in unskilled jobs and above all, the majority of women workers were concerned with part-time jobs.<sup>2</sup>

H.E Joshi, R. Layard and S.J Owen in their article entitled "Why Are More Women Working in Britain" (1985) confirmed that the number of women in the labour force kept rising especially the recruitment of married women aged 35 and over. They enumerated the reasons behind the increased number of women workers. The first reason stated that after the return of men from the battlefields, women were free from the heavy burden of full-time jobs because men had to regain their tasks. After the war, part-time jobs were tremendously available. Moreover, the introduction of new fabrics devoted for child care played a pivotal role in reducing time needed for child care. Last but not least, women got more aware and conscious of the necessity of working. Modern life, if compared to traditional life, is pertinent with the female involvement in paid employment.

Possible explanations for the post World War II rise in female labor participation are: 1) part time jobs were more available to women, 2) the drop in real prices of domestic appliances, processed foods, and easy care fabrics reduced the time required to take care of a family, and 3) the effect of long term changes in the roles women see for themselves in life.<sup>3</sup>

For those writers such as, Virginia Nicholson, April Falconi, Ann M. Webber, Mark R. Cullen, Marcia L. Stefanick, Yvonne L. Michael, Gary L. Darmstadt and Mark Jackson, believing that the war never impacted on women positively, confirmed that the women's involvement in the process of social production was trivial. Virginia Nicholson, in her article entitled "The 1940's: Britain's Wartime Women Gained a New Sense of

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<sup>1</sup> Penny Summerfield, "Women, War and Social Change: Women in Britain in World War II" in , *War and Social Change in the Twentieth Century* . ed. Arthur Marwick (London, Palgrave Macmillan, 1974), 137.

<sup>2</sup> G.E. Maguire, *Conservative Women* , 125.

<sup>3</sup> Heath E Joshi, Ricahrd Layard, and Susan.J. Owen , "Why Are More Women Working in Britain" , National Library of Medicine, 1985 <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/12267646/> (Accessed May21,2021)

Power” (2018”, explained that the female participation in the war empowered women to the extent of destroying the unity of their families. Some of those women war workers starting to enjoy self –independence asked for divorce to keep being free and independent from their husbands’ control.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, Mark Jackson, in his book *Stress in Post-War Britain, 1945-1985* (2016), dig deep into the psychological trauma women went through after the war. Women’s health deteriorated after the war which negatively deprived their children from their maternal care and protection.<sup>2</sup>

The role of women in the home, although involved in work outside home, was vehemently emphasized. The home remained the only sphere where women could exhibit their working abilities and their productive powers. David Morley and Robins Kevin, in their book entitled *Spaces of Identity: Global Media , Electronic Landscapes and Cultural Boundaries* (1995), pointed out that gender differences cannot be seen solely in work, but home is the right place when the two genders show their own differences. They wrote “ ...The dominant model of gender relations within this society is one in which the home is primarily defined for men as a site of leisure while the home is primarily defined for women as a sphere of work whether or not they also work outside the home.....”<sup>3</sup>

The real female role had to be performed indoors not outdoors. The Mothers who left their children and devoted themselves to paid work endangered the lives of their children. The latter would be deprived of the mother-care. The absence of a “home-based mother” means “latchkey kids”. “Latchkey kids’ reinforced the notion that children could not be probably cared for without a home-based mother, heightening public hostility towards such women”<sup>4</sup>. Socially speaking, the post war era especially the first years till 1951 witnessed an improved female presence in the world employment. Parliament was another institution where women kept being present and kept battling for more political emancipation in the House of Commons.

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<sup>1</sup> Virginia Nicholson, “The 1940’s: Britain’s Wartime Women Gained a New Sense of Power”, *The Guardian for 200 Years* (February 3,2018) <https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2018/feb/03/1940s-britains-wartime-women-gained-a-new-sense-of-power> (Accessed May2,2022)

<sup>2</sup> Mark Jackson, *Stress in Post-War Britain, 1945-1985* (New York: Routledge, 2016),114

<sup>3</sup> David Morley and Robins Kevin, *Spaces of Identity : Global Media , Electronic Landscapes and Cultural Boundaries* (London:RoutledgeTaylor and Francis Group, 1995),147

<sup>4</sup> Storry and Childs, *British Cultural Identities*,120

### **2.3.2. The Female Political Immersion in the House of Commons from Clement Attlee's to Alec Douglas Home's Administrations**

Parliament, referred to in England as “Men’s House”<sup>1</sup>, is an institution where the process of decision-making takes place. The task of the local management of any country is overshadowed by the duality of engagement; the male and the female engagement. It is an amalgam of male-female intervention where both sexes exhibit their political capabilities. In the light of the co-existence of both male and female sexes in politics. The feminist writer Jennifer Somerville called it “sexual politics”.<sup>2</sup>

The range of employment opportunities was not the sole sphere that reflected the role of women; politics remained one of the focal fields that mirrored the female capabilities. In this vein, Philippa Levine referred to the feminization of politics as “a symbolic victory”<sup>3</sup>. The gendered division of politics and granting women an occasion to politically run England reflects the importance of welcoming the female gender in parliament. Women parliamentarians proved themselves able to politically manage England during WWII. Even after the war, women kept involved in politics more and more if compared to the era before the war and during the war itself. The general elections of 1945, 1951, and 1955 were important landmarks for women’s political immersion in which women emerged as voters, candidates and finally MPs. One of the essential landmarks for women after the war was the general election of 1945 that resulted in the entry of 24 female MPs.<sup>4</sup>

#### **2.3.2.1. Women Voters and MPs in the General Election of 1945**

The 1945 election was held on July 5, 1945 in which the male candidates of the two leading political parties, Clement Attlee for the Labour Party and Winston Churchill<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Brian Harrison, “Women in a ‘Men’s House’: The Women M.P.s, 1919-1945,” *The Historical Journal* 29 (1986):653 <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2639051> (Accessed May22,2021)

<sup>2</sup> Jennifer Somerville, *Feminism and the Family : Politics and Society in the UK and USA* (New York : Martin’s Press, 2000),87

<sup>3</sup> Philippa Levine, *The British Empire , Sunrise to Sunset* (Great Britain : Pearson Education Limited, 2007), 162.

<sup>4</sup> “A Brief History of British Women MPs” <https://artsandculture.google.com/theme/a-brief-history-of-british-women-mps/3QJitjVNISCMKA> (Accessed May22,2021)

<sup>5</sup> Winston Leonard Spencer Churchill (1874-1965) was British statesman, orator, and author who as [prime minister](#) (1940–45, 1951–55) rallied the British people during [World War II](#) and led his [country](#) from the brink of defeat to victory. “Winston Churchill”, *Britannica* <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Winston-Churchill> (Accessed May15,2022)

(1940 to 1945/1951 to 1955) for the Conservative Party, were competing for power. The election was a victory for the Labour Party and Clement Attlee was elected Labour Prime Minister (1945-1951). The below-mentioned table shows the elections’ results in England.

**Table 2.1.: The 1945 General Election Results**

	<b>Conservative Party</b>	<b>Labour Party</b>	<b>Liberal Democrats</b>	<b>Others</b>
<b>Candidates</b>	507	494	265	97
<b>Votes (Millions)</b>	8.27	9.97	1.91	0.38
<b>Share of Vote (%)</b>	40.2	48.5	9.4	1.9
<b>Seats Won</b>	167	331	5	7

**Source:** Pelling and Cracknell, 20-21

Clement Attlee’s manifesto<sup>1</sup> of his election campaign started in May 1945. It stated: “Let Us Face the Future Together”<sup>2</sup>. Voters were eager to vote for Clement Attlee to avoid the shortcomings and the bitter failures of his predecessor Winston Churchill whose administration was overshadowed by the Great Depression (1929-1939) and his failure to forestall the threat of Nazi Germany. “Two words graven on the hurts of the overwhelming mass of men and women..never again.. never again will they submit to the social and economic evils of the past..”<sup>3</sup> The Labour Party appeared as victorious on July26, 1945.

Taking any election into consideration, it is an occasion when male and female voters choose their appropriate representative in politics. The latter refers to a field where power is divided and where decisions are the outcome of collaborative intervention of men and women. Graeme Turner refers to politics as “an operation”<sup>4</sup>. Any operation whatever its kind required preparations, plans and tactics to be accomplished. One of the leading steps that preceded any political action is voting by male and female citizens. The outcome of any election is not solely contingent on male votes, but even women.

After WWII, more women voted Conservative and more men voted Labour. The male electoral support to the Labour Party was triggered by the pleasant consequences of

<sup>1</sup> The slogan was drawn up by the Chairman of the Labour Party Herbert Morrison. Henry Pelling, “The 1945 General Election Reconsidered,” *The Historical Journal* Vol23,n°2 (June1980): 407

<sup>2</sup> “The 1945 General Election” <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/guides/zgmf2nb/revision/4> (Accessed May22,2021 )

<sup>3</sup> Steven Fielding, “What Did 'The People' Want?: The Meaning of the 1945 General Election?” *The Historical Journal* Vol.35, n° 3(1992):638

<sup>4</sup> Graeme Turner, *British Cultural Studies* (London: Routledge, 2005),197

the Welfare state. Although the welfare state, introduced by the Labour Party, supported the role of women in society, its kernel favoured the “traditional domestic role of women in the home” and treated women as always “dependent”.<sup>1</sup>

As far as the 1945 election is concerned, women voters supported the victory of the Conservative Party (Tories). Winston Churchill himself asserted that “I[Winston Churchill] hear the women are for me, but that the men have turned against me”<sup>2</sup>. Women favoured the success of the Conservative Party over the Labour Party due to a range of attractive efforts made for them and even Clement Attlee did his best to attract women voters especially the housewives embarking on a policy that would serve the family life.<sup>3</sup> The Conservative Party, for the sake of wooing women to vote conservative, opted for three main policies to attract women voters. They included: the introduction of the Equal pay, the admission of women into the House of Lords and the obligation of divorced and separated husbands to pay the maintenance.<sup>4</sup>

The female support to the conservative Party was entwined with the promises of the party itself and the nature of the reforms the Tories were going to introduce after the election. Lovenduski and Randall (1997) made it clear that “without the women’s vote, the British Conservatives would have remained in opposition between 1945 and 1979.”<sup>5</sup> Voting in 1945 was not only for the sake of echoing a woman’s voice to choose a representative in parliament, but it marked the persistent role women would play in the political and public life.

The difference the vote made was to enable women to feel that their presence in public life was legitimate. This presence also increased their capacity to control their private lives. To have reached this position, and to achieve some of the necessary changes, has been a long and slow process and one that is far from complete.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> G.E. Maguire, *Conservative Women*, 119

<sup>2</sup> “The Men Have Turned Against Me’: Winston Churchill and The Gender Politics Of The 1945 Election” <http://www.historymatters.group.shef.ac.uk/the-men-turned-me-winston-churchill-gender-politics-1945-election/> (Accessed May24,2021)

<sup>3</sup> G.E.Maguire, *Conservative Women* , 120.

<sup>4</sup> G.E.Maguire, *Conservative Women* , 120.

<sup>5</sup> Lovenduski.J and Randall. V in. Bernadette C.Hayes and Ian McAllister, “Gender, Party Leaders and Election Outcomes in Australia,Britain and the United States, *Comparative Political Studies* Vol.30,Nº1 (1997):5

<sup>6</sup> Patricia M. Thane, “What Difference Did the Vote Make? Women in Public and Private Life in Britain since 1918”, *Institute of Historical Research* Vol76, Nº192 (2003): 285. <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1111/1468-2281.00175> (Accessed May24,2021)

Voting is not the sole activity in which women were offered an opportunity to locally manage the country through amplifying their voice choosing their representatives, but they were also Members of Parliament in which their political empowerment reached its peak after World War II and their membership in the “men’s House” started to grow. After the General Election of 1945, the number of the female MPs witnessed a remarkable increase. Statistics showed that in the general Election of 1945, there were 87 women candidates to be elected for parliament.<sup>1</sup> From those 87 female candidates, 24 women<sup>23</sup> were elected to the House of Commons in which the victorious Labour Party got 21 Labour women MPs and only one (1) woman in the Conservative Party and two (2) women in other parties.<sup>4</sup> The 24 women represented 3.8%<sup>5</sup> of the House of Commons’ membership.

The twenty four (24) newly elected women MPs in the general election of 1945 rived to be MPs were called the “women of 1945”<sup>6</sup>. The only woman in Attlee’s cabinet was Ellen Wilkinson (1891-1947). She served as the Minister of Education (1945-1947) as the second woman Labour Cabinet Minister in the British history.<sup>7</sup> She believed that women deserved to be members of parliament as a reward for the battle they launched to fight for the franchise. She claimed “Women have worked very hard. They have starved in prison, they have given their lives, or have given all their time, in order that women might sit in this House and take part in the legislation of the country”<sup>8</sup>.

In 1950, there was another attempt to elect a new government through holding another election. The Labourites returned again to power. In this election, 06 new women

<sup>1</sup> “Women MPs & Parliamentary Candidates since 1945” <https://www.ukpolitical.info/FemaleMPs.htm> (Accessed May24,2021)

<sup>2</sup> Rachael Bunyan and Suyin Haynes, “A Century after Lady Astor Took Her Seat in Parliament, How Have British Politics Changed for Women”, *History News Network*, Columbian College of Arts and Sciences, February12,2019 <https://historynewsnetwork.org/article/173746> (Accessed November29,2021)

<sup>3</sup> For more details about the list of women MPs in the House of Commons during Clement Attlee’s Administration (1945-1951), see **APPENDIX C , P 263**.

<sup>4</sup> G.E.Maguire, *Conservative Women* , 164

<sup>5</sup> G.E.Maguire, *Conservative Women* , 164

<sup>6</sup> Rachel Reeves, “We Wouldn’t Be Where We Are Today Without the Women MPs of 1945” <https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/woman-mps-labour-1945-gender-equality-coronavirus-war-barbara-castle-a9636806.html> (Accessed May24,2021)

<sup>7</sup> For more details about all the female Cabinet Ministers from (1929-1997), see **APPENDIX D,P.268**

<sup>8</sup> Rachel Reeves, “The Women of Westminster and How They Have Transformed Politics Beyond Recognition” *LSE BPP* ,(April11,2019) <https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/politicsandpolicy/the-women-of-westminster/> (Accessed September26,2021)

Conservatives and other 14 Labour women were elected.<sup>1</sup> Among the most influential re-elected women in 1950 were Irene Ward and Florence Horsburgh . The Labour Party lost its power in 1951 general election in which the Conservatives under Churchill realized an electoral victory and women acquired new political experiences.

**2.3.2.2. Women’s Political Stances during Winston Churchill’s Premiership (1951-1955)**

Winston Churchill was elected again for the second term to serve as Prime Minister from (1951-1955) in the general election of 1951. The latter took place on October 25, 1951 bringing an end of six years of the Labour Government under Clement Attlee. The Conservative Party enjoyed a landslide victory through a record-breaking achievement getting the most votes if compared to other political parties.<sup>2</sup> The following table illustrates the results of the 1951 election.

**Table 2.2. The 1951 General Election Results**

	<b>Conservative Party</b>	<b>Labour Party</b>	<b>Liberal Democrats</b>	<b>Others</b>
<b>Candidates</b>	502	506	91	13
<b>Votes (Millions)</b>	11.62	11.63	0.54	0.04
<b>Share of Vote (%)</b>	48.8	48.8	2.3	0.1
<b>Seats Won</b>	271	233	2	00

**Source:** Pelling and Cracknell, 20-21

The 1951 general election was another occasion when the majority of women voters supported the Conservatives. It was estimated that 54% of women and 46% of men electorally supported Winston Churchill.<sup>3</sup> The female electoral support to the Conservative Party played a very important role in each general election. It was claimed that “if only men had the right to vote in the period (1945-1979), Labour would have been continuously in power.... the Conservatives would not have won either of these elections if women had not the vote”<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> G.E.Maguire, *Conservative Women* , 170

<sup>2</sup> Doug Cowan, “In 1951 More People Voted Labour than Conservative, yet the Conservatives Formed the Government” , 2018 <https://www.electoral-reform.org.uk/on-the-anniversary-of-a-stolen-election-let-1951s-wrong-winner-vote-be-a-lesson-to-us-all/> (Accessed May27,2021)

<sup>3</sup> G.E.Maguire, *Conservative Women* , 121

<sup>4</sup> G.E.Maguire, *Conservative Women*, 121

The results of the General Election of 1951 showed the landslide victory of the Conservatives led by Winston Churchill. The nomination of women into winnable seats was limited as usual. As far as the female candidacy in 1951 was concerned, there were 77 women candidates among them 25 female conservatives.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, there were 41 women Labour candidates. 6 Conservative and 11 Labour women were elected.<sup>2</sup> Women MPs<sup>3</sup>, during Winston Churchill administration, were few in number if compared to their male colleagues in parliament and still suffering from underrepresentation and gender inequality in politics.<sup>4</sup>

Winston Churchill was one of the male Prime Ministers who kept the number of women in the House of Commons low. He “found a woman’s intrusion into the House of Commons as embarrassing as if she had burst upon him in his bathroom when he had nothing to defend himself with but a sponge”<sup>5</sup>. Moreover, he believed that women are not qualified to take part in the process of decision-making. The latter used to be the onus of men since earlier centuries. The first woman to hold a cabinet ministerial position in the Conservative Party was Florence Horsburgh who was appointed as a Minister of Education<sup>6</sup>. Furthermore, he appointed Pat Hornby-Smith (1914-1985) as a Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Health. She was one example of those women who were marginalized and humiliated by male ministers. Although being appointed by Churchill, she was forced to resign in 1953 because he did not like her political work.<sup>7</sup>

Despite their limited entry to politics, women had their own organizations within the Conservative Party. As examples, The Women’s National Advisory Committee (WNAC) under the leadership of Evelyn Emmet (1951-1954), The Housewife League (HL) and The Married Women’s Association (MWA)<sup>8</sup>. The most primary and prominent organization

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<sup>1</sup> Haessly,55.

<sup>2</sup> Joni Luvenduski, Pippa Norris and Catriona Burness, “The Conservative Party and Women” in *The Conservative Century: Conservative Party since 1900*, ed. Anthony Seldon and Stuart Ball (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994),626

<sup>3</sup> For more details about the list of women MPs during Winston Churchill’s two administrations, see **APPENDIX C, P.263.**

<sup>4</sup> *Empowering Women for Stronger Political Parties: A Guidebook to Promote Women’s Political Participation* (National Democratic Institute for International Affairs, 2012

<sup>5</sup> Brookes, *Women at Westminster*,22

<sup>6</sup> Haessly, 199.

<sup>7</sup> G.E.Maguire, *Conservative Women* , 171

<sup>8</sup> Haessly ., 37-39



was the WNAC. It aimed at encouraging women's role in the party and it was concerned with the female recruitment in the party. The Housewife League and the Married Women's Association were not parliamentary bodies but they were local ones.

What characterized the membership of the committee was that all its members were women. The different roles it played mirrored the unchallengeable female commitment to the issues of the Conservative Party led by a man. Moreover, they increased their influence in the party although they were still undergoing the "political nightmare" <sup>1</sup> underrepresentation. What triggered the impossibility of avoiding male-female disparity in politics, the Conservative Party as an example, was the belief in the male superiority as political participants. "Women were not as well suited to represent the party in Parliament as were men"<sup>2</sup>

Those female members of the WNAC had their own offices within the Party. Their political commitment was contingent on delivering speeches about women issues, organizing meetings and national conferences about subjects going in tandem with women interests<sup>3</sup>. It is focal to point out that women were ceaselessly striving for power in the "mixed-sex politics". Being an MP or a member in an organization is the dawn of acquiring this political power.

Although women were accepted as MPs in the Party, they endured limited chances to be politically welcomed. Even the roles they played were minor than of men. They served as event planners, hostesses for parties or supporting their husbands if they are MPs.<sup>4</sup> Whenever trying to run for an important position in the party, women were opposed by the male members in the party because all the leaders of the Conservative Party shared a common view of the traditional role of women in the home and , above all, even the Conservative party from its early establishment was a "family-oriented Party".<sup>5</sup>

The Conservative Party members glorified the role of women in the house and placed much focus on the marital and the mother role in the family. For this reason, the number of

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<sup>1</sup> My own used concept.

<sup>2</sup> Elizabeth Vallance, *Women in the House: A Study of Women Members of Parliament* (London: UNKNO 1979), 9

<sup>3</sup> Haessly,39.

<sup>4</sup> Haessly,50.

<sup>5</sup> Haessly,50.

women in the Party was very limited. It was believed that if billions of opportunities were granted to women to become MPs, families would be destructed and the only victims would be children. In fine, after WWII, the Labour women were repeatedly more than the Conservative Women. When Churchill marched from office in 1955, other three male conservative Prime Ministers (Anthony Eden<sup>1</sup>, Harold Macmillan and Alec Douglass Home) would govern. Each one of them had his own attitudes towards the female increased admission into the House of Commons.

### **2.3.2.3. Women of The Conservative Party (1955-1964)**

Women, being MPs in the Conservative Party, were called “Tory Women”<sup>2</sup>. Their representation in the party and their endeavours to maintain their political identities had garnered much attention in twentieth century Britain. The inclusion-exclusion paradox overshadowed the female status in the party. Despite the golden principle of “Conservatism”<sup>3</sup> for the Tories, the mixed-sex politics welcomed more women MPs in the cabinets of Anthony Eden (1955-1957), Harold Macmillan (1957-1963) and Alec Douglass-Home (1963-1964). They did not guarantee their parliamentary rule overnight, but their crowning achievements as Prime Ministers went in tandem with the outcome of the two general elections in England: 1955 and 1959. The results of the two elections and the seats won for the three main political parties in England are mentioned in the following table.

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<sup>1</sup> Sir Robert Anthony Eden (1897-1977) was a Conservative Prime Minister who served from 1955-1957. Sir Anthony Eden carved out a career in the Foreign Office, serving as Foreign Secretary 3 times during important periods in the Second World War and the Cold War. “Sir Anthony Eden”, *GOV.UK* <https://www.gov.uk/government/history/past-prime-ministers/anthony-eden> (Accessed May15,2022)

<sup>2</sup> Berthezène and Gottlieb, “Considering Conservative Women in the Gendering of Modern British Politics”, 189

<sup>3</sup> Anna Gwiazda, “Analysing the “What” and “When” of Women’s Substantive Representation: The Role of Right-Wing Populist Party Ideology”, *East European Politics* Vol37,n°04(2021):684.

**Table 2.3.: The 1955 and 1959 General Elections Results Summary**

<b>The 1955 General Election Results</b>			
	<b>The Conservative Party</b>	<b>The Labour Party</b>	<b>The Liberal Democrats</b>
<b>Candidates</b>	509	510	95
<b>Votes (millions)</b>	11.17	10.36	0.57
<b>Share of the Vote (%)</b>	50.4	46.8	2.6
<b>Seats Won</b>	293	216	2
<b>The 1959 General Election Results</b>			
	<b>The Conservative Party</b>	<b>The Labour Party</b>	<b>The Liberal Democrats</b>
<b>Candidates</b>	509	511	191
<b>Votes (millions)</b>	11.56	10.09	1.45
<b>Share of the Vote (%)</b>	50	43.6	6.3
<b>Seats Won</b>	315	193	3

**Source:** Peeling and Cracknell, 21-22

The General Election of 1955 was held on May 26, 1955. It was a snap election after the retirement of Winston Churchill on April 4, 1955. The Tories manifesto stated “United for Peace and Progress”<sup>1</sup>. Anthony Eden called for an election and led the Conservatives to their second successive victory. His administration was short lived lasting from 1955 to 1957. It was pointed out that the Conservative Party, although strongly tied with the traditional role of women, attracted more women candidates. As previously mentioned, women tended to support the Conservative Party and the similar positive attitudes towards the Tories persisted in the 1955 election in which 55% of women voted for the victory of Anthony Eden where as only 47% of men electorally supported the Tories.<sup>2</sup>

Most importantly, women kept supporting the Tory Party over the Labour Party because they believed the Conservative Policies for women would be impactful. Although the number of women appointees remained low if compared to the Labour women, the prosperity brought to women due to Conservative policies was the most important thing rather than the increased political admission. The election of 1955 resulted in the election of 10 women MPs. Among them: Evelyn Emmet (1899-1980), Joan Vickers (1907-1994)

<sup>1</sup> “26 May 1955”, *Politics 97* <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/special/politics97/background/pastelec/ge55.shtml> (Accessed May 27, 2021)

<sup>2</sup> G.E. Maguire, *Conservative Women*, 121.

and Patricia Hornsby-Smith. The latter used to be an MP during the term of Anthony's predecessor. She kept her post in the Ministry of Health. Edith Pitt (1906-1966) was another eminent female figure in the House of Commons. She served as Parliamentary Secretary at the Ministry of Pensions and National Insurance. Last but not least, Mervyn Pike (1918-2004) was a female MP that mirrored the power of a woman in politics. She was appointed by Anthony in 1956 to replace a male Foreign Minister Anthony Nutting (1945-1956).

Anthony Eden, unlike his Conservative predecessors, encouraged the female political advancement through granting them ministerial positions.

Anthony Eden was similarly willing to put women in positions of relative importance, as under him, both Florence Horsbrugh and Patricia Hornsby-Smith were given ministerial positions. While neither reached Cabinet rank under Eden, the fact that he put them into such positions indicates that he was more willing than were many of his predecessors to aid the advancement of women within the party<sup>1</sup>

The next male Conservative Prime Minister was Harold Macmillan who would serve from January 1957 to October 1963. He was appointed Prime Minister after the resignation of Anthony Eden. The 1959 General Election was held on Thursday, October 8, 1959. It was an occasion when the conservatives had more winnable seats if compared to other competing political parties. He was one of the Prime Ministers who were electorally supported by the majority of women voters. He would never realize an electoral victory without the intervention of female voters. If only men voted, Macmillan would never be a Conservative PM.<sup>2</sup>

Concerning the female parliamentary participation during Macmillan years<sup>3</sup> as a Prime Minister, the number of women in parliament remained low. It was pointed out that Macmillan appointed only one woman for a very important post. He appointed Mervyn Pike (1918-2004) as Parliamentary Private Secretary at the Home Office in 1957.<sup>4</sup> In 1959, she became Assistant Postmaster General in 1959 and Under-Secretary at the Home

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<sup>1</sup> Jean Mann, *Women in Parliament* (London :Odhams Press Limited,1962),42-43

<sup>2</sup> G.E.Maguire, *Conservative Women* , 121.

<sup>3</sup> For more details about the women MPs serving in parliament during Harold Macmillan years, se **APPENDIX C , P263.**

<sup>4</sup> Mann, *Women in Parliament* , 42

office in 1963.<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, he kept the women MPs in their positions that were held before him. He kept Patricia Hornsby-Smith (1914-1985), Edith Pitt (1906-1966) and Lady Tweedsmuir (1915-1978).

After the resignation of Patricia, he appointed another woman Margaret Thatcher to serve as the Junior Pensions Minister in 1961. Thatcher proclaimed that despite the limitation of the number of women in politics, but the need for them was unavoidable. She stated “it was thought politically desirable to keep up the number of women in the Government”<sup>2</sup>. Women were still representing a “minority”<sup>3</sup> in Parliament if compared to men. If opening the door to women and impeding their full representation, so it is not a full political participation. It was still partial despite the strides they made in politics.

During Harold Macmillan's tenure, some women were either sacked from power or their political tasks being altered overnight to minor positions. This fact reflected the humiliating way some women were treated in the “Men's House” from time to time. To exemplify, Mervyn Pike, already appointed as a Secretary in Home office, became an under-secretary of State at Home Office.<sup>4</sup> Edith Pitt was another Macmillan's victims. Lady Tweedsmuir was also sacked to leave the House of Commons and became an under-secretary in the Scottish office.<sup>5</sup> Besides the disrespect to women's political power, Macmillan never granted women MPs an opportunity to hold a seat in his cabinet.<sup>6</sup> Those series of posts' alterations took place in June 1962 during the reshuffle known as “Knight of the Long Knives”<sup>7,8</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> “Mervyn Pike and Joan Quennell”, December 6, 2021 <https://ukvote100.org/2021/12/06/mervyn-pike-and-joan-quennell/> (Accessed December 11, 2021)

<sup>2</sup> Crista Cowman, “The Political Autobiographies of Early Women MPs, c.1918–1964” in *The Aftermath of Suffrage: Women, Gender and Politics in Britain 1918-1945*, ed. Julie V. Guttlied and Richard Toye, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 211.

<sup>3</sup> Caitríona Beaumont, “Women in Parliament from 1918–2020”, 2020 <https://www.bl.uk/womens-rights/articles/women-in-parliament-1918-2020> (Accessed May 29, 2021)

<sup>4</sup> G.E. Maguire, *Conservative Women*, 173.

<sup>5</sup> G.E. Maguire, *Conservative Women* 172.

<sup>6</sup> Bartley, *Women's Activism in Twentieth-Century Britain*, 189.

<sup>7</sup> G.E. Maguire, *Conservative Women*, 173

<sup>8</sup> The reshuffle known as “Knight of the Long Knives” refers to dismissing seven cabinet ministers from his cabinet on July 13, 1962. “On this Day in 1962, Macmillan's Night of the Long Knives”, *Bodleian Libraries Blog*, July 13, 2012 <https://blogs.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/archivesandmanuscripts/2012/07/13/on-this-day-in-1962-macmillans-night-of-the-long-knives/> (Accessed April 5, 2022)

After his sudden resignation<sup>1</sup>, Macmillan was succeeded by Alexander Frederick Douglas-Home known as Alec-Douglass-Home. The latter served from October 1963 to October 1964. The general election of 1964 resulted in a landslide for the Labour Party under Harold Wilson<sup>2</sup> when women would be offered an opportunity to get more political positions if compared to the political breakthrough in the Conservative Party. The following table shows the number of women MPs in the Conservative and the Labour Party from (1950-1964)

**Table 2.4.: The Elected Female Conservative and Labour MPs (1950–1964)**

	<b>Conservative</b>	<b>Labour</b>
<b>1950</b>	06	14
<b>1951</b>	06	11
<b>1955</b>	10	14
<b>1959</b>	12	13
<b>1964</b>	11	18

**Source:** “Statistics of Women in Parliament”, House of Commons Library, Factsheet M4 in Phd Thesis by Haessly, 44.

In the light of the above-mentioned table, women in the Labour Party always outnumbered their female Conservative counterparts. Whatever their number, they were enduring underrepresentation.

**2.4. Women Still a Minority: From Harold Wilson to James Callaghan (1964-1979)**

Alec-Douglass-Home was succeeded by Harold Wilson who would serve as a Labourist Prime Minister for two terms (1964-1976). He was followed by Edward Heath (1970-1974) who represented the political victory of the Conservative Party from over again. Last but not least, the last male Prime Minister before Margaret Thatcher as the first female Party leader was James Callaghan<sup>3</sup> (1976-1979).The female political representation remained low.

<sup>1</sup> “Home at the Top” , 2013 <http://www.bbc.co.uk/democracylive/24493540> (Accessed May29,2021)  
<sup>2</sup> James Harold Wilson (1916-1995) was a [Labour Party](#) politician who was [Prime Minister](#) of the [United Kingdom](#) from 1964 to 1970 and from 1974 to 1976. “Harold Wilson”, *Britannica* <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Harold-Wilson-Baron-Wilson-of-Rievaulx> (Accessed May15,2022)  
<sup>3</sup> James Callaghan (1912-2005) was the only 20th-century British Prime Minister to have held all 4 major offices of state: Chancellor of the Exchequer, Home Secretary, Foreign Secretary and Prime Minister. He

### 2.4.1. Harold Wilson’s Maximization of Women’s Political Immersion (1964-1970/ 1974-1976)

Harold Wilson became Prime Minister in 1964 bringing the Labour Party into the political scene again and guaranteed its return to politics as the leading one. Before 1964, the Conservative Party enjoyed repeated electoral victories. The 1964 election was held on October 15 in which the Labour Party won the majority of votes and seats defeating a thirteen years of Conservative rule.

**Table 2.5.: The 1964 General Election Results Summary**

Party	Seats	Votes	Share%	Candidates
Labour	317	12,205,814	44.1	628
Conservative	304	12,001,396	43.4	630
Liberal	9	3,092,878	11.2	365

**Source:** “1964 General Election Results Summary” <https://www.ukpolitical.info/1964.htm> (Accessed August 20, 2021)

Harold Wilson did not oppose the female admission to parliamentary politics and even did not prevent them from holding good ministerial positions. The election of 1964 resulted in electing 18 Labour women. Among them, 7 women were given good positions in the House of Commons.<sup>1</sup> It was the first time in the British history when two women joined a PM in his cabinet. His predecessors included only one woman. Harold Wilson was the first PM to appoint a couple of women into his cabinet. They were Barbara Castle (1910-2002) and Judith Hart (1924-1991). Furthermore, he awarded plenty of women as ministers in different departments and in the House of Lords<sup>2</sup>. Barbara Castle was granted a golden opportunity to hold four high ministerial positions. “Altogether Barbara Castle held four posts in the Wilson governments: Minister of Overseas Development (1964-1965), Minister of Transport (1965-1968), Secretary of State for Employment (1968-1970) and Secretary of state for Social Services (1974-1976)”<sup>3</sup>

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served as Labour Prime Minister (1976-1979). “James Callaghan”, *GOV.UK* <https://www.gov.uk/government/history/past-prime-ministers/james-callaghan> (Accessed May15,2022)

<sup>1</sup> G.E.Maguire, *Conservative Women*, 173

<sup>2</sup> For more details about all women appointed to the House of Commons and Lords during Wilson’s years, see **APPENDIX C , P 263 and APPENDIX E, PP./ 279-282**

<sup>3</sup> Kate Law, “Labour Women in Power: Cabinet Ministers in the 20th century – Dr. Paula Bartley” , March19,2019 <https://womenshistorynetwork.org/labour-women-in-power-cabinet-ministers-in-the-20th-century-dr-paula-bartley/> (Accessed September24,2021)

On March, 31, 1966, a snap-election took place. Harold Wilson went for another election to increase the membership in the Labour Party in parliament. The latter realized a landslide victory for the second time due to the increased female electoral support. “in 1966, for the first time, obtained a majority of the female vote”<sup>1</sup>. Most importantly, the increased support for women in parliament by the Labour governments pushed women voters to shift their electoral support to the Labour Party rather than the Conservative. In the 1960's, women tended to support the Labourists.

Although the Labour party increased the female membership after the Second World War, but the number of women MPs was always low if compared to their male counterparts. In her PhD Thesis, entitled “British Conservative women MPs and 'women's issues'1950-1979” (2010), submitted in the University of Nottingham, Katie Haessly listed the reasons that led to the rise in the number of women in the Labour Party. She stated “There are several factors which contributed to this increase, including a more welcoming electorate, more viable candidates and simply more women putting themselves forward”<sup>2</sup>. Although political parity had not been realized, Labour women started to achieve high ministerial positions during Wilson years.

During his second term (1974-1976), Harold Wilson appointed more women to ministerial positions. The election of 1974 had culminated in the selection of 138 women candidates. Among them, only 27 women in the House of Commons were elected. 18 for the Labour Party, 7 were conservatives plus 2 for other parties.<sup>3</sup> Wilson appointed Judith Hart as Paymaster-General. It was the first time in the political history of Britain that this post of paymaster General was ceded to a woman.

This portrayed the fact that although women were still underrepresented in Wilson's cabinet and in parliament, but this minority started getting positions never granted before to women. Although partially immersed in politics, but gaining a kind of political emancipation for those women MPs. She assumed a range of political responsibilities. Kate Law stated in details those political tasks assigned to Hart:

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<sup>1</sup> Amy Black and Stephen Brooke, “The Labour Party, Women and the Problem of Gender, 1951-1966,” *GBS Journal of British Studies* Vol 36,no.4(January 2014):419

<sup>2</sup> Haessly, 227

<sup>3</sup> G.E.Maguire, *Conservative Women* , 164



[Judith Hart] was not given a department to manage but had a 'rag-bag of responsibilities': to oversee government policy; to bridge the ever-widening gap between Parliament and the electorate by making politics attractive; to supervise the devolution of powers to Scotland and Wales; to be a 'mini-Minister of Youth' by appealing to young people; and lastly to promote the equality of women<sup>1</sup>

The third woman to be appointed by Harold Wilson was Shirley Williams (1930-2021)<sup>2</sup>. She served as Secretary of State for Prices and Consumer Protection<sup>3</sup>. She was described in an American *Time* Magazine as "the most brilliant woman in British Politics"<sup>4</sup> One of other women who hold greater positions during Wilson years was Mercia Williams known as Mercia Falkender (1932-2019) who served as his political Secretary (1956-1983) and his advisor even before being an MP<sup>5</sup>. Due to the immense support Mercia Falkender offered to Wilson as a Prime Minister, it was referred to her as Wilson's "right-hand woman"<sup>6</sup>

Additionally, since Harold was a Labour leader, some Conservative women used to be political participants during Edward Heath's term lost their positions on the one hand. It was estimated that during the second term of the Labour leased Harold Wilson, nine Conservative Women MPs lost their positions or resigned<sup>7</sup>. This led to a very constrained number of four women representatives only<sup>8</sup>. One of those female MPs losing her seat was Peggy Fenner. The latter did not lose her seat forever, but she was given an opportunity to return back to parliament in 1979. On the other hand, there were conservative women MPs who kept holding power even during a Labour administration like Lynda Chalker (Born 1942)<sup>9</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Paula Bartley, *Labour Women in Power: Cabinet Ministers in the 20th century* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2019), 219

<sup>2</sup> Her full name is Shirley Vivian Teresa Brittain-Catlin. Bartley, *Labour Women in Power*, 249.

<sup>3</sup> Bartley, *Labour Women in Power*, 249

<sup>4</sup> Bartley, *Labour Women in Power*, 273

<sup>5</sup> Georgia Aspinall, "Marcia Williams, Right-Hand Woman Of Harold Wilson And Surprising Star Of The Crown", November 18, 2019 <https://graziadaily.co.uk/life/tv-and-film/marcia-williams/> (Accessed July 21, 2021)

<sup>6</sup> Jamie Doward, "Lady Falkender, Harold Wilson's Right-hand Woman, Dies aged 86", *The Observer*, February 16, 2019 <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2019/feb/16/lady-falkender-harold-wilsons-right-hand-woman-dies-aged-86> (Accessed July 21, 2021)

<sup>7</sup> Haessly, 62.

<sup>8</sup> Haessly, 62

<sup>9</sup> "Former Women Members of the House of Commons by Party"

<http://www.qub.ac.uk/cawp/Observatory%20docs/MPs%20%20by%20party.doc> (Accessed August 21, 2021)

By the end of his second term (1974-1976), Harold Wilson was succeeded by another Labour Prime Minister James Callaghan (1976-1979). It is important to mention that Harold Wilson did not serve as Prime Minister successively but his first term was followed by a term served by the Conservative Edward Richard George Heath (1916-2005). He would serve as the leader of the Conservative Party and Conservative Prime Minister from 1970-1974.

## 2.4.2. Edward Heath Welcoming More Women Into the House of Commons (1970-1974)

Edward Heath<sup>1</sup> became Prime Minister in the light of an “unexpected victory”<sup>2</sup> he achieved in the General Election of 1970. The latter was held on Thursday, June 18, 1970. The Results showed and confirmed the victory of Heath and the Conservative Party in parliament through enjoying the majority of winnable seats. The number of electors, in this election, increased due to the enactment of The Representation of the People Act of 1969 which received a royal assent on April 17, 1969. It lowered the voting age for men and women from 21 to 18.<sup>3</sup> The Act stated:

For purposes of the Representation of the People Act [1969] a person shall be of voting age if he is of the age of eighteen years or over; and, if otherwise qualified, a person who is of voting age on the date of the poll at a parliamentary or local government election shall be entitled to vote as an elector, whether or not he is of voting age on the qualifying date.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Edward Heath (1916-2005) Heath served in the Second World War, reaching the rank of Lieutenant Colonel before briefly entering the Civil Service. He was elected to Parliament in 1950 and rose rapidly to become Government Chief Whip to [Anthony Eden](#). He was elected leader of the Conservative Party in 1965. Heath won the 1970 election, and served his only term as Prime Minister (1970-1974). “Sir Edward Heath”, *GOV.UK* <https://www.gov.uk/government/history/past-prime-ministers/edward-heath> (Accessed May 15, 2022)

<sup>2</sup> “1970 : Shock Election Win for Heath”, *On this Day 1950-2005*, BBC NEWS [http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/june/19/newsid\\_3829000/3829819.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/june/19/newsid_3829000/3829819.stm) (Accessed August 20, 2021)

<sup>3</sup> The UK was the first country in the world that lowered the franchise age to 18. Tom Loughran, Andy Mycock and Jon Tonge , “Lowering the Voting Age: Three Lessons from the 1969 Representation of the People Act”, *LSE British Politics and Policy* , November 3, 2021 <https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/politicsandpolicy/lessons-from-the-1969-representation-of-the-peoples-act/> (Accessed May 3, 2022)

<sup>4</sup> “Representation of the People Act 1969”, Chapter 15 , Parliamentary Archives, HL/PO/PU/1/1969/c15

**Table 2.6: The 1970 General Election Results Summary**

	<b>Conservative Party</b>	<b>Labour Party</b>	<b>Liberal Democrats</b>
<b>Candidates</b>	510	511	282
<b>Votes (Millions)</b>	11.28	10.13	1.85
<b>Share of Vote (%)</b>	48.3	43.4	7.9
<b>Seats Won</b>	292	216	2

**Source:** Pelling and Cracknell, 20-21

As far as Edward Heath’s attitudes towards women in politics was concerned, he was not against appointing and welcoming women in parliament , but still the hurdle of women minority in politics overshadowed their political representation. He was not against the female political integration<sup>1</sup>. In his speech delivered in 1969 in Brighton, he glorified the role of women in society. He stated “women have a just and equal place in our society today”.<sup>2</sup> From 1979-1974, 14 Conservative women served as MPs in the Commons.<sup>3</sup> He set up the Cripps Committee concerned with investigating discrimination against women and the disabilities encountered by women. The Committee, in turn, would suggest remedies.

Lady Tweedsmuir was one of those women who were politically active during Heath’s term. She was appointed by him in 1972 to serve as Minister of State for the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (1972-1974)<sup>4</sup>. Above all, Edward Heath glorified the idea of including female MPs into politics believing that they would successfully achieve a fruitful political intervention. Peggy Fenner (1922-2014), additionally, remained one of the influential political figures during Heath’s term. Peggy Fenner served as a Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food. Moreover, Betty Harvie Anderson (1913-1979) was appointed by Heath as the first woman Deputy Speaker in the House of Commons. She served from 1979-1973. “She became the first and so far the only

<sup>1</sup> Haessly,61.

<sup>2</sup> “Leaders’ Speech, Brighton 1969: Edward ”, British Political Speech, Speech Archive <http://www.britishpoliticalspeech.org/speech-archive.htm?speech=116> (Accessed May3,2022)

<sup>3</sup> G.E.Maguire, *Conservative Women*, 173

<sup>4</sup> “Women in the House of Commons” <http://www.parliament.uk/documents/upload/M04C.pdf> (Accessed August20,2021)

woman to sit in the Speaker's chair. She did the job competently and with characteristic lack of fuss"<sup>1</sup>

Melanie Phillips (1980) emphasized the idea that Edward Heath expressed positive attitudes towards the positive role women could play in politics and he believed that since women and men are different, women could politically intervene differently than men. In this case, the amalgam of male and female efforts in politics could contribute and open new horizon for a successful gendered politics. Interviewed by Phillips, Heath stated that "[Edward Heath] have seen it so often: women on our advisory committees, for instance, coming up with ideas and approaches which apparently have never occurred to men, contributions which made you look at the whole thing again"<sup>2</sup>. He broke with the unjust traditions of domesticity that glorified the role of a woman only in the house.

Another female figure in Heath's cabinet was Margaret Thatcher. She did not solely enjoy a good and high ministerial position in Heath's cabinet as Secretary of state for education (1970-1974)<sup>3</sup>. Although Heath had politically supported women, their number in parliament was still limited. Thatcher pointed out that "that it was not easy for women in politics at the time, '[Margaret Thatcher] think it would be extremely difficult for a woman to make it to the top...I have always taken the view that to get to the very top one has to have experience"<sup>4</sup>. Thatcher's political integration did not start firstly in 1970, it dated back to 1959.<sup>5</sup>

The power of Thatcher as a woman strengthened her not only to be in a man's cabinet as MP, but she started challenging Heath over presiding the Conservative Party believing that women had to be fully admitted into politics not as Members in a party but

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<sup>1</sup> Cathy Hartley, *A Historical Dictionary of British Women* (London: Europa Publications Tylor and Francis Group, 1983),208.

<sup>2</sup> Melanie Phillips, *The Divided House: Women at Westminster* (London: Sidgwick & Jackson,1980),155

<sup>3</sup> "Margaret Thatcher and Conservative Politics in England", *Constitutional Rights Foundation* [https://www.crf-usa.org/images/pdf/gates/Margaret\\_Thatcher.pdf](https://www.crf-usa.org/images/pdf/gates/Margaret_Thatcher.pdf) (Accessed August 211,2021)

<sup>4</sup> Margaret Thatcher, *Path to Power* (London: Harper Collins, 1995), 261-262.

<sup>5</sup> Margaret Thatcher firstly ran for Parliament representing the Constituency of Finchley in 1959 in which she won the seat. "Margaret Thatcher", *History.com*, November9,2009, Updated November12,2020) <https://www.history.com/topics/british-history/margaret-thatcher> (Accessed May2,2022)

as party leaders. She claims “In politics, if you want anything said, ask a man. If you want anything done, ask a woman”<sup>1</sup>

The Conservative leader Edward Heath's cabinet witnessed a rarity of female integration despite the ministerial support of women and women's rights. The Conservatives were brought to their knees in 1974 when being defeated again by Harold Wilson to carry on his second term from 1974 to 1976. After the debacle of the Conservatives in 1974, Harold Wilson was victorious again. He was succeeded by James Callaghan in 1976.

#### **2.4.3. James Callaghan's Attitudes Towards Women in Politics (1976-1979)**

After the resignation of Harold Wilson on March 16, 1976, James Callaghan (1912-2005) was elected Prime Minister who would serve from 1976-1979 bringing the Labour Party from over again into the political landscape. He did not grant abundant opportunities for women to reach high ministerial positions. He appointed women into parliament after being elected, but only few of them accomplished political privileges.

The female appointment was very limited during Callaghan's tenure. In 1976, Callaghan ousted Barbara Castle who served as Secretary of State for Social Services during his predecessor Harold Wilson's administration. Barbara Castle and James Callaghan's relation was not stable even before his election as PM. He considered her as “old enemy”<sup>2</sup>. This hostility had a negative impact on Castle's political destiny. He told her that “she was too old and needed to stand aside for new blood”<sup>3</sup>. James appointed Shirley Williams to hold a couple of posts one after another. She served as Secretary of State for

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<sup>1</sup> “Margaret Thatcher, 100 Women”, *Encyclopedia Britannica* <https://www.britannica.com/explore/100women/profiles/margaret-thatcher> (Accessed on August 21, 2021)

<sup>2</sup> Richard Johnson, “The Resilient Radicalism of Barbara Castle”, *Tribune*, October 06, 2021 <https://tribunemag.co.uk/2021/10/the-resilient-radicalism-of-barbara-castle> (Accessed March 13, 2022)

<sup>3</sup> Johnson, “The Resilient Radicalism of Barbara Castle”.

Prices and Consumer Protection (1974-1976), Secretary of State for Education and Science (1976-1979), and later as Pay Master General (1976-1979).<sup>1</sup>

The House of Commons was not the sole parliamentary chamber that included men and women. The House of Lords became also an institution where women joined men. Their presence in the House of Lords was a very difficult step if compared to their admission in the Commons. In 1918, women joined men in the House of Commons. Their first admission in the House of Lords did not take place until 1958.

### **2.5. Women in the House of Lords (1958-1979)**

Women could not stand as MPs in the House of Lords till 1958. The parliamentary reluctance to pave the way for their involvement in the Upper House did not arise from scratch. The Female involvement in the Lower House (the House of Commons) was perceived as enough to have a word in the process of decision-making. Their political engagement needed to be official. The peerage Act of 1958 was a turning point in the female political history. It was a new chapter in the history of women's political experiences.

#### **2.5.1. The Origin of Female Integration in the Upper House**

The House of Lords was an institution where only men hereditary peers could stand. Before 1958, women were not allowed to stand as members in the House. Several women inherited the right to stand in the Lords through inheriting the titles from their fathers or husbands, but they were excluded and never granted a chance to try to do that.

The Lord and the Liberal MP David Alfred Thomas (1917-1918)<sup>2</sup> was the first male Lord who started demanding the parliamentary approval to accept his daughter Margaret

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<sup>1</sup> A Pay Master General is a government [minister responsible](#) for making [payments](#) by government [departments](#). "Pay Master General", *Collins Dictionary* <https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/paymaster-general> (Accessed March13,2022)

<sup>2</sup> David Alfred Thomas (1856-1918) served as Minister of Food in June 1917. He held the post until his death on 3rd July, 1918. His peerage passed, by special remainder, to his daughter, [Viscountess Rhondda](#). "David Alfred Thomas", *Spartacus Educational* <https://spartacus-educational.com/PRrhondda.htm> (Accessed May15,2022)

Haig Thomas (1883-1958) to inherit his title after his death as an MP in the House of Lords since he had no sons. In this vein, it should be pointed out that the House of Lords was a hereditary body prior to 1958. The titles could be inherited after the death or the resignation of a given male MP. Margaret used to be one of the militant suffragettes who campaigned violently for the right to vote (suffrage). To strengthen her claim for inheriting her father's seat in the Lords, Margaret Thomas known as Lady Rhondda established a feminist organization called the "Six Point Group"<sup>1</sup> on February 21, 1921 and she set up a weekly feminist *Magazine* entitled *Time and Tide*.<sup>2</sup>

After her father's death in 1918, Margaret Thomas started campaigning and claiming for inheriting her father's seat referring her demand to the Sex Disqualification Act (1919) stating that any person would never be prevented to practice any kind of function regardless his/her sex. Section 1 of the Act stated:

A person shall not be disqualified by sex or marriage from the exercise of any public function, or from being appointed to or holding any civil or judicial office or post, or from entering or assuming or carrying on any civil profession or vocation, or for admission to any incorporated society (whether incorporated by Royal Charter or otherwise), and a person shall not be exempted by sex or marriage from the liability to serve as a juror<sup>3</sup>

She believed that gender would never be a hurdle that would hamper any woman to hold any kind of work. Her case, brought to the Upper House, was presented to the Committee for Privileges in 1922. She became known as "Rhondda Case"<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> The Six-Point Group was a feminist organization that aimed at campaigning for equal rights for women. The six points campaigned for were: Satisfactory legislation on child assault, Satisfactory legislation for the widowed mother, Satisfactory legislation for the unmarried mother and her child, Equal rights of guardianship for married parents, Equal pay for teachers and Equal opportunities for men and women in the civil service. Erika Rackley and Rosemary Auchmuty, "Centenary of the Six-Point Group", *The Law Society: Gazette*, June 21, 2021 <https://www.lawgazette.co.uk/women-in-the-law/centenary-of-the-six-point-group/5108893.article> (Accessed March 22, 2022)

<sup>2</sup> "Women and the House of Lords", UK Parliament <https://www.parliament.uk/about/living-heritage/transformingsociety/electionsvoting/womenvote/overview/womenthelords/> (Accessed March 13, 2022)

<sup>3</sup> "The Sex Disqualification (Removal) Act 1919", [UK Public General Acts 1919 c. 71 \(Regnal. 9 and 10 Geo 5\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/Geo5/9-10/71/section/1), Section 1 <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/Geo5/9-10/71/section/1> (Accessed May 3, 2022)

<sup>4</sup> "Women and the House of Lords".

Rhonda Case was firstly heard in 1922, but quickly opposed and rejected by the male anti-suffragist and the anti-feminist<sup>1</sup> Lord Chancellor Frederick Edwin Smith (1919-1922) known in the House of Lords as Lord Birkenhead, the first earl of Birkenhead (1872-1930). Known as “No friend for women”,<sup>2</sup> he was strongly against the female admission into politics, let alone admitting them in the Upper House. He did not oppose her claim for granted, but he believed that the House should remain a male-led without any female intervention. He confessed in 1924: “I[Lord Birkenhead] spent many years of my life in attempting to prevent any woman getting into the House of Commons and if I could drive them out today I should certainly do it. I am entitled to say that I, and I alone, have kept them out of the House of Lords”<sup>3</sup>

Unlike the female political admission into the House of Commons, women's integration into the House of Lords was not easy. The first female attempt to join men in the Upper House was bitterly opposed. Women's interest in the Lords membership, represented by Rhondda, required a lengthy period to be accomplished. By the same token, the female vehement desire to join men in the Upper house mirrored the female political power in the “Men's House” and most significantly, reflected their self-confidence in their ability to be political participants. The early parliamentary onslaught on Rhonda's suggestion did not impede the female continued demands to sit in the Lords.

### **2.5.2. Private Bills and Petitions**

Granting women a chance to stand in the House of Lords was a tough and a lengthy process. From 1924 until 1928, several bills were introduced to the House in an attempt to open the doors of the Upper House to women as hereditary peers, but in vain. Besides bills, petitions were also another tactic to make from the female membership in the Upper House a reality. The male support played a pivotal role in siding with women to reach the second chamber. Lord Waldorf Astor (1910-1919), the husband of the first woman MP in the

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<sup>1</sup> Lizzie B, “Why I'm on Team Rhondda?”, *Women Who Meant Business: Laws and Policies Women and the House of Lords*, November 19, 2020 <https://womenwhomeantbusiness.com/2020/11/19/why-im-on-team-rhondda/> (Accessed May 3, 2022)

<sup>2</sup> Rosemary Auchmuty, *Great Debates in Gender and Law* (London : Palgrave Macmillan Publishers Ltd, 2018), 177

<sup>3</sup> Lizzie.



British politics Nancy Astor taking her seat in 1919, introduced three bills in 1920's to allow peeresses in "their own right" to stand in the House of Lords, but all of them were defeated.<sup>1</sup> Through those bills, he wanted to allow women to receive titles through inheritance whether from their husbands or fathers.

A pressure group led by the English lawyer Edward Iwi (1904-1966) collected 50.000 signatures<sup>2</sup> in 1948 that revealed the female quest for the parliamentary participation in the House of Lords. It was pointed out that the first petition was never presented to parliament.<sup>3</sup> By the same token, another petition was introduced to the Lords on March2, 1948.

One of the signatures in the second petition was the one of Lady Rhondda, the first woman who started fighting for the female political formal engagement in the Upper House. One year later, the Lords voted for admitting women into the House. On December5, 1957, A Life Peerages Bill was introduced and finally accepted by Prime Minister Harold Macmillan. An amendment was suggested for this bill to exclude women from the House of Lords and never acquaint them with an opportunity to stand there. The amendment was not accepted. It was defeated by 134 votes to 30.<sup>4</sup>

The petitions played a focal role in guaranteeing the female political admission into the Upper House. They represented the female unstoppable attempts to keep wooing the male Lords to officially welcome them in the House. Those presented petitions were fruitful to the extent they brought a result. Women were finally accepted as life peeresses.

### **2.5.3. The Dawn of Women's Membership 1958**

Before 1958, The House of Lords was reserved for men only. They were hereditary peers. The parliamentary enactment of the Life Peerages Act in 1958 represented a

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<sup>1</sup> G.E.Maguire, *Conservative Women*, 166.

<sup>2</sup> "Women and the House of Lords"

<sup>3</sup> "Women and the House of Lords"

<sup>4</sup> "Life Peerages Act 1958", UK Parliament, (2022) <https://www.parliament.uk/about/living-heritage/evolutionofparliament/houseoflords/parliamentacts/overview/lifepeeragesact/> (Accessed March14,2022)

watershed in the female political trends. Until 1958, women could sit in the House of Lords although they started joining men in the House of Commons earlier in 1918. On April 2, 1958, the Act reached its third reading in the Commons by 292 votes to 241.<sup>1</sup> The act, in turn, allowed women to stand in the House of Lords as life peers. It means that their title would never be inherited after their resignation or death by their children (from parents to children). Finally, on April 30, 1958, the Bill received the Royal Assent. The nub of the Act was pertinent with granting life peerage to men and women. Chapter 21 of the Act confirmed the fact that women were finally declared life peers in the House of Lords. It stated “An Act to make provision for the creation of life peerages carrying the right to sit and vote in the House of Lords... A life peerage [Is] conferred under this section on a woman”<sup>2</sup>

The first women admitted to the House of Lords started to get their seats in October 1958. The first 14<sup>3</sup> male and female Life peers were firstly appointed to the House on July 24, among them four<sup>4</sup> women namely Barbara Wootton<sup>5</sup> (1897-1988), Stella Isaacs (1894-1971), Katherine Eliot (1903-1994) and Irene Curzon (1896-1966). The 1958 Act opened new horizons for more women to be appointed by the Prime Ministers to stand in the Lords. It was estimated that 225 women Life peers were selected to stand in the Lords.<sup>67</sup> Baroness<sup>8</sup> Eliot celebrated the female political success to stand in the House of Lords for the first time in the British History. In her maiden speech delivered on November

<sup>1</sup> “Life Peerages Act 1958”.

<sup>2</sup> “1958 Life Peerage Act” Parliamentary Archives GB.061, HL C1293-2019 [https://archives.parliament.uk/collections/getrecord/GB61\\_HL](https://archives.parliament.uk/collections/getrecord/GB61_HL) (Accessed May 3, 2022)

<sup>3</sup> “Life Peerages Act: First Women Life Peers”, *The History of Parliament*, July 24, 2018 <https://thehistoryofparliament.wordpress.com/2018/07/24/life-peerages-act-1958-first-women-life-peers/> (Accessed March 14, 2022)

<sup>4</sup> Robert Rogers, *Order! Order: A Parliamentary Miscellany* (London: JR Books Ltd, 2009)

<sup>5</sup> She was the first woman to be appointed into the House of Lords on August 8, 1958. “Barbara Frances Wootton (1897-1988”, UK Parliament (2022) <https://www.parliament.uk/about/living-heritage/evolutionofparliament/houseoflords/house-of-lords-reform/overview/first-life-peers/barbara-frances-wootton/> (Accessed May 3, 2022)

<sup>6</sup> Russel Taylor, “Lords Membership: How Many Women Have Sat in the Lords?”, House of Lords Library, UK Parliament, February 22, 2021 <https://lordslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/lln-2018-0014/> (Accessed March 22, 2022)

<sup>7</sup> For more details about the list of women in the House of Lords, see **APPENDIX E, P 269**.

<sup>8</sup> The word “baroness” refers to the wife or the widow of a baron. Politically, it refers to a woman holding the rank of baron either as a life peerage or as a hereditary rank. “Baroness”, *Encyclopedia.com* (2019) <https://www.google.com/search?q=definition+of+baroness&og=definition+of+baroness&aqs=chrome..69i57j4961j0j15&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8> (Accessed March 22, 2022)

4, 1958, she stated “Probably this is the first occasion in 900 years that the voice of a woman has been heard in the deliberations of his House”<sup>1</sup>

Since women MPs in the House of Commons were elected each general election, the ones admitted to the House of Lords were appointed by the Monarch after being chosen by Prime Minister because he/ she knew the capabilities of each member. Even the PM did not appoint them overnight, there were pre-appointment steps. First and foremost, the ministers were nominated by political parties and approved by the PM. It is of great importance to note that any member, women as example, in the House of Lords had only one occasion to be appointed. It means that, he would not be appointed from over again if leaving his seat.<sup>2</sup>

Like the House of Commons, the House of Lords was another chamber where women were subjected to political underrepresentation and marginalization. Men outnumbered women and men received life peerages more than women.<sup>3</sup> The following table illustrates life peerages granted to men and women in the House of Lords from Harold Macmillan to James Callaghan.

**Table 2.7. : Life Peerage Creations (1958-1979)**

<b>Prime Minister</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Of which Women</b>	<b>Percentage of Women</b>
<b>Harold Macmillan</b>	47	7	15%
<b>Alec Douglas Home</b>	16	2	12%
<b>Harold Wilson</b>	135	14	10%
<b>Edward Heath</b>	45	8	18%
<b>Harold Wilson</b>	80	11	14%
<b>James Callaghan</b>	58	5	9%

**Source:** Haves.

<sup>1</sup> L.C. Dickinson and M.B. Foster, “Viscountess Rhondda , Women and the House of Lords: Achieving Equality for Women in the House of Lords”, Parliamentary Art Collection WOA 2945 , August 1958 , 05 [https://www.parliament.uk/globalassets/documents/parliamentary-archives/Viscountess\\_Rhondda\\_Women\\_House\\_of\\_Lords.pdf](https://www.parliament.uk/globalassets/documents/parliamentary-archives/Viscountess_Rhondda_Women_House_of_Lords.pdf) (Accessed March22,2022)

<sup>2</sup> Sonali Campion, Sean Kippin and The Democratic Audit Team, “How Undemocratic Is the House of Lords?”, 183, <http://the-uks-changing-democracy-13-chapter-44-how-undemocratic-is-the-house-of-lords.pdf> (Accessed March23,2022)

<sup>3</sup> Emily Haves, “Representation of Women in the House of Lords”, House of Lords Library, (February 24,2021) <https://lordslibrary.parliament.uk/representation-of-women-in-the-house-of-lords/> (Accessed March14,2022)

Since 1958, all the male Prime Ministers (1958-1979) appointed women to the House of Lords in different proportions depending on their personal attitudes towards the female political presence in the Lords. Harold Wilson was Prime Minister who appointed the largest number of women in the Lords. He appointed 14 women who represented 10% of the whole number of the Lords.<sup>1</sup> Additionally, Alec Douglas-Home shared different political views concerning women in the Lords. He appointed the lowest number of Women. Only two women were appointed.<sup>2</sup>

Welcoming women in the second political Chamber of the bicameral parliament was one of the crowning achievements in the female political history. This political breakthrough was not achieved overnight; it was the outcome of women's ceaseless demand of their political emancipation. Incorporating the female touch into the already male-led House of Lords contributed to a divided power and a divided gender authority. Women life peers shifted from "power seekers in the Lords" into "power practitioners in the Lords"; an achievement that cemented their political pride. The political extensions for women in the Upper House remained in practice after the 1958 Act.

#### **2.5.4. Women: From Life Peeresses to Hereditary Peeresses (1963)**

In 1963, things took another turn. The Peerage Act was enacted on July 31, 1963. It was one of the parliamentary reforms in the House of Lords. It allowed the hereditary peers to get rid of the titles for life any time they wanted without being obliged to remain an MP in the House of Lords until death. Most importantly, it extended the parliamentary existence of women in the House. It stated that even women hereditary peers<sup>3</sup> could be MPs in this House. It means that their title would be inherited after their death by their sons or daughters. It was enacted on July 31, 1963. It was mentioned in Section 1 of the Act:

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<sup>1</sup> Haves, "Representation of Women in the House of Lords".

<sup>2</sup> Haves, "Representation of Women in the House of Lords".

<sup>3</sup> The term 'peer' emerged by the 15th century to refer to the Lords Temporal, who had by this time formed five ranks – Baron, Viscount, Earl, Marquess and Duke. "The House of Lords Reform" presented to Parliament by the Leader of the House of Commons and Lord Privy Seal by Command of Her Majesty, The Stationary Office, London, N° 7027, 2007, 10  
[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/228891/7027.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/228891/7027.pdf) (Accessed March 14, 2022)

An Act to authorise the disclaimer for life of certain hereditary peerages; to include among the peers qualified to sit in the House of Lords all peers in their own right in the peerages of England, Scotland, Great Britain and the United Kingdom...Subject to the provisions of this section, any person who, after the commencement of this Act, succeeds to a peerage in the peerage of England, Scotland, Great Britain or the United Kingdom may, by an instrument of disclaimer delivered to the Lord Chancellor within the period prescribed by this Act, disclaim that peerage for his life.<sup>1</sup>

It was pointed out that in 1963; the political equality was finally accomplished in the House of Lords<sup>2</sup>. But the number of women in the House remained low from one PM's tenure into another if compared to their male counterparts. It could refer to the equality of admission, but the equality of representation was still in question. The first female hereditary peers in the Lords were: the first hereditary peeress to take her seat in the House Baroness Strange of Knokin (born 1966) , Baroness Audley Rosina Manawee (1911-1973), Baroness Mona Eitzland-Howard (1894-1971) and Countess<sup>3</sup> Diana Hay (1926-1978)<sup>4</sup>. Those women and others did not stand overnight, their first step was appointment.

### **2.5.5. The Reasons behind Governmental Reluctance to Welcome Women in the Upper House**

The female involvement in the House of Lords was a lengthy process. Although there were several bills presented before 1958, the female entry to the House of Lords was in vain. The governmental repeated rejection to open the House for women was triggered by a number of reasons. Unlike the House of Commons which started to be opened for the female representation in 1919, the House of Lords remained reserved for men only until 1958. Thus, women, after forty years serving in the Lower House, were finally granted a golden opportunity to join the male Lords in their political mission.

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<sup>1</sup> "Peerage Act 1963", Legislation.Gov.UK, Open Government Licence V30

<sup>2</sup> Dickinson and Foster, 08

<sup>3</sup> The word "Countess" refers to the wife or widow of a count or earl. "Countess"  
<https://www.google.com/search?q=definition+of+countess&oq=definition+of+countess&aqs=chrome..69i57j0i512i2j0i22i30i7.4179j0j15&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8> (Accessed March22,2022)

<sup>4</sup> Dickinson and Foster, 08.

The most pivotal reason behind the late women's entry to the House was the patriarchal nature of the male presence in the House. Most male Lords refused to accept women as MPs among them because they vehemently believed that the House of Lords was firstly established by men and should remain managed by men only. In 1957, one year before the female political admission into the House of Lords, one of the male Life Peers in the Upper House backed up the reason behind the repeated exclusion of women from the Upper House. He told the Lords on October 31, 1957:

Women... are not suited to Politics, for the following reasons. They are often moved by their hearts more than they are by their heads, and the emotional urge which exist in a woman's make-up does help towards good judgment.... Many of us do not want women in this House. We do not want to sit beside them on the Benches, nor do we want to meet them in the Library. This is a House of men, a House of Lords. We do not wish it to become a House of Lords and Ladies.<sup>1</sup>

The male Lords believed that women had been already vouchsafed several opportunities to be rulers on the one hand. On the other hand, they had several ways to be involved in the process of decision-making. The Upper House must be run by men only. Even its name, it stated the House of Lords, not the House of "ladies". Women could stand as Queens and MPs in the Lower House. The Upper House should not be feminized; it should remain a male-only sphere. Another male Life Peer in the House of Lords shared the same view of the inevitability of excluding women from the House. He stated in 1957 "If we will allow women into this House where will this emancipation end? ... I find that a horrifying thought"<sup>2</sup>

Besides the male reluctance to feminize the House of Lords, the urgent need for political reforms pushed the Lords accept admitting women making from the House of Lords a mixed-sex body. Thus, the Act of 1958 did not shed light solely on admitting women, but its second aim was to make from the Upper House "an effective and representative"<sup>3</sup> one. As a result, women were easily welcomed in the House of Lords.

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<sup>1</sup> Rogers, *Order! Order: A Parliamentary Miscellany*.

<sup>2</sup> Dickinson and Foster, 10.

<sup>3</sup> Emily Haves, "Challenging for Equality in Parliament: How Women Won Their Place in the House of Lords", UK Parliament, March 3, 2021 <https://lordslibrary.parliament.uk/challenging-for-equality-in-parliament-how-women-won-their-place-in-the-house-of-lords/> (Accessed March 23, 2022)

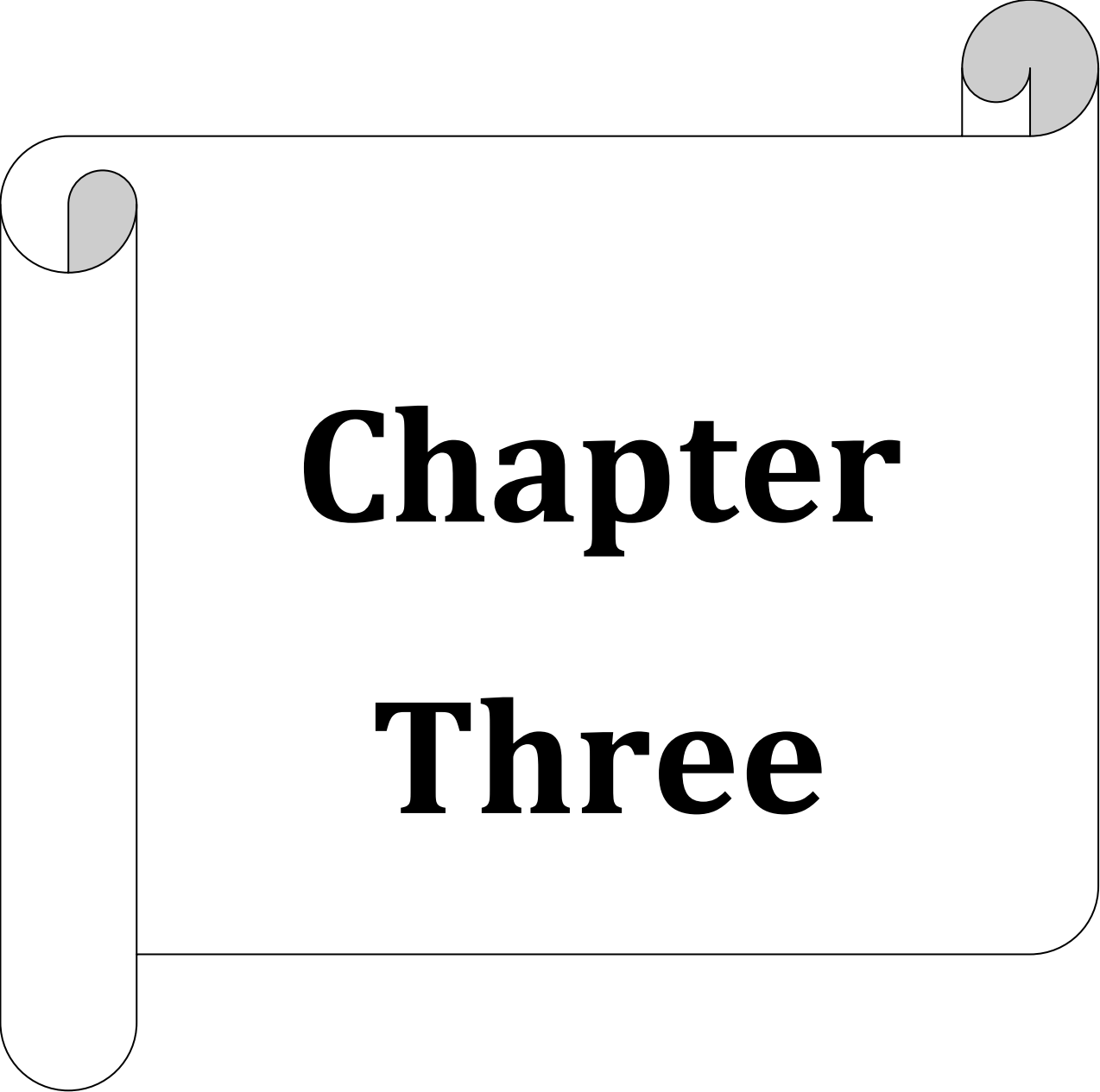
Accepting women in the Upper House did not mean that the Lords finally agreed that women were suited for politics. Women were accepted to join the male peers just to generalize the principle of representation.

## **2.6. Conclusion**

Although women were proved eligible for politics, their political admission remained in question. It was concluded that the final decision of either maximizing or minimizing the female political involvement was put forward by the male party leaders who worked on making gender parity in politics an impossible mission to be realized. Women political hard work persisted after the war and despite the challenges and the barriers that impeded their full political participation, women MPs proudly emerged on the political scenes sharing the local management of England with men under the umbrella of male political patriarchy.

Add to this, the gender gap and the gender disparity remained a defining feature of gender politics after WWII in the House of Commons and the House of Lords. The post WWII era (1945-1979) witnessed radical changes as far as the female political participation was concerned. Women desire for gender political parity was tremendous. Whenever they realized a political breakthrough, they started working for other political achievements. Despite their inclusion in the House of Commons before WWII, they battled for an extended political presence in the House of Lords.

The cabinet ministerial positions granted to women appointees after WWII reflected the seeds of the female successful involvement in the male field. Gender disparity in British politics was never a hint for the female weakness in politics. The sole trigger point jeopardizing women's political positions was the male discriminative procedures during candidates' selection. Between the dilemma of male support and opposition, women kept being powerful, politically ready and strong to overcome the male discriminative treatment in their "House". From party members, a woman called Margaret Thatcher appeared on the political scene as a party leader and a , above all, a woman Prime Minister. The following chapter digs deep into throwing light on the good and the bad side of women's political participation among men.



# **Chapter Three**



**Chapter Three  
Margaret Thatcher: The First Woman Prime Minister in  
British Politics (1979-1990)**

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### **3.1. Introduction**

Margaret Thatcher, dubbed “Iron Lady”<sup>1</sup>, was the first female Prime Minister in Britain and the first female leader of the Conservative Party. The latter used to be led by men only before the coming of Thatcher. Her crowning political achievement represented the female power and ability not solely to join men in the political contest, but successfully a female leader of men.

As Prime Minister, she introduced radical changes and she successfully spiced her administration with a number of policies especially economic ones. Her policies and her principles as a political leader were labeled as “Thatcherism”. Her successful incorporation of economic and political reforms made of her a political trailblazer ever effectively leading England to the path of prosperity. By the same token, she was one of the female pioneers as a political leader. Her successful access to power as a PM changed the image of women of politics. Women could not be only party members, but they could be also political leaders breaking all the chains of humiliation and discrimination.

What seemed paradoxical was that although Prime Minister was a woman, she did not promote women increased entry to parliament. This does not mean that women were deprived from climbing the ladder of political engagement. During her premiership, several women held positions never held by women before. The same continued hurdle was gender inequality in parliament.

This chapter aims at providing a detailed study of Margaret Thatcher as a “woman” in politics in an attempt to examine the female role in a male- dominated parliament on the one hand. On the other hand, it attempts to see whether women were over-represented or under-represented since Prime Minister was a woman. Additionally, the gist of this chapter is to find out how she strengthened her relation with her male and female colleagues to

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<sup>1</sup> The nickname “Iron Lady” was firstly coined by the Soviet Journalist Yuri Gavrilov in 1976 in the Soviet Red Army’s *Red Star Newspaper*. He likened Thatcher to the German’s “Iron Chancellor” Otto Von Bismarck for her staunch opposition to the Soviet Union and socialism. He firstly used the phrase “Iron Lady” after reading one of her speeches delivered against the Soviet Union. Gavrilov stated in 1976 : “Since I couldn't use a male term to describe Margaret Thatcher, I replaced the word Chancellor with Lady. I'm proud of those two words and I meant no offence. But I did have the feeling that the Soviet Union would soon face a tough opponent”. Will Stewart , “Revealed: Red Army Colonel Who Dubbed Maggie the Iron Lady ... and Changed History”, Daily Mail , February 24,2007 <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-438281/Revealed-Red-Army-colonel-dubbed-Maggie-Iron-Lady---changed-history.html> (Accessed May6,2022)

better understand the nature of gender relations in both houses of parliament: the House of Commons and the House of Lords.

### **3.2. Margaret Thatcher's Early Political Trajectory (1950-1979)**

In the light of the female political integration and representation under the umbrella of formal political participation, the dawn of Thatcher's political career did not take place firstly in 1979, but her inclination to be a political participant dated back to the pre-1979 era when she burst upon the political scene firstly not as a Prime Minister, but an MP only in 1959. Her successful presence in parliament could not be a reality without the male support.

#### **3.2.1. Margaret Thatcher's Biography**

Margaret Thatcher (1925-2013) was born on October 13, 1925, in Grantham, England as Margaret Hilda Roberts. She was nicknamed "Iron lady". She was the second<sup>1</sup> daughter<sup>2</sup> of Alfred Roberts (1892–1970) and Beatrice Ethel Stephenson (1888-1960). Her father was a grocer, local leader, preacher, alderman and town's mayor. Her mother was a homemaker and dressmaker.

Margaret Thatcher carried her education in a Grammar school called Grantham Girls' High School and was later accepted in Oxford University. She specialized in chemistry at Somerville College from 1943-1947. From Somerville, she got her degree in 1947. After her graduation, she started working as chemist with Xylonite Plastics<sup>3</sup>, located at Manningtree in Essex. Besides chemistry, she studied law and in 1954 she became a barrister<sup>4</sup>. As a barrister, she was specializing in Tax Law<sup>5</sup>. She married Denis Thatcher

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<sup>1</sup> "Margaret Thatcher: A Biography", Churchill College Cambridge <https://www.chu.cam.ac.uk/archives/collections/thatcher-papers/thatcher-biography/> (Accessed November24,2021 )

<sup>2</sup> Her only older sister is called Muriel. John Johnson Lewes, "Margaret Thatcher: British Prime Minister 1979-1990", *Thought.Co* , May30,2019 <https://www.thoughtco.com/margaret-thatcher-biography-3530565> (Accessed November24,2021 )

<sup>3</sup> David Cannadine, *Margaret Thatcher: A Life and Legacy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press,2017),09

<sup>4</sup> Barrister is one of the two types of practicing law in England and Wales, the other being the solicitor. In general, barristers engage in advocacy (trial work) and solicitors in office work. "Barrister", The Editors of Encyclopedia Britannica <https://www.britannica.com/topic/barrister> (Accessed November24,2021)

<sup>5</sup> "Margaret Thatcher: A Biography", Churchill College Cambridge <https://www.chu.cam.ac.uk/archives/collections/thatcher-papers/thatcher-biography/> (Accessed November24,2021)

(1915-2003) in December 1951. Her husband had a great positive impact on her political breakthrough although he had no political ambitions for himself.<sup>1</sup>

### **3.2.2. Margaret Thatcher's Pre- 1979 Political Foray**

Margaret Thatcher's involvement in politics was not an overnight decision, but it was "a desire to be a politician" since her childhood when she was 13 years old.<sup>2</sup> Her first interaction with politicians took place when she was a child. Her father used to accompany her because he served also as a member of town's council.<sup>3</sup> She gained a political experience due to her early relation with politics. In Oxford University, she was the first one to preside over the Conservative Association where her first political experience originated.<sup>4</sup> In this association, she got in touch with the male prominent Mps of the Conservative Party.

Her first attempt to be engaged in parliament took place in 1950 when she was selected as a candidate in the General Election of 1950 but in vain. Her failure to be an MP did not thwart her political enthusiasm. She believed in herself to the extent of trying again and again until the goal was fulfilled. She stated "'You may have to fight a battle more than once to win it."<sup>5</sup>

Until 1959, an opportunity was vouchsafed to her through winning a seat in the House of Commons. She assumed a range of political responsibilities. In 1961, she was appointed by Prime Minister Harold Macmillan to serve as Parliamentary Secretary in the Ministry of Pensions and National Insurance (1961–64). Moreover, she was granted a chance to be the chief opposition spokesman on education (1969–70) and as secretary education and science (1970–74) in the Conservative government of Edward Heath (1916-2005) when the Conservatives realized a landslide victory in the Election of 1970<sup>6</sup>. In 1975, she became the leader of the Conservative Party. Four years later, she reached the

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<sup>1</sup> Cannadine, 10.

<sup>2</sup> Hugo Young, "Margaret Thatcher: Prime Minister of United Kingdom", *Britannica*, October 9, 2021 <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Margaret-Thatcher> (Accessed November 24, 2021)

<sup>3</sup> "Margaret Thatcher Biography", April 2, 2014 <https://www.biography.com/political-figure/margaret-thatcher> (Accessed November 23, 2020)

<sup>4</sup> "Margaret Thatcher Biography".

<sup>5</sup> "Margaret Thatcher Quotes", *Goodreads*, <https://www.goodreads.com/quotes/24065-you-may-have-to-fight-a-battle-more-than-once> (Accessed May 17, 2022)

<sup>6</sup> "Margaret Thatcher :Prime Minister of United Kingdom" <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Margaret-Thatcher> (Accessed November 23, 2020)

zenith of her political involvement as a Prime Minister. Her premiership lasted 11 years extending from May 1979 to November 1990.

### **3.2.3. Male Familial Support to Margaret Thatcher**

The support of her father and her husband played a vital role in Margaret Thatcher's increased thirst for political parliamentary involvement. Her father Alfred Roberts was a politician that is why he aroused in his daughter the will to opt for political leadership. He was elected to the town's council in 1927 and he served as Mayor from (1945-1946)<sup>1</sup>

It was claimed that Alfred Robert wished to have a boy besides his first daughter Muriel, but destiny decided differently. Another daughter was born in 1925. He treated her as his "son"<sup>2</sup>. She endeavored and worked hard to strengthen his pride in her. She considered her father as her "role model"<sup>3</sup>. He taught his daughter to work hard because the latter is always a path to self-advancement. "Her capacity for hard work and little sleep was legendary"<sup>4</sup>

Furthermore, he aroused in her a high motivation to be ready for "public service"<sup>5</sup>. Thus, the paternal support to Margaret Thatcher was not political, but a moral one. He was a source of inspiration for his daughter and a source of knowledge required to become a successful leader. Those golden principles learnt from her father persisted to become political convictions overshadowing her administration. In a self-confident way, she stated "I am not a consensus politician. I'm a conviction politician."<sup>6</sup>

Margaret Thatcher's husband Denis Thatcher (1915-2003) represented another source of support. He was a model of an ideal husband who kept encouraging and supporting her to fulfill her political ambition. Most importantly, he used to strengthen her political views. Her marital status introduced a "new life" for her due to the emotional and the financial

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<sup>1</sup> Dick Leonard, "Margaret Thatcher — Grocer's Daughter to Iron Lady" in *A Century of Premiers*, ed. Dick Leonard (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 301.

<sup>2</sup> Leonard, 301.

<sup>3</sup> Leonard, 301.

<sup>4</sup> Henry Chu and Patt Morrison, "Margaret Thatcher Dies at 87: Britain's First Female Prime Minister", *Los Angeles Times*, April 8, 2013 <https://www.latimes.com/local/obituaries/la-me-margaret-thatcher-20130409-story.html> (Accessed November 24, 2021).

<sup>5</sup> Leonard, 302.

<sup>6</sup> Britain's Margaret Thatcher, in Her Own Words", *Reuters*, April 8, 2013 <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-britain-thatcher-quotes-idUSBRE9370LI20130408> (Accessed May 17, 2022)

support of Mr. Denis at the very beguiling of their marital life.<sup>1</sup> “He remained a loyal and supportive husband for the rest of his life”<sup>2</sup>. Denis himself glorified his wife and he was always proud of her achievement as the first woman leader in Britain. He proudly and happily proclaimed “I have been married to one of the greatest women the world has ever produced. All I could produce—small as it may be—was love and loyalty”<sup>3</sup>

Besides being an ideal and supportive spouse, he was always proud of her as a political participant. Whenever he was involved in an interview, he always referred to his wife as “a boss”<sup>4</sup>. Her successful political achievement could not be achieved without the help of her husband. In her autobiography, she wrote down “I could never have been Prime Minister for more than 11 years without Denis by my side. He was a fund of shrewd advice and penetrating comment .....and he very sensibly saved these for me rather than the outside world.”<sup>5</sup>

Margaret Thatcher became a national celebrity that attracted the attention of male MPs and even the citizens in England. In 1979, she beat the record of political competition with male MPs emerging not as previously a party leader only but Prime Minister breaking the traditional burden of excluding women from high ministerial positions. She was not only a leader over men , but “ she could beat men”<sup>6</sup>

### **3.3. Margaret Thatcher As Prime Minister (1979-1990)**

Margaret Thatcher became the first leading Prime Minister in the twentieth century. She served as the longest Prime Minister since the administration of the Conservative Prime Minister Robert Banks Jenkinson (1812-1827)<sup>7</sup> in the nineteenth century<sup>1</sup> and

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<sup>1</sup> Cannadine, 11.

<sup>2</sup> Leena Kim, “Margaret Thatcher’s Husband Denis Plays a Key Role in This Season of the Crown”, *Town and Country*, Novemebr15,2020 <https://www.townandcountrymag.com/society/politics/a34227978/denis-thatcher-margaret-thatcher-husband/> (Accessed November24,2021 )

<sup>3</sup> “Tributes to Baroness Thatcher”, House of Commons Vol560, April10,2013

<sup>4</sup> Kim.

<sup>5</sup> Grant Rindner, “Who Was Margaret Thatcher’s Husband, Denis?”, *Oprah Daily*, November18, 2020 <https://www.oprahdaily.com/entertainment/tv-movies/a34509164/margaret-thatcher-husband-denis-thatcher/> (Accessed November24,2021)

<sup>6</sup> Chu and Morrison.

<sup>7</sup> Robert Banks Jenkinson (Earl of Liverpool) known politically as Lord Liverpool (1770-1828) served as a British Prime Minister from (1812-1827) “Past Prime Ministers”, *GOV.UK* <https://www.gov.uk/government/history/past-prime-ministers/robert-banks-jenkinson-earl-of-liverpool> (Accessed November25,2021)

Winston Churchill (1940-1945 and again 1951-1955) in the twentieth century. Despite the repeated defeats to become party members before 1979, her hard work, par excellence, in conducting the political tasks ceded to her contributed to an unexpected political success. Prime Minister David Cameron (2010-2016)<sup>2</sup> commented on Thatcher's political strides she did as a "Woman" in politics. He, joyously, claimed "at a time when it was difficult for a woman to become a Member of Parliament, almost inconceivable that one could lead the Conservative Party and, by her own reckoning, virtually impossible that a woman could become Prime Minister, she did all three".<sup>3</sup>

### **3.3.1. The General Election of 1979**

Margaret Thatcher did not emerge as Prime Minister overnight, but her deserved political breakthrough accomplished that year, was the outcome of voters' choice. In the parliamentary politics in England, the political party that scored the great number of votes and seats would be the victorious and the leading one in Parliament. The results of this election owed Thatcher a good reputation of a powerful woman who strived and reaped the fruits of her labour. Before the general election of May 1979, a motion to move the ruling Prime Minister, known as "A Vote of No Confidence"<sup>4</sup>, was held on March 28, 1979.<sup>5</sup>

After the failure of Callaghan's in the 1979 motion, a new government must be formed. It would be done so only if a general election would be held. In British politics, a general election did not take place only after the dissolution of parliament. To meet this

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<sup>1</sup> "Margaret Thatcher and Conservative Politics in England", [https://www.crf-usa.org/images/pdf/gates/Margaret\\_Thatcher.pdf](https://www.crf-usa.org/images/pdf/gates/Margaret_Thatcher.pdf) (Accessed November 23, 2020)

<sup>2</sup> David Cameron (born in 1966) was Prime Minister from May 2010 until July 2016. David led a Conservative and Liberal Democrat coalition government from 2010 until 2015 and continued as Prime Minister from May 2015 leading a Conservative government. He was elected the Conservative MP for Witney in West Oxfordshire in 2001. Before being elected as an MP, David worked for the Conservative Party Research Department. He then worked as a special adviser in government, first to the Chancellor of the Exchequer and then to the Home Secretary. "The Rt Hon David Cameron", GOV.UK <https://www.gov.uk/government/people/david-cameron> (Accessed May 6, 2022)

<sup>3</sup> Ben Griffin, "Thatcher and the Glass Ceiling", *History of Government Blog*, May 7, 2013 <https://history.blog.gov.uk/2013/05/07/thatcher-and-the-glass-ceiling/> (Accessed November 28, 2021)

<sup>4</sup> Ryan Fleming, "What if Callaghan Survived the 1979 Motion of No-Confidence?", *Never Was Blog*, December 19, 2021 <https://neverwasmag.com/2021/12/what-if-callaghan-survived-the-1979-motion-of-no-confidence/> (Accessed May 6, 2022)

<sup>5</sup> With the eruption of plenty of strikes against the government of Callaghan, a motion was urgently organized to know the parliamentary views whether still trusting the government of Callaghan or not. The results of the "the Vote of No-Confidence" showed that 311 of MPs declared that they "had no confidence" in the Labour government. 310 responded had confidence in the Labour government. Fleming, "What if Callaghan Survived the 1979 Motion of No-Confidence?"

end, parliament was dissolved on April 7, 1979 and a general election was called in May 1979 for the sake of electing the members of the House of Commons. In May 3, 1979, a general election was held in England. The British voters voted for Margaret Thatcher as Prime Minister and the leader of the Conservative Party (also called Tory Party). It was estimated that 13,697,923 voters voted for the success of the Conservative Party<sup>1</sup>. Margaret Thatcher won the election with a majority of 43 seats<sup>2</sup>.

The Conservative Party, under the leadership of Thatcher from 1975, realized a landslide victory over the competing Labour Party led by James Callaghan (1976-1979). Thatcher's predecessor, James Callaghan, described her victory as "tremendous moment"<sup>3</sup>. He stated "for a woman to occupy that office is a tremendous moment in the country's history". This election was also described as "the greatest election"<sup>4</sup> if compared to all the previous ones since it culminated in bringing a female icon like Thatcher to the political scene. In the first Conservative Party conference, she attended as Prime Minister on October 12, 1979, she delivered a speech<sup>5</sup> in Blackpool in which she was proud of herself to attain such a crowning achievement. She stated in her speech held in October 1979:

I am, as you may know, the first ... research chemist to hold this great position, The job you have given me is at once a supreme honour and the greatest possible challenge. Now, more than, ever, my responsibility is not only to the Party but to the nation..On Thursday, 3rd of May, we won a great victory. Yes, it was a victory for realism and responsibility. It was also a victory for conviction and commitment. And it was a victory for loyalty and dedication<sup>6</sup>

It is of paramount importance to note that voters, whether male or female, voted for "a woman" to be their leader because they desired change. The era from 1945-1979 was referred to "consensus"<sup>7</sup>. In the light of this political style, the all-male Prime

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<sup>1</sup> "1979 General Election Results Summary" <http://www.ukpolitical.info/1979.htm> (Accessed November 23, 2020)

<sup>2</sup> Roswitha Sieper, *The Students Companion to Britain : British History, Geography, Life , Institutions, Arts and Thought* (Paris: Ellipses, 1993), 111

<sup>3</sup> David Butler and Denis Kavanagh, "A Watershed Election?" in *The British General Election of 1979*, ed. David Butler and Denis Kavanagh (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1980), 336

<sup>4</sup> Sieper, 111.

<sup>5</sup> For more details about the whole speech, see **APPENDIX G, P274.**

<sup>6</sup> "Speech to Conservative Party Conference", Thatcher Archive: CCOPR 1059/79, October 12, 1979

<sup>7</sup> Daniel Ussishkin, "Moral and the Postwar Politics of Consensus," *Journal of British Studies* 52 (2013): 722



Ministers agreed on fixed political principles and actions<sup>1</sup> without any inclination to change. Moreover, her educational career proved attractive and admired<sup>2</sup>. Her education in Oxford played a focal role in her political breakthrough. The following table shows the results attained from the election of 1979 that marked a ground-breaking political breakthrough for the Conservative Party led by Margaret Thatcher.

**Table 3.1.: The 1979 General Election Results Summary**

	<b>Conservative Party</b>	<b>Labour Party</b>	<b>Liberal Democrats</b>
<b>Candidates</b>	516	516	506
<b>Votes (Millions)</b>	12.26	9.53	3.88
<b>Share of Vote (%)</b>	47.2	36.7	14.9
<b>Seats Won</b>	306	203	7

**Source:** Pilling and Cracknell, 20-21

The first female Prime Minister in Britain and the entire Europe succeeded in attracting a great number of voters who electorally supported her to enjoy the seeds of change. Before 1979, women were pro-conservative supporting the Conservative Party through their votes especially the older women who were ceaselessly opting for the victory of the Conservatives. In 1979, a great number of women, whether young, middle-aged or old, emerged as electoral supporters to Margaret Thatcher. In 1980's, younger women shifted their attention to the Labour Party in the light of Thatcherite hostility with trade unions.<sup>3</sup>

After an initial flirtation with Thatcherism, women trade unionists also shifted to the Labour Party at the end of the decade. In contrast, middle-aged women barely waned in their support for the Conservatives, while older women remained a bulwark of Tory support.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Those unchanged issues included political issues and concepts such as the mixed economy, the role of the trades unions, the need for an incomes policy and the nature of the provision of public services such as health and education. "03May 1979", *Politics 97*

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/special/politics97/background/pastelec/ge79.shtml> (Accessed November25,2021)

<sup>2</sup> . "03May 1979", *Politics 97*.

<sup>3</sup> Laura Beers, "Thatcher and the Women's Vote," in *Making Thatcher's Britain*, ed. Ben Jackson and Robert Saunders (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 113.

<sup>4</sup> Beers, 113

It was pointed out that without the bedrock of support that the majority of female voters offered to Thatcher, she could not have been a Prime Minister. She was electorally supported by “traditional female voters who could have felt alienated by her credentials as a career woman”<sup>1</sup>. Women outnumbered men in their electoral support to Thatcher. It was estimated that 48% of women voted Conservative.<sup>2</sup>

The reason behind the female voting support to Thatcher was twofold. Firstly, they wanted such a strong and devoted woman to be their leader in order to experience another form of government spiced with a woman’s personal thinking and decisions. Secondly, women supported Thatcher because they believed that a woman leader in parliament would prompt new incentives of the significance of the feminine gender in politics. The support of Thatcher was synonymous with the support of the feminine gender in politics.

Women voters were not the only ones to support, even men were ready to electorally support Thatcher since the Labour of Callaghan brought strife, setback and failure rather than guaranteeing good an unbearable circumstances in England “Callaghan was a nice man, but his government was shambolic in the views of the public who gave the Tories the majority.”<sup>3</sup>. During her election campaign when England was experiencing the mire of trade unions’ strikes, she promised to make an end to the domination of trade unions. Her promise contributed to a surge male-female electoral support during the ballot day in May 1979.<sup>4</sup>. Statistics showed that 45% of men and 48% of women opted for the electoral breakthrough of the Tories; they voted conservative.<sup>5</sup>

The election of 1979 remained a vital occasion that confirmed Thatcher’s electoral pinnacle. Without the electoral success she accomplished and, most importantly, without the electoral support of male and female voters desiring change, she would not have been taken the lead as Prime Minister. Her full political immersion did not halt with the end of

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<sup>1</sup> Sharon Maxwell Magnus, “One of Us: Margaret Thatcher, Women’s Magazines, and the Art of Wooing Women Voters” *Journal of Magazine Media* Vol20,n°1-2 (2019): 29

<sup>2</sup> Beers, “Thatcher and the Women’s Vote”, 113.

<sup>3</sup> Mark Pack, “[How Margaret Thatcher Really Won in 1979 – and Why It Isn’t a Role Model for a Corbyn-led Labour Party](https://www.markpack.org.uk/133777/lessons-jeremy-corbyn-1979-election/)”, November26, 2017 <https://www.markpack.org.uk/133777/lessons-jeremy-corbyn-1979-election/> (Accessed November 27,2021)

<sup>4</sup> Andy Beckett, “A Winter of Discontent Is Unlikely to Dissolve the Tories’ Support”, *The Guardian*, October1,2021 <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2021/oct/01/winter-discontent-tories-support-crisis> (Accessed Novemebr27,2021)

<sup>5</sup> Beers, “Thatcher and the Women’s Vote”, 113.

the election. The end of the election and the announcement of results in 1979 was the dawn of her political mission as PM.

### **3.3.2. Thatcher's Political Achievements in the "Men's House"**

As previously mentioned, the election of May 1979 was a milestone that prompted a huge change in the parliamentary politics when a woman was chosen by voters to be their Prime Minister. She introduced radical changes never performed in the pre-Thatcher era. Those were concerned especially with the economic side. She spiced her political administration with sweeping principles known as "Thatcherism".<sup>1</sup> By the same token, she was the first woman and the first Prime Minister in British history to serve as the victorious leader of the Conservative Party for three consecutive terms.

#### **3.3.2.1. Taking the Lead as Prime Minister (1979)**

First and foremost, general elections were held in England each five years for the sake of electing the members of the Commons from constituencies. The leader of the main three political parties in England with the greatest number of MPs in the House of Commons would become a Prime Minister. The latter is the highest governmental position in the British politics appointed by the monarch.

As a matter of fact, it was impossible to become Prime Minister unless he/ she had been already an MP and the most focal point is the leadership over a given political party. The political experience played a vital role for paving the way for an MP to set foot in "10 Downing Street"<sup>2</sup>. Thatcher, as an example, started to preside over the Conservative Party in 1975. Sometimes, no political party got the majority of seats. In this case a coalition of two leading political parties would be introduced.

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<sup>1</sup> Patrick Dunleavy, "The Lasting Achievement of Thatcherism as a Political Project Is That Britain Now Has Three Political Parties of the Right, Instead of One" in *The Legacy of Margaret Thatcher* (London: LSE Public Policy Group, 2013), 22

<sup>2</sup> 10 Downing Street in London in the city of Westminster is the place where the PM lives and conducts his/her political work. It started to be the residence for Prime Ministers in 1735. Number 10 has 3 overlapping functions. It is the official residence of the British Prime Minister: their office, and is also the place where the Prime Minister entertains guests from Her Majesty The Queen to presidents of the United States and other world leaders. It was called Downing Street referring to George Downing (1623-1684) who called the street where the official residence is taking place. "History of 10 Downing Street", *GOV UK* <https://www.gov.uk/government/history/10-downing-street> (Accessed December 28, 2021)

At the end of each general election, only one victorious political party emerged on the political scene. For this reason, there are a couple of political party types: the party in power also labeled the Government and the party out of power labeled as the opposition party.<sup>1</sup> The latter refers to the defeated one in an election and the one that had less votes than the victorious one. It is claimed that becoming a PM was a very difficult job that the leaders of the political parties had to fight for. Although it was a tough journey, Margaret Thatcher did it for the first time in the political history of Britain. Any PM was the representative of her Majesty's Elizabeth II (born 1926)<sup>2</sup> as the leader of government. Becoming PM was not an overnight process. It was preceded by a set of steps. The first step was his/ her selection as a candidate for the chosen political party. Furthermore, to become PM, the candidate must represent a constituency of voters.<sup>3</sup>

### **3.3.2.2. Prime Ministers' Political Tasks**

The journey of Prime Ministers' political management started the first day they set foot in 10 Downing Street after the announcement of general elections' results. The task of any PM was the formation of his/ her government. He / she was required to choose the members of his/her cabinet in which he/ she could fire them the time he/ she wanted.<sup>4</sup> Choosing the cabinet members was gradual. It was not accomplished in one day. It took them days to be very careful about who should be included in the cabinet.

As far as Margaret Thatcher was concerned, she was quick in the formation of her government. This proved her political readiness from the very beginning of her political

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<sup>1</sup> Nick Carter, "How to Become Prime Minister of United Kingdom", *SWAMP*, <https://vocal.media/theSwamp/how-to-become-prime-minister-of-the-united-kingdom> (Accessed Decmeber28,2021)

<sup>2</sup> Queen Elizabeth II of Great Britain was born in 1926 in London. She is the longest-reigning monarch in British history. She became Queen on February 6, 1952, and was crowned on June 2, 1953. Appointed colonel-in-chief of the Grenadier Guards by her father, Elizabeth made her first public appearance inspecting the troops in 1942. She also began to accompany her parents on official visits within Britain. "Queen Elizabeth II" *Biography*, April 2,2014, Last Updated February 23, 2022 <https://www.biography.com/royalty/queen-elizabeth-ii> (Accessed May15,2022)

<sup>3</sup> "How to Become Prime Minister", *Britpolitics*, <https://www.britpolitics.co.uk/how-to-become-prime-minister/> (Accessed December 28,2021)

<sup>4</sup> "Boris Johnson: What Does the Job of Prime Minister Actually Involve?", *BBC NEWS*, July23,2019 <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-politics-48497953> (Accessed May6,2022)

career as a PM.<sup>1</sup>The backbone the PM's political work was the cabinet. The latter refers to a group of senior ministers appointed by the PM in which he/ she was their leader. It served as a legislative body since making laws and decisions was the outcome of the PM's cooperation with his/her secretaries of state. The cabinet was described as "the ultimate arbiter of all government policy".<sup>2</sup>

The next important step which functioned as liaison between the elected PM and his minister was the beginning of a number of briefings to discuss the way the local affairs would be tackled on the one hand. On the other hand, to impose instructions on the ministers that demarcated their political responsibilities and the nature of the task granted to them plus which office they would stay. Sometimes, Prime Minister devoted his/ her time for such trivial matters such as where the ministers sit in which office chaired by whom.

The PM found himself/ herself busy devoting his/ her time for ministers' meetings, briefings, setting up decisions, visits to other countries meeting other leaders, meetings with the press, delivering speeches. Last but not least, the most important political task was the Prime Minister's Questions ( PMQ). Most importantly, the PM did not solely appoint the cabinet<sup>3</sup> ministers and they were free to do whatever they wanted. He/ she was responsible also for the management of the cabinet. It was claimed that in a discussion with her team, Margret Thatcher encountered some clashes and dissatisfaction. She did not wait for them to take solution. She acted solving the problem by her own.<sup>4</sup>

The role of the PM was to organize also and put forward the work of government departments. Each government department had its own head appointed by the PM. The number of ministers with whom the PM, Margaret Thatcher as an example, worked were labeled "secretaries of state"<sup>5</sup> or cabinet ministers. They included: The Chancellor of the

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<sup>1</sup> Catherine Haddon, "Becoming Prime Minister", Institute for Government, June 2019 , 03 <https://www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk/sites/default/files/publications/becoming-prime-minister-final.pdf> (Accessed December28,2021)

<sup>2</sup> "Cabinet", Institute for Government, <https://www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk/explainers/cabinet> (Accessed December28,2021)

<sup>3</sup> The cabinets of the other political parties are known as shadow cabinets. Mandy Barrow, "British Life and Culture", *Project Britain*, 2013 <http://projectbritain.com/government/primeminister.htm> (Accessed December28,2021)

<sup>4</sup> Haddon, 11

<sup>5</sup> Barrow.

Exchequer, The Foreign Secretary, The Home Secretary, The Lord Chancellor, and The Secretary for State for Education, The Secretary of State for Transport and the Environment.<sup>1</sup>

The way of decision making was dual. It could be done by the PM alone or it could be done during meetings with the PM's team to divide the workload. Moreover, one of the PM's essential political tasks was the total readiness to encounter crises whether social, political or economic crisis. In times, of crisis, the PM got the lion's share of preparations and staunch perseverance to overcome it.<sup>2</sup> Additionally, the PM was responsible for defense and security. In times of attack, he/ she must be ready to defend through a governmental reliance on the armed forces or the navy. The representation of the his/ her country at home and on the international level was one of the duties that rested on the PM's shoulders. Thatcher's policies as a Prime Minister were labeled as "Thatcherism".<sup>3</sup>

### **3.3.2.3. Thatcherism: General Overview**

During the years that preceded the political access of Thatcher as PM especially (1976-1979), the male Prime Ministers Harold Wilson and James Callaghan were politically experienced. Despite their political experience in the "Men's House", England witnessed political, social and economic chaos. Margaret Thatcher, as "inexperienced"<sup>4</sup> woman in politics, embarked on a process of radical changes especially in the economic field to better overcome the economic setbacks already undermining England's progress and triggering a number of strikes. "The poverty and divisive politics of the 1970s were all

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<sup>1</sup> Barrow.

<sup>2</sup> Haddon, 13

<sup>3</sup> The term "Thatcherism" was firstly coined by the Jamaican-born professor and the cultural theorist Stuart Hall (1932-2014) in January 1979 . He was working in the University of Birmingham's Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies . In his Seminal article published in the British journal *Marxism Today* , The term "Thatcherism" was firstly used . He wrote "Thatcherism was a project which aimed to transform the 'hearts and minds' of the electorate and to change the way we instinctively think about politics" . Peter Kerr, "Thatcherism: A Phrase Coined Here in Birmingham", University of Birmingham, [Department of Political Science and International Studies \(POLSIS\)](https://www.birmingham.ac.uk/research/perspective/thatcher-peter-kerr-2.aspx), 2021 <https://www.birmingham.ac.uk/research/perspective/thatcher-peter-kerr-2.aspx> (Accessed May6,2022)

<sup>4</sup> "Prime Ministers and Politics Timeline", *History* [https://www.bbc.co.uk/history/british/pm\\_and\\_pol\\_tl\\_01.shtml#top](https://www.bbc.co.uk/history/british/pm_and_pol_tl_01.shtml#top) (Accessed November26,2021)

around me. Britain was paralyzed for much of that decade with national strikes, power cuts (from the global oil crisis) and unrest.”<sup>1</sup>

Thatcher’s principles as a leader were labeled as “Thatcherism”<sup>2</sup>. This was a proof of the power of women in politics and their ability of “change”. Thatcher and her ruling doctrine Thatcherism came to declare the triviality of the imposed female exclusion from politics on the one hand. On the other hand, her premiership as Prime Minister was a response for those anti-feminists who stressed the role of women in the kitchen through the glorification of the traditional credo dictating the home as the “real” place for women.

Simply put, the concept of Thatcherism is considered as a “system”, a “style” and an “ideology”<sup>3</sup>. As a system, it is coincided with a series of methods applied in ruling. As a style, it refers to the personal choice of any governor to manage the arena in charge of the way he/ she wanted and through the path he/ she follows to reach his/ her governmental aims. Last but not least, as an ideology, it refers to Thatcher’s convictions. Any leader whatever the field he/ she is in charge of, has a set of ideas in mind. In this vein, Margaret Thatcher, due to her political experience in the conservative party before being a Prime Minister, had a set of political ideas.

Thatcherism encapsulates the variety of principles and policies the “Iron Lady” hinged on to politically, economically and socially managing England. It refers to “[t]he development and specificity of the emergent strategic line pursued by Thatcher and her various circles of political and ideological supporters”<sup>4</sup>. It is noteworthy that Thatcherism was not applied by the leader only, but even by everyone supporting her whether inside parliament or outside it. This illustrated the quick way she impacted on her supporters. Those who were born or grew up during her premiership were known as “Thatcher’s Children”<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Emma Wallis, “Opinion: We Are All 'Thatcher's Children' Now”, *Made for Minds*, April 19,2013 <https://www.dw.com/en/opinion-we-are-all-thatchers-children-now/a-16749402>(Accessed November26,2021)

<sup>2</sup> Wallis.

<sup>3</sup> Richard Heffernan, “Exploring Political Change: Thatcherism and the Remaking of The Labour Party 1979-1997,” Phd diss., (University of London,2014),1-7-35

<sup>4</sup> Bob Jessop, “Margaret Thatcher and Thatcherism: Dead but not Buried”, *International Politics*, *Palgrave Macmillan*, January05,2015 [www.palgrave-journals.com/bp/](http://www.palgrave-journals.com/bp/) (Accessed November23,2020)

<sup>5</sup> Beers, “Thatcher and the Women’s Vote”, 113.

Put simply, Thatcherism as a doctrine mirrored the moral values and the beliefs of the leader. She managed England the way she was taught and in the light of her convictions. Her personal convictions were not lonely relied on by her. All generations during her “long”<sup>2</sup> rule were affected by her ideology.

#### **3.3.2.4. Thatcher and the “Winter of Discontent”**

The presence of the feminine gender in parliament had been already fought and limited. Male Prime Ministers, before Thatcher, did their best to decrease the number of women in the House of Commons although privileging a “minority” of women. Thatcher climbing the ladder of politics as a leader “over men” portrayed the importance of the female gender in Politics.

Before the election of Thatcher as PM, England was highly unstable due to the eruption of strikes against the Labour government. The English people lived in anarchical circumstances in which they resorted to strikes as a shield to protect their rights. Under the umbrella of Thatcherism, she worked on radically altering the political and economic process. Emma Wallis, one those people undergoing the radical changes introduced by Margaret Thatcher and one of those English people who were waiting for Thatcher to cement enlightenment instead of darkness, in her article entitled “Opinion: We Are All 'Thatcher's Children' Now” (2013) wrote “I don't remember much of those years, but I do recall the excitement and fear that power cuts brought as we scabbled to the drawer where we kept candles and waited for the lights to come back on”<sup>3</sup>

Winning the election and appearing as a political trailblazer, Margaret Thatcher Started thriving to introduce her Thatcherite values. Dennis Cavannagh summarized the eight Thatcherite principles of Thatcherism. They included “minimal government, the importance of individual responsibility, a strong state to provide adequate defense and to

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<sup>1</sup> “Thatcher’s Children” is a nickname for the generation of people who grew up with Margaret Thatcher as a major political figure in the UK. Primarily heard in UK.. “Thatcher’s Children” , *The Free Dictionary*, Farlex (2003-2021) <https://idioms.thefreedictionary.com/Thatcher%27s+children> (Accessed November26,2021)

<sup>2</sup> Wallis

<sup>3</sup> Wallis.



uphold the rule of law, the promotion of a market economy, the moral rejection of high borrowing, and the pursuit of lower taxes and sound money”<sup>1</sup>.

The female leader of the Conservative Party believed in the free markets. She introduced the indirect governmental intervention in citizens’ lives. They had to be responsible for their own lives. She totally rejected the state’s ownership of industries. Thatcherism remained an umbrella term in which her policies are ingrained. To politically lead England, Thatcher was influenced by the Austrian-born British economist Friedrich Hayek (1899-1992)<sup>2</sup>. So, she vehemently advocated privatization and strongly approving free markets.

The principles of Thatcherism were not welcomed by all people in England, but at least she brought up “a change” she promised before being a leader. Thatcherism could be a double –edged sword. It could be a beneficial and useful ruling style, but it could be also a destructive method<sup>3</sup> negatively impacted on the well-being of people. Thatcherism increased the rates of poverty on the societal level. The poor people, already, relying on the governmental welfare state, found themselves living in extreme level of poverty under Thatcher. The golden principle of individuality glorified by Thatcher could not be enjoyed by the poor people without the state’s intervention. Furthermore, crushing the trade unions went in tandem with crushing the rights of the working-class. Not to mention, one of evils of Thatcherism was an increased employment. Austerity became one of the negative seeds of Thatcherism.<sup>4</sup>

Above all, despite the bitter seeds of Thatcherism, it remained an unforgettable ideology by a woman who promised “change” and she did. She taught people how to be real individuals, how to foster their own self-reliance and, most importantly, to live their

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<sup>1</sup>Martin Holmes, *Thatcherism Scope and Limits, 1983–87* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 1989),03

<sup>2</sup> Hayek advocates personal and economic freedom and believed that socialism would lead to the emergence of dictatorship. He resented socialism, the welfare state and the state’s control of economy. He strongly believed that any economy in the world has one problem which is how people got coordinated together. What eased their coordination was the free market. The market would evolve due t human actions. Thatcher was influenced by his written books such as *Prices and Production (1931)* and *The Road to Serfdom (1944)*. Donald J. Boudreaux, “The Essential Hayek”, Fraser Institute ,2014, 34  
<https://www.fraserinstitute.org/sites/default/files/essential-hayek.pdf> (Accessed May6,2022)

<sup>3</sup> Freya Cormack, “What So Bad about Thatcherism and Reaganomics?”, *Arc*  
<https://www.arc.unsw.edu.au/blitz/read/whats-so-bad-about-thatcherism-and-reaganomicsquestion-a-response-to-josh-frydenberg> (Accessed May7,2022)

<sup>4</sup> Cormack, “What So Bad about Thatcherism and Reaganomics?”.

own individuality. “Although the changes she made brought strife, anger and dissatisfaction for many across the UK and changed the way successive generations approached work, life and society.”<sup>1</sup>

As a woman, she came not just to rule, but to free the people of England from the straw that broke the camel’s back; from the unstable economic circumstances and strikes which led to the emergence of “Winter of Discontent”<sup>2</sup>. The latter (1978-1979) was triggered by “greedy”<sup>3</sup> trade unionists who desired wages’ increase. During the pre-Thatcher era, the male Prime Ministers failed to encounter the strikers and overcome the chaotic eras people in England experienced. As a leader in parliament, she worked hard to crush trade unions and curtail their power. She strived to “clip the wings of trade unions”<sup>4</sup>

Discontent came to an ultimate standstill and a new era of sweeping Thatcherite changes started only because the nature of leadership altered from “masculine” to “feminine” ; From James Callaghan to the “Iron Lady”. First of all, she cut the link between the working classes and politics. What added insult to the injury was that those strikers responsible for spreading anarchy in England were not only men, but even female trade unionists. They were in a powerful position to an extent they rebelled against government and they could even surmount the governmental reaction. Trade Unions at that time formed “over a half of the workforce”.<sup>5</sup>

Thatcher as a woman and a leader faced a dual domination of male and female domination. Thatcher’s political intervention coupled with her principles of Thatcherism prompted a death knell of the working-class power. The battle between the Labour government and trade unions would be a battle in which nobody won, but Thatcher emerged as a winner over the Labour government and over trade unions. Since men failed to win over the working classes, a woman succeeded in crushing their power and spoiled their domination. She referred to trade unions as “enemy”. She warned “We always have to

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<sup>1</sup> Wallis.

<sup>2</sup> Wallis.

<sup>3</sup> Sheila Rowbotham, “Forword” in Lopez, X

<sup>4</sup> Lopez,02.

<sup>5</sup> Tara Martin, “The Beginning of Labor’s End ? Britain’s: “Winter of Discontent” and Working-Class Women’s Activism” *International Labor and Working-Class History* Vol75 (2009):49  
[doi:10.1017/s0147547909000052](https://doi.org/10.1017/s0147547909000052)

be aware of the enemy within, which is much more difficult to fight and more dangerous to liberty”<sup>1</sup>

Margaret Thatcher embarked on introducing radical economic changes under the umbrella of “Thatcherism”. The latter became a defining flagship of her premiership. The economic principles, strongly advocated by Thatcher, pleased and angered people at the same time. This reflected a fact about any politician in parliament. Any policy or legislation introduced, it would meet duality of reactions. It would be either accepted or rejected. Thatcherism remained one of the “unforgettable” Thatcherite policies that introduced positive and negative changes. Thatcherism was not the lone political achievement for Thatcher. She had a lot to realize.

### **3.3.2.5. Thatcherite Victory in Falklands War (1982)**

In 1982, Margaret Thatcher was involved in war known as the Falklands War. It lasted 11 weeks<sup>2</sup>. It flared up because the British still-controlled Falklands Islands<sup>34</sup> were invaded by Argentina on April 2, 1982 after ousting the British governor to Uruguay. As a woman, she assumed her role as a leader to regain one of the British overseas possessions. The British presence in the Falklands Islands dated back to 1690 when the English Captain John Strong (1654-1693) firstly landed in the islands.<sup>5</sup> It made it impossible for them to

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<sup>1</sup> Adam Taylor, “Margaret Thatcher Fought One Huge Battle That Changed The UK Forever”, *Insider*, April 8, 2013 <https://www.businessinsider.com/thacher-versus-the-unions-2013-4?IR=T> (Accessed November 27, 2021 )

<sup>2</sup> John Blundell, *Margaret Thatcher: A Portrait of the Iron Lady* (New York: Algora Publishing, 2008), 114.

<sup>3</sup> The Falklands Islands also called Malvinas Islands. Group of Islands in Southern South America. Internally self-governing overseas territory of the United Kingdom in the South Atlantic Ocean. It lies about 300 miles (480 km) northeast of the southern tip of South America and a similar distance east of the Strait of Magellan. “Falklands Islands”, *Britannica* <https://www.britannica.com/place/Falkland-Islands> (Accessed May 7, 2022)

<sup>4</sup> The Falklands Islands were as the following: Gibraltar, Anguilla, Bermuda, British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands, Montserrat, Pitcairn Islands, Ascension, Saint Helena, Tristan da Cunha, South Georgia, the South Sandwich Islands and the Turks and Caicos Islands. Blundell, 113-114

<sup>5</sup> John Strong, British naval official, named the two main islands after Viscount Falkland. The name was later applied to the whole island group. The French navigator Louis-Antoine de Bougainville founded the islands’ first settlement, on East Falkland, in 1764, and he named the islands the Malovines. The British, in 1765, were the first to settle West Falkland, but they were driven off in 1770 by the Spanish, who had bought out the French settlement about 1767. The British outpost on West Falkland was restored in 1771 after threat of war, but then the British withdrew from the island in 1774 for reasons of economy, without renouncing their claim to the Falklands. After World War II the issue of sovereignty over the Falkland Islands shifted to the United Nations when, in 1964, the islands’ status was debated by the UN committee on decolonization. In 1965 the UN General Assembly approved a resolution inviting Britain and Argentina to hold discussions to find a peaceful solution to the dispute. These protracted discussions were still proceeding in February 1982,

easily allow another country to set foot in the islands or to forcibly capture them. Even the islanders considered themselves “British”<sup>1</sup>. Although it was a destructive war, but victory was the final result for Britain under Thatcher. Britain lost two warships, 250 casualties and financial loss of 3£ billion.<sup>2</sup>

To strengthen the political readiness for regaining the Falklands Islands, she founded a “War Cabinet”<sup>3</sup> composed of a number of male ministers and her. They devoted their time not to discuss local affairs, but every single detail about the war and the way they must achieve victory. The establishment of a war cabinet revealed Thatcher’s efforts to exhibit her political capability to encounter male forceful intervention in the Falklands. The war was the story of a woman against a bulk of men. She gave orders and the men only fulfilled those orders.

Thatcher’s political tactics, the support of the Labour Party plus the American<sup>4</sup> military support to defeat the Argentineans and regain the Falkland Islands were fruitful. She ordered a submarine to sink the Argentinean battleship known as Bulgrano<sup>5</sup>. It was estimated that by June , 10.000<sup>6</sup> Argentineans surrendered being unable to overcome the iron resistance of the “Iron Lady” to regain one of the focal remnants of the British Empire.

Margaret Thatcher , after her victory over the Argentineans, owed a good reputation as a strong woman. She inhibited not only the feminine role as a leader, but she exhibited a masculine role also through rebelling bravely against the male Argentineans. The military victory was synonymous with the political victory of Thatcher in the light of her first intervention in a war since her political recruitment as Prime Minister in 1979. “She was aware of the immense political value of success. She understood that intangibles such as

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but on April 2 Argentina’s military government invaded the Falklands. “History of the Falklands Islands”, *Britannica* <https://www.britannica.com/place/Falkland-Islands/History> (Accessed May7,2022)

<sup>1</sup> Blundell,114 .

<sup>2</sup> Sieper,112.

<sup>3</sup> Blundell,116.

<sup>4</sup> The American president who supported Thatcher was Ronald Reagan (1911-2004). He served as a president from (1981-1989). “Ronald Reagan”, *History*, November9,2009, Last Updated January7,2022 <https://www.history.com/topics/us-presidents/ronald-reagan> (Accessed May15,2022)

<sup>5</sup> R.G Grant, Ann Kay, Michael Kerrigan, and Phillip Parker, *History of the Definitive Visual Guide Britain and Ireland* (New York: DK Publishing, 2011), 384.

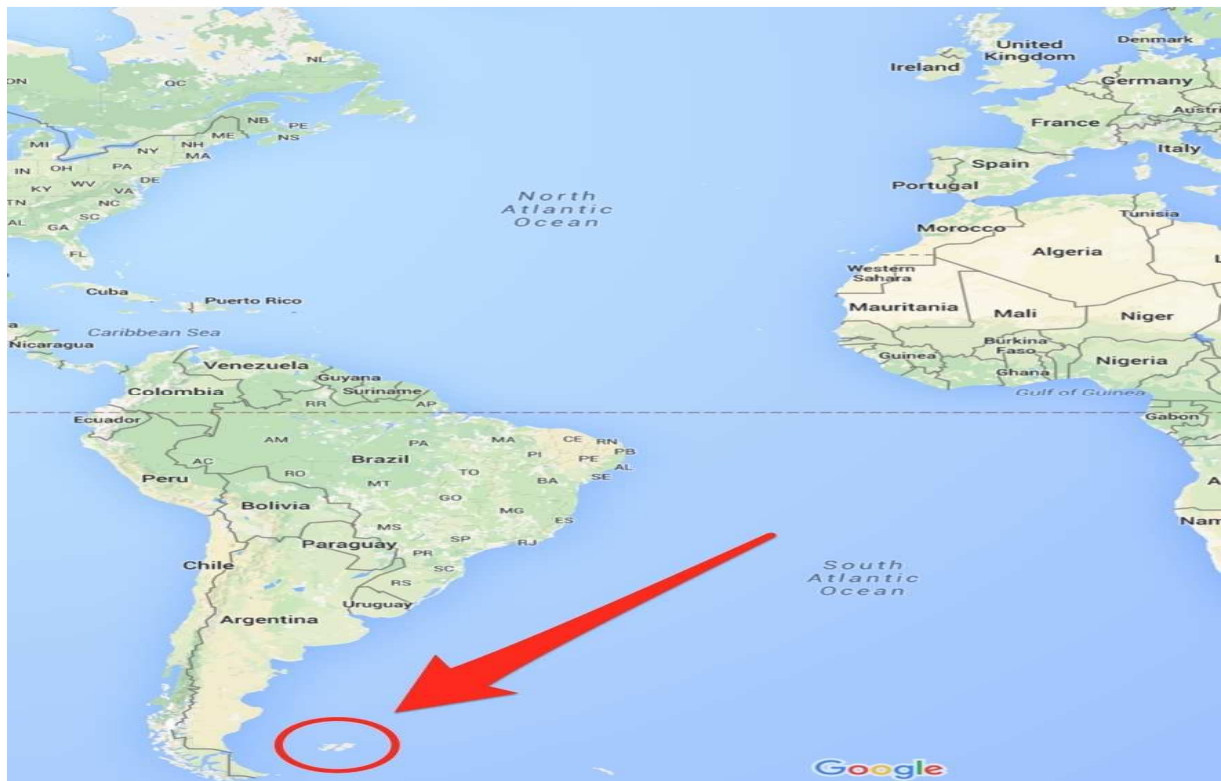
<sup>6</sup> Grant, Kay, Kerrigan and Parker, 384.

‘freedom’ and ‘patriotism ‘are more politically charged than desiccated calculations”<sup>1</sup>. The map below shows the geographical position of the British-controlled Falklands Islands. As it is shown in the map, The Falklands Islands were isolated in Southern South America.

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<sup>1</sup> Eric.J.Evans, *Thatcher and Thatcherism* 2<sup>nd</sup> ed (New York: Routledge,1997),101.

**Map 3.1.:** The Location of Falkland Islands



**Source:** The Falklands Islands <http://www.fidc.co.fk/about-us/facts-on-the-falkland-islands> (Accessed November 27, 2021)

The Falklands War was an anarchical phase that portrayed the effectiveness of Thatcher's political and military tactics to regain one of the British possessions. As a woman, she won over millions of Argentinean men. Gender, in this case, was not a criterion upon which to exclude women from politics. On the contrary, The British military victory over the Argentineans might not be possible without the brave intervention of a woman politician. Thatcher's victory in the Falklands War in 1982 maximized her political breakthrough through the good reputation she owed. This opened new horizon for repeated electoral victories in the coming general elections in England.

### **3.3.2.6. The First Woman Winning Three Consecutive Terms**

Margaret Thatcher led the Conservative Party to a couple of victories in the General Election of 1983 and again in 1987. She was the only Prime Minister that accomplished a deserved victory of her party successively in 1979, 1983 and 1987. Her political

government was divided into three phases. The first one from (1979-1983), the second one from (1983-1987), and the third one extending from (1987-1990).

### 3.3.2.6.1. The General Election of 1983

Margaret Thatcher was re-elected again in 1983 as Prime Minister for the second Term. The British public again electorally supported her since the seeds of Thatcherism contributed to a flowering period in England. The threat of trade unions already started to be thwarted during her first term (1979-1983). The bulk of knowledge about the female leader stated that Margaret Thatcher was unpopular in her early career as Prime Minister, but leading Britain to victory in the Falklands War in 1982 made her a famous political celebrity.<sup>1</sup>

Thatcherite heroic defeat of the Argentineans increased the numbers of voters and introduced a surge in the bedrock of the electoral support from male and female voters. The opinion polls had increased to 15%<sup>2</sup> as a reward for Thatcher's defeat of the Argentineans. "The 1983 General election followed the outbreak of the Falkland War in 1982. Elections which occur after a war can be more unpredictable than usual as they tend to favour the leader in charge with a healthy dose of patriotic appreciation".<sup>3</sup>

By the same token, the ballot manifesto for the 1983 Election had a positive impact on the fruitful results fulfilled by the Conservatives. The manifesto stated "defence, Employment and Economic Prosperity".<sup>4</sup> Margaret Thatcher stated in her manifesto

In the last four years, Britain has recovered her confidence and self-respect. We have regained the regard and admiration of other nations. We are seen today as a people with integrity, resolve and the will to succeed. This Manifesto describes the achievements of four years of Conservative government and sets out our plans for our second term. The choice before the nation is stark: either to continue our present steadfast progress towards recovery, or to follow policies more extreme and more damaging than those ever put forward by any previous Opposition. We face three challenges: the defence of our country, the employment of our people, and the prosperity of our economy.....<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "Case Study: 1983 Election", *Study Rocket*, BBC News Archive <https://studyrrocket.co.uk/revision/a-level-politics-edexcel/uk-politics/case-study-1-1983-election> (Accessed November27,2021)

<sup>2</sup> David Sanders, Hugh Ward, and David Marsh, "Government Popularity and Falklands War: A Reassessment" *British Journal of Political Science* Vol17,n°03 (1987):281

<sup>3</sup> "Mrs Thatcher Was Elected for a Second Term: The 1983 Landslide Victory", *UK Politics Essays*, National Library of Scotland <https://digital.nls.uk/1980s/uk-politics/thatcher-term-2/> (Accessed November27,2021)

<sup>4</sup> "Case Study: 1983 Election", *Study Rocket*, BBC News Archive.

<sup>5</sup> "1983 Conservative Party General Election Manifesto", *Political News CO.UK*, 2001 <http://www.conservativemanifesto.com/1983/1983-conservative-manifesto.shtml>(Accessed November27,2021)

The 1983 General Election was held on Thursday, June 9, 1983 when the Conservative Party scored a landslide victory again for the second time when the Labourites, under Michael Foot (1913-2010)<sup>1</sup> were defeated from over again. The following table shows the election results.

**Table 3.2. The 1983 General Election Results Summary**

	<b>Conservative Party</b>	<b>Labour Party</b>	<b>Liberal Democrats</b>
<b>Candidates</b>	523	523	523
<b>Votes (Millions)</b>	11.71	6.86	6.71
<b>Share of Vote (%)</b>	46	26.9	26.4
<b>Seats Won</b>	362	148	13

**Source:** Pilling and Cracknell, 20-21

For the second time, Thatcher could not accomplish such a crowning achievement in 1983 without the female electoral support. Although Thatcher did not support the female political participation and she did not work on rewarding tweaks for women, women kept electorally supporting her. 46%<sup>2</sup> of women and 45 %<sup>3</sup> of men voted for the success of the Conservative Party. The latter represented 42% of the entire electors<sup>4</sup>. To come to the nub of the matter, the increased female support for Thatcher more than the male support dictated the male reluctance to support a woman leader in the male-dominated parliamentary world. The majority of women supporting Thatcher were women ageing 25-50. The younger ones ageing 18-24 grew pro-Labour after 1983.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Michael Foot served as the leader of the Labour Party from November 1980 to October 1983. "Michael Foot: British Politician", The Editors of Encyclopedia Britannica <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Michael-Foot> (Accessed November 27, 2021)

<sup>2</sup> David Butler and Dennis Kavanagh, *The British General Election of 1983* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984), 296

<sup>3</sup> G.E. Maguire, *Conservative Women*, 194

<sup>4</sup> Butler and Kavanagh, *The British General Election of 1983*, 296

<sup>5</sup> Pippa Norris, 'Gender: A Gender-Generation Gap?', in *Critical Elections: British Parties and Voters in Long-Term Perspective*, ed. Geoffrey Evans and Pippa Norris (London: SAGE, 1999), 148-63.



Being electorally successful again in 1983, her second administration was a tiring one in the light of the economic instability on the one hand. On the other hand, the rising threat of trade unions needed to come to a standstill whatever her political tactics. The complete downfall of trade unions reached its fullest in 1984-1985 when the Miners' Strike was a total fiasco under a female political intervention. Although a woman, she succeeded in crushing the male opponents whatever the reason and whatever the nature or opposition and protest. Her gender as "feminine" was never a hindrance to be overestimated and valued.

### **3.3.2.6.2. The Omnipotence of Thatcher in The Miners' Strike (1984-1985)**

It is important to note that 1984 miners' strike was not the first one in England, but the first strike defeated by a woman leader in the British history. Before 1984, two strikers took place in 1972 and 1974. In 1972, the miners went on a strike as an outcry against Edward Heath (1970-1974) who rejected increasing wages for the miner workers. Miners complained that it was not fair to earn a salary less than other male workers in other fields. "In January 1971, it was reported that the average weekly wage for a man in a full-time manual labour role was £28.11. By comparison, the highest weekly wage available for a miner in November of 1971 was considerably lower, at £23.50."<sup>1</sup>

As a man, he failed to absorb the increased authority of the strikers in 1972. Moreover, in 1974 another strike flared up during premiership of the same leader Edward Heath. The reason was the same. Coal miners and railway workers demanded increasing their wages otherwise they would break order and stability in England. Miner workers and trade unions posed a great local threat for England's stability. For the second time, Edward Heath failed to defeat the strikers and express the governmental omnipotence against his people. He called for a snap-election<sup>2</sup> in an attempt to gain public support against the miners.

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<sup>1</sup> Emily Ingram, "The 1972 Miners' Strike at 50", *Tribune*, January 9, 2022  
<https://tribunemag.co.uk/2022/01/1972-miners-strike-num-industrial-action-edward-heath> (Accessed May 7, 2022)

In 1984, strikers attempted to re-express their authority on the government, but the “Iron Lady” was ready to act against them as their “own nemesis”<sup>1</sup>. What worsened matters in 1984 was that the female “Iron Lady” felt that her authority as a ruler started to be spoiled when miners went beyond the content of 1982 Employment Act. It was an act that encapsulated several measures about trade unions. One of its main points made “sympathy strikes” illegal.<sup>2</sup> This Act provided the real criteria of “a lawful strike”. The latter has to be between workers and their employers, but it became unlawful if the onslaught was expressed towards government.<sup>3</sup>

At the very beginning of her rule, Margaret Thatcher embarked on a process of crushing trade unions whose increased number led to their overlap with the political machinery. Trade unions had not another way to express their wrath and revolt against governmental decisions only through the resort to strikes. The miners’ Strike, led by Arthur Scargill (born in 1938)<sup>4</sup> in England marked a watershed in the history of trade unions when male strikers were enormously defeated by a Thatcher.

In any corner of the world, any strike was and is triggered by a reason that strengthen strikers to echo their voice for change or as a way to say “No”. In this case, the strike is considered as “a weapon” persuading someone or a group of people to accept one’s demands based on their dissatisfaction. Add to this, any strike requires two conflicting groups: one against another. The Strike of 1984 against Thatcher’s government was an opportunity for miners to amplify their voice saying no for the closure of their coal pits.

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<sup>1</sup> “How Thatcher Broke the Miners’ Strike but at What Cost?”, *History*  
<https://www.history.co.uk/article/how-thatcher-broke-the-miners-strike-but-at-what-cost> (Accessed May7,2022)

<sup>2</sup> Charles More, *Britain in the Twentieth Century* (Great Britain: British Library Cataloging in Publication Data, 2007),186

<sup>3</sup> Kim Changhyun, “Thatcherism: Thatcher’s Policies”, October2005  
<https://www.zum.de/whkmla/sp/changhyun/ThatcherPolicies4.html> (Accessed November28,2021)

<sup>4</sup> Arthur Scargill (1938-) was a trade unionist. He became the President of the National Union of Mineworkers in 1982, and a member of the General Council of the Trades Union Congress. He is remembered for his strong defense of British coal mines in an era of decline and closure. This brought him into conflict with Margaret Thatcher's government, and led to the Miners' Strike of 1984-85. “Arthur Scargill”, National Portrait Gallery <https://www.npg.org.uk/collections/search/person/mp05736/arthur-scargill> (Accessed May15,2022)

Margaret Thatcher acted in a way that triggered the fury of the strikers. Several coal pits had to be closed since coal became an “unprofitable”<sup>1</sup> and “uneconomic industry”.<sup>2</sup> She privatized the already state-owned industries and ceded them to private ownership. Statistics showed that Thatcher ordered for the closure of 20 collieries to decrease the governmental spending on an unprofitable coal industry. The closure of 20 coal pits meant the loss of 20.000 jobs.<sup>3</sup>

Strikers strengthened their protest through relying on the organization of National Union of Mineworkers (NUM)<sup>4</sup>. The government was represented by its own organization National Coal Board (NCB) against the NUM. The NCB was established in 1947 after the nationalization of coal industry in 1946. The strike lasted 362 days<sup>5</sup> from March 5, 1984 to March 3, 1985. This lengthy period was overshadowed by a “physical” confrontation from government and strikers. Margaret Thatcher was supported by the police to overcome the perilous intervention picket lines.

The government mobilized the police in a highly coordinated military-style offensive against the miners, designed to isolate the Nottinghamshire area and break picket lines elsewhere, for example using mounted police with truncheons to charge down pickets at Orgreave. They occupied mining villages, arrested 11,312 people and tried 5,653 in the courts for alleged offences (most of them miners)<sup>6</sup>

Thatcher, not only crushed the strikers, but uttered a farewell to the power of trade unions. The Welsh Labour Party MP Kim Scott Howells (1989-2010), stated “The miners defeat knocked the guts out of the trade union movement”<sup>7</sup>. Thus, the governmental reaction to the strike was twofold. It was economic and political. The economic reaction had to do with the necessity to urgently defeat the miners since they were of part of trade

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<sup>1</sup> Jones Nerys Anwen , “ Coal Was Our Life,” Phd Diss., (The Open University, 1997), 66 <http://dx.doi.org/doi:10.21954/ou.ro.0000d49a>

<sup>2</sup> Malcolm Pearce and Geoffrey Stewart, *British Political History 1867-1990*(New York: Routedledge,1992),533

<sup>3</sup> “Miners’ Strike 1984-1985” , *Archive Hub* <https://archiveshub.jisc.ac.uk/features/mar04.shtml> (Accessed November4,2021)

<sup>4</sup> It was firstly established in 1889 under the name of Miners Federation of Great Britain (MFGB). Its name was altered to National Union for of Mineworkers in 1945. “Miners Federation of Great Britain”

<https://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/details/c/F144331> (Accessed June19,2022)

<sup>5</sup> Pearce and Stewart, 533

<sup>6</sup> Ralph Darlington, “There Is No Alternative: Exploring the Options in the 1984-5 Miners' Strike” *Capital & Class* Vol29, n°03( 2005):71

<sup>7</sup> Pearce and Stewart, 534

unionism that Thatcher vehemently resented. As a political reaction, it was a chance that proved the effectiveness of the “female “political tactics. “There was a kind of duality in the Government's treatment of the Strike - both treating it as an economic dispute which Scargill was illegitimately politicizing and playing it politically (not just in terms of the tactics used but, for example, Thatcher's denunciation of the miners as 'the Enemy within’<sup>1</sup>. Her political triumphant achievements and her ability to overcome plenty of threats to the national security and stability contributed for her third slide victory in the general election of 1987.

### **3.3.2.6.3. Margaret Thatcher Surmounting the Wapping Strike (1986-1987)**

The Wapping<sup>2</sup> Dispute or the Print Workers Strike took place on January 24, 1986 during the premiership of Thatcher as Prime Minister. It was another victory for Thatcher alongside her victory over the miners in 1985. A dispute never started from scratch, but there is always a trigger reason that instigates this dispute between two persons or group of people.

It was organized by print workers in London in 1986 and it was a dispute between print workers themselves. With technological advancement and the resort to computers, journalists started to input copies of newspapers directly without relying on print union workers to print through the traditional and time-consuming technique of “hot-metal”<sup>34</sup>. This meant that print union workers would cease working and would be dismissed. The one responsible for the outbreak of this strike was Rupert Murdoch (born in 1931).<sup>5</sup> Relying on advanced methods of printing, he started producing and printing in secret and

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<sup>1</sup> Jacqueline Ellen Briggs, “The 1984/5 Miners’ Strike: The Politicizing Effects?,” Phd Diss., (University of York: Department of Politics, 1995), 330

<sup>2</sup> Wapping is a district in Eastern London. “Wapping” <https://hidden-london.com/gazetteer/wapping/> (accessed June 19, 2022)

<sup>3</sup> Nicola Cutcher, “Wapping Strike Story”, *Special Branch Files Project*, January 12, 2016 <http://specialbranchfiles.uk/wapping-strike-story/> (Accessed November 28, 2021)

<sup>4</sup> Hot Metal is a typesetting technique in which type is newly made each time from molten metal, cast by a composing machine. “Hot metal”, *UK Dictionary* [https://www.lexico.com/definition/hot\\_metal](https://www.lexico.com/definition/hot_metal) (Accessed November 28, 2021)

<sup>5</sup> He was an Australian journalist owning four British national newspapers: *The Sun*, *News of the World*, *The Times* and *The Sunday Times*. Annie Brown, “Wapping Dispute 30 Years On: How Murdoch and Thatcher United to Crush British Workers”, *Daily Record*, October 2, 2016 <https://www.dailyrecord.co.uk/news/uk-world-news/wapping-big-read-8949504> (Accessed November 28, 2021)

equipped machinery in Eastern London rather than the previous printing place locating in Fleet Street in London.

As a reaction from the dismissed print workers, the 6000<sup>1</sup> print union workers, losing their jobs, went for a national strike. A series of demonstrations and pickets started to threaten the local stability in England. Margaret Thatcher found herself in front of other pickets who stood to ask for their rights and demanding the regain of their jobs from Murdoch who dismissed them. Since Thatcher vehemently hated trade unions and trade unionists, she supported Murdoch against them and she was victorious. Like the way the miners were defeated, the print workers were harshly<sup>2</sup> defeated by the police in an order from Thatcher.

The seminal print worker's dispute of the mid-80s, along with the miner's strike, were two of the biggest victory's for Thatcher's anti-union ideological war..... To disempower the union movement, Thatcher focused on destroying their twin pillars – the miners and the print workers. As in the defeat of the miners, Thatcher saw Wapping not as a dispute between employer and employee but a battle between the state and the unions.<sup>3</sup>

After one year, the police-print workers confrontations, the print workers lost hope and they grew exhausted. It was estimated that 1262 strikers were jailed and 410 police wounded.<sup>4</sup> The Wapping Strike was one of the focal defeats in the history of trade unionism in England. The dispute ended in February 1987. In fine, it was a conflict between an employer and his employees, but Thatcher as a leader intervened to quench her thirst for undermining the power of trade unions and she successfully did.

#### **3.3.2.6.4. The General Election of 1987**

As already noted, the dissolution of parliament after each 5 years and the re-election of its members was an occasion when political parties competed and did their best during their electoral campaigns to attract more voters to offer a bedrock of support. After the

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<sup>1</sup> Cutcher.

<sup>2</sup> Brown.

<sup>3</sup> Brown.

<sup>4</sup> Jon Henley, "Rupert Murdoch and the Battle of Wapping: 25 years on", *The Guardian*, July 27, 2011 <https://www.theguardian.com/media/2011/jul/27/rupert-murdoch-wapping-25-years> (Accessed November 28, 2021)

parliamentary dissolution on May 18, 1987 another general election was held on June 11, 1987, and it was a political breakthrough for the Conservative Party under Thatcher for the third time.

By the same token, it was the third downfall of the Labour Party under the leadership of Neil Kinnock (born in 1942)<sup>1</sup>. The following table shows the results of the election that confirmed the victory of the Conservatives over the Labour and the Liberal Democrats.

**Table 3.3. The 1987 General Election Results Summary**

	<b>Conservative Party</b>	<b>Labour Party</b>	<b>Liberal Democrats</b>
<b>Candidates</b>	523	523	523
<b>Votes (Millions)</b>	12.55	8.01	6.47
<b>Share of Vote (%)</b>	46.2	29.5	23.8
<b>Seats Won</b>	358	155	10

**Source:** Pilling and Cracknell, 20-21

The female humdinger's defeat of the Miners in the miners' Strike (1984-1985) and her victory in the Wapping Dispute (1985-1986) increased the possibilities to be re-elected for the third time and above all gained more national popularity as "a tough and resolute leader"<sup>2</sup>. The British people supported such impressive and brave persona to double her political, economic incentives. Her successive victories against the strikers arouse in her a great self confidence and she was certain that would be re-elected. She stated "I could go on and on and on"<sup>3</sup>. Her over-confidence instigated her male opponents' criticism. They

<sup>1</sup> Neil Kinnock led the Labour Party from 1980-1992. "Neil Kinnock: British Politician" <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Neil-Kinnock-Baron-Kinnock-of-Bedwellty> (Accessed November 28, 2021)

<sup>2</sup> Margaret Scammel, "Towards the Permanent Campaign: the 1987 Election" in *Designer Politics: How Elections Are won*, ed. Margaret Scammel (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1995), 118.

<sup>3</sup> Ramesh Chandran, "Margaret Thatcher Well on Course to Spearhead the Tories to Record Third Successive Term", *India Today*, June 15, 1987 <https://www.indiatoday.in/magazine/international/story/19870615-margaret-thatcher-well-on-course-to-spearhead-the-tories-to-record-third-successive-term-798932-1987-06-15> (Accessed November 28, 2021)

referred to her as “authoritarian” and Liberal leader David Steel (1952-2021) called her “Mama Doc”<sup>1</sup>

Concurrently, accomplishing such political success for the third time was always coincided with the electoral support especially of women. In this election, men and women were equal in their electoral support to Thatcher. 44% of men and 44%<sup>2</sup> of women voted for the victory of Thatcher. What overshadowed the female support to Thatcher in the election of 1987 was that young women did not support her this time. They shifted their attention to the Labour Party. Their support to the Labour Party stemmed from Thatcher’s continued hostility to the promotion of employments advancement of women instead her continued promotion of the female part-time work.<sup>3</sup>

The nature of whether liking or disliking Margaret Thatcher was guaranteed in the light of the male –female co-existence in parliament. The members of the victorious Conservative Party and the Opposition the Labour Party in addition to other parties set foot together in the same parliamentary ground. The male ministers, under Thatcher, found themselves under the parliamentary control of a woman. Altering the leader from being a man into a woman introduced a turning point in the history of gender relations in parliament in general and Thatcher’s cabinet in particular.

### **3.4. Gender Roles and Gender Relations during Thatcher’s Years**

The Election of a woman as the first Prime Minister prompted a change in gender roles and the nature of gender interaction in parliamentary politics. Since the pre-Thatcher male Prime Ministers did their best to increase the number of women MPs from one election into another, despite the continued gender discrimination, Thatcher worked on minimizing the number of women MPs. As far as her relation with the male and female ministers in her cabinet, she garnered the status of being more inclined to political domination.

#### **3.4.1. Margaret Thatcher as a “Queen Bee”**

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<sup>1</sup> Chandran.

<sup>2</sup> G.E.Maguire, *Conservative Women*, 194.

<sup>3</sup> Beers, “Thatcher and Women’s Vote”, 116.

The “Iron Lady” represented the female political zenith as PM, but what seemed paradoxical was her total rejection to welcome more women in parliament. The cabinet she formed was an all-male one giving no chance to women to be cabinet ministers during her 11 years term. She was described as “tough” and “no feminist”<sup>1</sup>. During her premiership (1979-1990), no more political extensions were offered to women. Her onslaught on women and women issues in parliament was dual. She neither appointed a great number women in parliament nor supported women’s issues parliament. Thus, she paid scant attention to women policies and rarely<sup>2</sup> advocating pro-female legislations.

Thatcher was a disappointment to many other women. She was no feminist and indeed once said that feminism was poison. Since she saw no reason to see women as a separate entity to men, she did not pursue women-friendly policies, for example, in regard to childcare, nursery provision or equal pay<sup>3</sup>

During Thatcher’s 11 years in office, women represented small percentages of the whole parliamentary membership in the House of Commons.<sup>4</sup> She appointed few women into the House of Lords.<sup>5</sup> Janet Mary Young (1926-2002)<sup>6</sup> was appointed by Thatcher to an important political position as the first female leader of the House of Lords (1981 to 1983). Young was described as “the “Iron Lady” of the Lords”<sup>7</sup> However the political integration of Janet, under Thatcher, did not last long. Janet Young was appointed by Thatcher because they were friends and Thatcher was certain that Young was a politically-

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<sup>1</sup> June Purvis, “What Was Margaret Thatcher’s Legacy for Women?” *Women’s History Review* Vol 22,n°06 (2013): 1014

<sup>2</sup> Ian Evans, “Thatcher, Britain’s First Female PM, Leaves a Mixed Legacy on Women”, *The Christian Science Monitor*, April 12, 2013 <https://www.csmonitor.com/World/Europe/2013/0412/Thatcher-Britain-s-first-female-PM-leaves-a-mixed-legacy-on-women> (Accessed December 11, 2021)

<sup>3</sup> Purvis, “What Was Margaret Thatcher’s Legacy for Women?”, 1016

<sup>4</sup> For more details about all women MPs in the House of Commons during Thatcher’s years, see **APPENDIX E, P 269**.

<sup>5</sup> For more details about all women Peeresses in the House of Lords during Thatcher’s tenure, see **APPENDIX E, P 269**.

<sup>6</sup> Janet Young did not hold only the position of leader of the House of Lords. But she held several political positions before being the first woman leader of the Upper House. She served as Member, House of Lords (1972-1973), Under-Secretary of State in the Department of Environment (1973-1974), Minister of State in the Department of Education and Science (1979-1981), A member in charge of Civil Service Department (1981-1983), The first woman leader of the House of Lords (1982-1983) and a Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office (1983-1987). “Janet Mary Young”, *Prabook* <https://prabook.com/web/janet.young/958406> (Accessed May 15, 2022)

<sup>7</sup> “Baroness Young of Farnworth: Obituary”, *BBC News*, September 6, 2002 [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk\\_news/politics/2241555.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/politics/2241555.stm) (Accessed December 11, 2021)



experienced woman and deserved to hold such important political position. As a result, she was granted a very high ministerial position as the leader of the Upper House in parliament. Thatcher stated “Janet Young was not only a good friend, but she was one of the most courageous and effective woman politicians of her generation”<sup>1</sup>

In this vein, it was argued that Margaret Thatcher enjoyed being surrounded by men rather than women in her cabinet because she glorified the traditional family values.<sup>2</sup> Thatcher did her best to keep from parliament “a male company”.<sup>3</sup> This does not mean that Janet Young was the only woman in parliament. Three General Elections of 1979, 1983 and 1987 resulted in the emergence of numerous women MPs in the House of Commons. There were 11 women elected for the Labour Party and 8 women for the Conservative Party.<sup>4</sup> The General Election of 1983 resulted in the election of 10 women for the Labour Party, 13 women for the Conservative Party.<sup>5</sup> In the cabinet, only those ministers advising and working with Prime Minister were involved. By the same token, in the general election of 1987, 21 Labour women were elected, 17 Conservatives and 01 woman for the Liberal Democrats.<sup>6</sup>

It was pointed out that as a woman, Margaret Thatcher was tremendously expected to empower women and increase their number in her cabinet. She was also expected to promote women’s political integration through offering abundant opportunities for other women to forestall the threat of gender discrimination in parliament, but in vain. Women in England got betrayed. Since a woman, sharing the same gender, hampered their way for political parity, the blame would never be placed on male Prime Ministers who, already depriving women, from gender political equality. The British feminist writer Beatrix Campbell (born 1947), stated that “[Beatrix Campbell] was very disappointed that she took an active and robust disengagement from British women, despite the struggle and

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<sup>1</sup> “Lady Young Dies, Aged 75”, *The Guardian*, September 06, 2002

<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2002/sep/06/obituaries.uk> (Accessed December 25, 2021)

<sup>2</sup> Purvis, “What Was Margaret Thatcher’s Legacy for Women?”, 1016

<sup>3</sup> Prestidge Jessica Dawn, “Margaret Thatcher’s Politics: The Cultural and Ideological Forces of Domestic Femininity,” Phd Diss., (Durham University, 2017), 139.

<sup>4</sup> Cassie Barton, Lukas Audickas, Richard Cracknell and Richard Tunnicliffe, “ Social Background of MPs, 1979-2019), House of Commons Library Number CBP 7483, February 15, 2022

<sup>5</sup> Judith Squires, “ Gender Quotas in Britain: A Fast Track to Equality”, Seminar on “Quotas for Women Worldwide – a Fast Track to Equality and Empowerment?”, Stockholm University, Monday, December 8, 2003), 07

<sup>6</sup> Squires, 07

suffrage without which she would not have even had a vote, let alone become an MP and Prime Minister.”<sup>1</sup>

Another woman, who was an American author and historian interested in the British politics, Laura Beers explained that Thatcher clearly expressed her resentment to feminism although she was a woman. She wrote “the former Prime Minister was hostile to feminism”<sup>2</sup>. She spiced her political mission with an enormous inclination to support more men to parliament rather than women. As a leader, she was described as “an elitist” rather than “egalitarian”<sup>3</sup>.

Any leader whatever his/her principles should be an egalitarian ruler through equalizing opportunities of political immersion and maximizing the chances that would pave the way for rights’ enjoyment. It is important to mention that Thatcher not only hampered women’s political participation, but above all she did her best to deprive women from electoral success through her refusal to include more women in the electoral short-lists before the general elections.<sup>4</sup>

For the General Election of June 9, 1983, Thatcher selected 40 women candidates only for the Conservative Party. From those 40 female candidates, 13 women MPs were elected representing 03% of the whole parliamentary membership. It was a very tiny percentage if compared to the number of female candidates and MPs in the Labour Party led by Neil Kinnock (1983-1992). He selected 78 women candidates.<sup>5</sup> The following table provides more details about the number of women candidates and the female elected MPs for the three main political Parties in England in 1983 General Election.

**Table 3.4: Women Candidates and Elected MPs in the 1983 General Election**

	<b>The Conservative Party</b>	<b>The Labour Party</b>	<b>The Liberal Party</b>
<b>The Number of Women</b>	40	78	32

<sup>1</sup> Evans, “Thatcher, Britain's First Female PM, Leaves a Mixed Legacy on Women”.

<sup>2</sup> Evans, “Thatcher, Britain's First Female PM, Leaves a Mixed Legacy on Women”.

<sup>3</sup> Evans, “Thatcher, Britain's First Female PM, Leaves a Mixed Legacy on Women”.

<sup>4</sup> Evans, “Thatcher, Britain's First Female PM, Leaves a Mixed Legacy on Women”.

<sup>5</sup> “General Election Results 9 June 1983”, House of Commons Public Information Office Factsheet N°22, 10

<b>Candidates</b>			
<b>The Percentage of Women Candidates</b>	6.3	12.3	9.9
<b>The Number of Women Elected MPs</b>	13	10	00
<b>The Percentage of Women Elected MPs</b>	3.3	4.8	//

**Source:** “General Election Results 9June 1983”, House of Commons Public Information Office Factsheet N°22, 10

The House of Commons was not the only arena where women were under-represented. The House of Lords was another example. During Thatcher’s premiership, the House of Lords did not include only men. Women were also peers, but they were few if compared to their male counterparts. As already mentioned, the members of the House of Lords were not elected, but appointed by the Prime Minister. From 1979-1990, 27 women were granted life peerages.<sup>1</sup> The 27 female appointees<sup>2</sup> represented 13%<sup>3</sup> of the Lords. From those women, it can be listed Lena May Jeger (1915-2007)<sup>4</sup>, Jean Kennedy (1926-2012)<sup>5</sup>, Margaret Betty Harvie Anderson (1913-1979)<sup>6</sup> and Rachel Trixie Anne Gardner (born 1927)<sup>7</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Véronique Molinari, “House of Lords Reform and Women’s Representation”, *HAL Open Science*, 2013, 58 <https://hal.archives-ouvertes.fr/hal-01164520/document> (Accessed February 20,2022)

<sup>2</sup> For more details about the list of women Members in the House of Lords during Thatcher’s Years, See **APPENDIX E, P 269.**

<sup>3</sup> Haves.

<sup>4</sup> Lena May Jeger served as a Life Peeress in the House of Lords from (1979-1980). “Lena May Jeger” <https://artsandculture.google.com/entity/m0b3dcd?hl=pl> (Accessed May15,2022)

<sup>5</sup> Jean Kennedy McFarlane served as a Life Peeress in the House of Lords from (1979-2012). “Jean McFarlane”, *St James & Emmanuel* <https://stjamesandemmanuel.org/jean-mcFarlane/> (Accessed May15,2022)

<sup>6</sup> Betty Harvie Anderson used to be an MP in the House of Commons. After her retirement in 1979, she received a life peerage in 1979. Within a week of becoming a peeress in the House of Lords, she died of a sudden Asthma attack. Paul Drury, “ Scottish Country House That Made Margaret Thatcher Goes on Sale”, *The Scotsman*, April 14,2020 <https://www.scotsman.com/heritage-and-retro/heritage/scottish-country-house-made-margaret-thatcher-goes-sale-2537568> (Accessed May15,2022)

<sup>7</sup> Rachel Trixie Anne Gardner received life peerage in 1981. “Baroness Gardner of Parkes”, UK Parliament,MPs and Lords <https://members.parliament.uk/member/3596/career> (Accessed May15,2022)

In the light of the aforementioned facts portraying Thatcher's reluctance to promote and to support more women into politics especially in the House of Commons, she was described as "a Queen Bee"<sup>1</sup> and she was a good example of those women "Queen Bees" who enjoyed leadership roles hampering other women to do the same. "A Queen Bee" is a term used to describe a woman in authority who does not help other women, sharing the same sex and gender, to achieve success. Being a "Queen Bee" does not imply solely the rejection to help, support and to promote other women to be successful in the same field, but resorted also to a hostile and unfriendly way to treat other women desiring success.

Additionally, the theory interlinked with shedding light on the "Queen Bees's" issues is called "Queen Bee Syndrom (QBS)". It is a theory that refers to women in authority or power that treating subordinate females worse than males purely because of their gender .... And women who have personal and professional success but who refuse to share knowledge and tips with other women to help them achieve their own success".<sup>2</sup> The term "Queen Bee Syndrome" was firstly introduced by three researchers at the University of Michigan T.E Jayarante, C. Tavis and G.L. Staines in 1973 in which they conducted a research published in *Psychology Today* digging deep in the contribution of women in the emancipation of other women. To attain the results of their research they questioned more than 20000 response persons about whether any "Queen Bee" hampered other women's success or not.<sup>3</sup> The results indicated that not all women hinder the way for other women to be successful. However, there were women who showed a bitter resentment to help and support other women to achieve a breakthrough in the same domain.<sup>4</sup> The kernel of this theory stated that women sometimes worked hard not to support other women in the same field because competition will surge among them highly than men. Women know themselves very well, they know their strong and weak points.

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<sup>1</sup> "Queen Bees: Do Women Hinder the Progress of Other Women?", *Reality Check Team*, January 2018. <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-41165076> (Accessed December22,2021 )

<sup>2</sup> "What Is Queen Bee Syndrome?", *Culture Pioneers Awards* , 2021 <https://www.hrzone.com/hr-glossary/what-is-queen-bee-syndrome> (Accessed December22,2021 at 22:24)

<sup>3</sup> Peggy Drexler, "The Tyranny of the Queen Bee" *The Wall Street Journal* (March 2013) <https://www.wsj.com/articles/SB10001424127887323884304578328271526080496> (Accessed December22,2021)

<sup>4</sup> Anna Sobczak, "The Queen Bee Syndrome: The Paradox of Women Discrimination on the Labour Market" *Journal of Gender and Power* Vol 09,n°01 (2018): 54

Saddled with this theory, Margaret Thatcher worked on excluding women from her cabinet and did not even offer help or encouragement to other women to reach the political contest. The majority of her ministers were men. She did not support other women, sharing the same gender as hers, to be politically successful members. This discriminatory practice made from her a “Queen Bee”.

The idea that needs to be expounded is that Thatcherite resentment of promoting women political participation did not stem from scratch; it was triggered by her personal beliefs about women in politics. She was one of the politicians who glorified the traditional role of women and tremendously believing in the golden task of women which is childcare. She did not even think about the ways those poor women could financially support themselves. Political participation may be a lucrative source from which a woman could earn money. This does not mean that Thatcher hampered their employment opportunities in other fields. Statistics showed that the employment of women increased by 15% from 1985-1990 and the number of women workers surged steadily. By 1990, women represented 48% of the whole labour force.<sup>1</sup>

Margaret Thatcher was against appointing women to the parliamentary life because she believed that children would be deprived of their mother’s care and affection when they are outdoors for “political” work. A British journalist Jennie Murray commented “She did not want to see Britain turned into a *creche* society,” Her patronizing advice for those women who wished to keep their hand in politics while their children were young – and she was all in favour of a little part-time work to keep the brain engaged”<sup>2</sup>.

Margaret Thatcher, herself, admitted that she was a mother of twin children Carol and Mark, but she entered politics only when they reached six years old. She was vehemently against the fact a mother leaving her young children and went to work whether in parliament or in another working institution. Thatcher glorified the real role of women in their families. She made it clear to a woman journalist asking her about the female right of work. She responded:

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<sup>1</sup> Earl A.Reitan, *The Thatcher Revolution: Margert Thatcher John Major, Tony Blair , and the Transformation of Modern Britain 1979-2001*(USA: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2003), 96

<sup>2</sup> [Michael S. Rosenwald](https://www.seattletimes.com/entertainment/fact-checking-the-crown-did-margaret-thatcher-really-look-down-on-women/), “Fact-Checking ‘The Crown’: Did Margaret Thatcher Really Look down on Women?”, *The Seattle Times*, November27,2020 <https://www.seattletimes.com/entertainment/fact-checking-the-crown-did-margaret-thatcher-really-look-down-on-women/> (Accessed December23,2021 )

Look, look I do believe passionately that many women take the view, and quite rightly, that when their children are young their first duty is to look after the children and keep the family together. I wasn't a Member of Parliament until after my children were six ... And I do say this to you very seriously indeed: it is every bit as worthy an objective and an ambition to stay at home and look after the family as it is to go out to work. And you must not in *any way* make young women feel guilty because they don't go out to work ... That must not be ... It's not for us to lay down how they should choose, and I will not have them criticised in any way for doing perhaps one of the most important jobs in the world, which is keeping family life together<sup>1</sup>

Put simply, another reason behind the introduction of all- male cabinet was the decreased number of women MPs at that time. She did not know whether those women MPs were experienced or not. Margot James, a Conservative Lawmaker and politician, stressed this point through claiming that "it was unfair to blame Thatcher for having so few women in her cabinet, because at that time there were not many women MPs to choose from"<sup>2</sup>

What seemed paradoxical is that she was vehemently against women liberation or as it is labeled "women's Lib"<sup>3</sup>. She paid scant attention to support women in their liberation movements which started to be organized during WWII under the umbrella of Second Wave feminism.<sup>4</sup> As far as Thatcher's rejection to appoint women to parliament in general and to her cabinet in particular, it was based on her ultimate rejection to "feminize politics".<sup>5</sup>

Although Thatcher's resentment of appointing women to politics for the sake of sharing the local government of England is one of the thorny subjects when it comes to the political empowerment of women, it was noted that Thatcher's breakthrough as a the first

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<sup>1</sup> "Scottish Press Conference", April 26, 1979 in Beers, 119.

<sup>2</sup> "I Owe Nothing to Women's Lib : Thatcher" , 9NEWS, April 10, 2013 <https://www.9news.com.au/world/i-owe-nothing-to-women-s-lib-thatcher/a0acc7f0-6a4f-4eab-a129-e36b33a6eb3e> (Accessed December 25, 2021)

<sup>3</sup> Dawn, 106.

<sup>4</sup> The First -Wave Feminism refers to the series of movements by women demanding suffrage and property rights in the eighteenth and nineteenth century. The Second -Wave Feminism started during WWII in which women demanded a set of civil rights such as increased employment and educational opportunities. The Third -Wave Feminism emerged in the 1980's in which women of colour and lesbians demanded their rights. "Women's Lib" <https://www.nationalgeographic.org/media/second-wave-feminism/> (Accessed December 24, 2021)

<sup>5</sup> Dawn, 110.

Prime Minister in Britain would open new horizons for women to strengthen their political integration after Thatcher. Her political success would arouse in women an iron will to be a politician and it would, above all, be an enough illustration of the female qualification for political participation.

### **3.4.2. The Nature of Margaret Thatcher's Relation with Male Colleagues**

As previously noted, Margaret Thatcher was the first woman leader over her male staff ministers. Parliament, before her political breakthrough as a Prime minister, used to be an only-male led institution giving few chances to women MPs to enter parliament. Her emergence on the scene as a leader over male MPs prompted a sea change in the way the political cooperation was performed. Some of the male ministers in her cabinet supported her. As an example, Peter Morrison (1974-1992) and George Younger (1964-1992) had a very good relation with the Prime Minister. She herself confessed:

In Peter Morrison, I considered that I had an experienced House of Commons man who could put together a good team to work for me. Peter and I had been friends ever since he entered the House. He had been one of the first backbenchers to urge me to stand in 1975. I knew that I could rely on his loyalty.<sup>1</sup>

Additionally, it was pointed out by Prime Minister David Cameron (2010-2016) that she was kind to all the members of her cabinet.<sup>2</sup> She was totally devoted to her work and gave an enormous importance to every single detail linked with the political management of Britain. Whenever meeting with the MPs for a debate or a negotiation, she was always ready and before being there, the male and female MPs came before her waiting for her to come. Thatcher's tough way of dealing with her MPs was described as "blood sport"<sup>3</sup>.

It is important to mention that not all Thatcher's staff perceived the nature of their political relation with her a positive one. The way of judgment was totally different from one MP to another. Her strong personality pushed her to be very kind with those hard worker politicians and very harsh with those who did not do their work to its fullest. She

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<sup>1</sup> Margaret Thatcher, *Downing Street Years* (Harper Collins Publishers, 1993), 706-707

<sup>2</sup> "Tributes to Baroness Thatcher", UK Parliament, House of Commons Vol560, April10,2013.

<sup>3</sup> Gail Sheehy, "The Blooming of Margaret Thatcher", *Vanity Fair*, June 1989  
<https://www.vanityfair.com/news/1989/06/margaret-thatcher-198906> (Accessed December22,2021)

used to bully her male colleagues who showed little interest in their work or they did it badly deviating from her orders.<sup>1</sup> She criticized her colleagues in front of each other without secretly blaming them.

She believed that working with someone who did not do his work to its fullest, he did not deserve to be forgiven. Keeping working with such lazy ministers was not a characteristic of a successful politician. “She was merciless if someone failed to prepare ..... she believed that compromise was cowardice”.<sup>2</sup> As an example of her harsh treatment and blame to her male colleagues, she told Geoffrey Howe (1979-1990) one of the MPs in her cabinet “then I’d better send you to hospital and deliver the statement myself”.<sup>3</sup>

Margaret Thatcher was very harsh when dealing with men in debates or negotiations especially when they met face to face. She was described as “the best man in the cabinet”<sup>4</sup> Robin Butler (born in 1938), Thatcher’s Principal Private Secretary (1982-1985), pointed out that it was very difficult to deal with her when she was nervous or when she did not like the political work of a given MP. She was a squeamish<sup>5</sup> person that is why she was easily being nervous even the situation sometimes was silly. He commented “dealing with her face to face was like feeding a fierce animal”<sup>6</sup>.

Thatcher’s harshness with men and her political domination over them in parliament was the result of her belief in the weakness of men. She told the Dutch male representatives<sup>7</sup> after “spitting at” them “You men, you’re all so weak”.<sup>8</sup> Being surrounded and accompanied by men, Thatcher behaved sometimes like a “man” through resorting to “masculine” qualities such as toughness and aggressiveness<sup>9</sup>. Her planned methods to deal

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<sup>1</sup> James Wood, “It’s Still Mrs. Thatcher’s Britain”, *The New Yorker*, November 25, 2019  
<https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2019/12/02/its-still-mrs-thatchers-britain> (Accessed December 22, 2021)

<sup>2</sup> Herminia Ibarra, *Act Like a Leader, Think Like a Leader* (Harvard Business School Publishing, 2015), 95

<sup>3</sup> Wood.

<sup>4</sup> Dawn, 128.

<sup>5</sup> Wood.

<sup>6</sup> Wood.

<sup>7</sup> During this occasion, the Dutch Prime Minister Ruud Lubbers (1982-1994) visited Britain on March 2, 1983. “Speech at Lunch for Dutch Prime Minister”, *Margaret Thatcher Foundation*  
<https://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/105264> (Accessed May 15, 2022)

<sup>8</sup> Wood.

<sup>9</sup> Timothy Stanley, “Why Thatcher Made so Many Enemies”, *CNN*, April 9, 2013  
<https://edition.cnn.com/2013/04/08/opinion/stanley-margaret-thatcher/index.html> (Accessed May 7, 2022)



with men in their house pushed her to be very careful about the style she would rely on to lead England and to make from government a fruitful one.

### **3.4.3. Aftermath of Thatcher's Political Domination**

As a politician, the “Iron Lady’s” leadership style was autocratic. She set up her own decisions without resorting to the views of her male ministers. She was described as “stubborn”<sup>1</sup>. She wanted her plans to be fulfilled whatever the result. One of her policies that brought her debacle was her stubborn insistence on introducing the Poll Tax<sup>2</sup>. She did so firstly in Scotland in 1989 and in England in 1990 although her male colleagues advised her to forget about the idea. They were experienced in politics and they knew very well the destructive results of such burdensome plans on the backs of people. She did not listen to them and really introduced the poll tax. She embarked on “authoritative approach” or as it also labeled “Thatcher’s Authoritarianism”<sup>3</sup>

This strengthened an unstable relation with some of her ministers. The autocratic style of leadership was a double-edged sword. It can be positive as a ruling method and it can have a negative impact on the ruler-ruled relationship. This was what happened during the tenure of Margaret Thatcher as an autocratic leader. She was authoritative and exercised a political domination<sup>4</sup> over her ministers to the extent of neglecting their intervention to have a hand in the final decisions. Roddy Millarn in his Article entitled “Margaret Thatcher: An Appraisal of Leadership Style” (2013), confirms this idea through

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<sup>1</sup> Grant, Kay, Kerrigan, and Parker, 383.

<sup>2</sup> The Poll Tax is also known as the “community charge” or “uniform community charge”. It is a sum of money levied on adults over the age of 18 as if they were going to pay for their existence in the household. The amount of money per person reached 400£ annually with decreases for students and those with low wages. It was an extended form of taxation in Britain. Before the imposition of Poll Tax on people by Thatcher in 1990, people in England used to pay Local Property Tax (LPT). In return for renting a house, they used to pay their property tax as a financial source for government. The origin of the Poll Tax dated back to 1986 when the Department of Environment drafted a document called the “Green Paper” and also known as “Paying for Local Government”.<sup>2</sup> The document stated three points that guaranteed the sources of the governmental finance. One of those reforms ingrained in this document was the substitution of the property tax with flat rate community charge or Poll Tax.. Document was finally enacted in 1987 and consequently the Poll Tax firstly introduced in Scotland 1989 and in England and Wales the following year. Peter Smith, “Lessons from The British Poll Tax Disaster,” *National Tax Journal* Vol44,n°04, Part 02(1991): 421

<sup>3</sup> Louisa Hadley and Elizabeth Ho, *Thatcher & After: Margaret Thatcher and Her Afterlife Contemporary Culture* (UK:Palgrave Macmillan, 2010),230.

<sup>4</sup> Charlie Beckett, “Margaret Thatcher Transformed Political Communication in UK Politics”, *LSE Blog* April9,2013 <https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/politicsandpolicy/margaret-thatcher-reshaped-politics-and-political-communications/> (Accessed May7,2022)

claiming that “Thatcher was not a collaborative leader”<sup>1</sup>. She explained that it is not important for her the way her ministers talk , but what mattered was that they must fulfill what she said without saying no. She claimed “I [Margaret Thatcher ] don’t mind how much my ministers talk, as long as they do what I say”<sup>2</sup>.

Each beginning has an end. The latter can be either happy or tragic. The end of Thatcher’s tenure was a tragic one which was coincided with her downfall and unceremonial departure. She firstly entered parliament happily greeted by millions, but she left parliament “with tears in her eye”.<sup>3</sup> The failure of someone or his/her unexpected lamentable withdrawal does not stem from scratch, but there is always a factor bringing things upside down. Despite her repeated political breakthroughs, Thatcher’s final years in office were a total fiasco. Her involuntary resignation was the outcome of the population’s wrath and the coup her male colleagues organized against her.

#### **3.4.3.1. Societal and Governmental Opposition to the Poll Tax**

Margaret Thatcher worked hard on introducing several reforms that supercharged England’s economy under the umbrella of Thatcherism. Yet, the latter had its own dark side. It can be said that the web of reforms she introduced was a double-edged sword. The unbearable bitter results of her policies led to her downfall in 1990. Thatcher’s political debacle was vehemently interlinked with the mistakes she committed in the “Men’s House”. The Poll Tax imposed forcefully in England prompted a societal and political *coup* against her.

Thatcher’s gradual downfall in 1990 portrayed the fact that being a woman can sometimes lead to tragic results in politics. In this vein, the power of a woman in politics must not be exaggerated to the extent of introducing something that would undermine people’s energy and place a heavy burden on their backs. The Poll Tax, introduced by Thatcher, for the first time in the British history, was an example of the diminishing results

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<sup>1</sup> Roddy Millar, “Margaret Thatcher: An Appraisal of Leadership Style”, *IEDP Developing Leaders*, April 11, 2013 <https://www.iedp.com/articles/margaret-thatcher-an-appraisal-of-leadership-style/> (Accessed December23,2021)

<sup>2</sup> “Memorable Margert Thatcher Quotes”, *AL Jazeera*, April 08,2013 <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2013/4/8/memorable-margaret-thatcher-quotes> (Accessed December26,2021)

<sup>3</sup> James Ball, “The Thatcher Effect: What Changed and What Stayed the Same”, *The Guardian* April12,2013 <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2013/apr/12/thatcher-britain> (Accessed May7,2022)

of the female domination over men in general and over the population in particular. It was the last and the lone issue that triggered the end of her Prime Ministership. The Poll Tax was preceded by a surfeit of reforms that created a state of “poverty and inequality”<sup>1</sup>. Through the Poll Tax, she incorporated another diminishing policy that would empty the poor people pockets bringing them into a new phase of intense misery.

The ignominious resignation of Thatcher was provoked by her imposition of the Poll Tax on the British people. She thought people would pay it blindly without challenging her governmental decisions as before, but this time she did not only trigger people fury and rebellion, she put an end to her political career as a Prime Minister. What worsened matters was that the disobedience was not only from the part of population, but even it met a parliamentary rebellion in the Conservative Party. Her political domination, in fact, had its own price.

The shift from the property tax to Poll Tax led England into anarchy though a myriad of riots against Margert Thatcher to annul this disastrous reform. The anti-Poll Tax movement was organized through the formation of opposition groups united to express their outcry against the destructive Thatcherite reform.

Any protest has its own forms. The people’s protest against Thatcher came in a form of riots known as “tax riots”<sup>2</sup>.on March 31, 1990 in Trafalgar Square. They refused to pay the tax bills through repeated violent demonstrations. England became a battlefield where the English people were fighting a bloody battle against their leader Margaret Thatcher. It was estimated that “On March 31, 1990, between 70,000 – 200,000 gathered to protest the tax...One hundred thirteen people were injured, and 340 people were arrested. Over 100 police needed treatment for injuries”<sup>3</sup>

The Poll Tax remained one of the most disastrous Thatcherite flagships. It triggered not only people’s unrest but even her male colleagues in parliament and in her cabinet grew furious and they had their own reaction since they would be themselves levied also. Several male ministers warned her to forget about the Poll Tax, but in vain. Her political

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<sup>1</sup> Eliana Dockterman, “Why Is Margaet Thatcher Always Crying *in the Crown?*”, *Time*, Novermebr15,2020 <https://time.com/5907856/margaret-thatcher-the-crown/> (Accessed December22,2021)

<sup>2</sup> Marlon Mosley, “Margert Thatcher and the Poll Tax”, June 03,2019 <https://mwmblog.com/2019/06/03/margaret-thatcher-and-the-poll-tax/> (Accessed Decemeber24,2021)

<sup>3</sup> Mosley.

stubbornness led to an overnight end of her mandate. As an example, the Environment Secretary Mr Nicholas Ridley (1989-1990) reminded Thatcher that the Poll Tax would ruin the entire Britain, but she refused to change her mind. Another Minister Mr Nigel Lawson warned her that the poll Tax would be “completely unworkable and politically catastrophic”<sup>1</sup>.

### **3.4.3.2. Male Reaction to Thatcherite Political Domination**

Male MPs during Thatcher’s tenure found themselves fulfilling a woman’s orders, obeying her decisions and above all being criticized by a woman. Thatcher’s male colleagues respected her to the extent that they kept silent when being criticized or blamed publicly.<sup>2</sup> This does not mean that they liked the way she used to deal with them. It was pointed out that male MPs in Thatcher’s cabinet reacted against some negative issues of her treatment through mocking her “behind her back”.<sup>3</sup>

It was pointed out that one of the main reasons behind Thatcher’s debacle was the rising of male opposition to her since she used to exercise a kind of political domination over them. “Thatcher is more powerful than all the men around her, she bossed them around”<sup>4</sup>. She kept appointing male ministers for positions she wanted, not as they wanted. Sometimes, some male ministers wanted to be recruited for a given political ministerial position because they knew that they excelled in that domain, but she used to reject their demands. Some Ministers started to resign.

As an example of those male ministers who resigned because of Thatcher’s political exaggerated domination was Nigel Lawson (1981-1989) and Geoffrey Howe. The latter described her in his resignation speech as “a nightmare image”.<sup>5</sup> Margaret Thatcher’s withdrawal from parliament, after many years of perseverance and endeavours, was triggered by the loss of unity among the male ministers of her cabinet and she was the only one responsible for the state of instability in her cabinet. “She was pushed out of office

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<sup>1</sup> “Poll Tax Paper Show Margert Thatcher Ignored Early Rebellion”, February 19,2016  
<https://www.theweek.co.uk/69766/poll-tax-papers-show-margaret-thatcher-ignored-early-rebellion> (Accessed December24,2021 )

<sup>2</sup> Shephard.

<sup>3</sup> Shephard.

<sup>4</sup> Beatrix Campbell, *Iron Ladies: Why Do Women Vote Tory?* (London: Virago,1987), 233.

<sup>5</sup> Rodney Brazier, “The Downfall of Margaret Thatcher,” *The Modern Law Review* Vol54, n°4 (1991): 473

without even losing a general election, indeed without losing the leadership election which forced her to resign”<sup>1</sup>. The poll tax marked a watershed that culminated in jeopardizing Thatcher’s relation with her male ministers already having a good relation with. As ministers, they were against the poll tax and they expressed their own outrage themselves.

Most importantly, the end of Thatcher’s government took place when a man reacted against her. This reflected the weakness of women in politics. All that had been bravely done by Thatcher since 1979, a man brought her to her knees. Geoffrey Howe was claimed to be the Minister behind her resignation. In 1989, Thatcher dismissed Geoffrey Howe from her cabinet as the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1983-1989). He resigned on November 1, 1990 delivering his resignation speech against Thatcher publicly criticizing her policies, governmental style and accusing her of destroying the future of Britain. It was pointed out that Geoffrey Howe’s 1990 Speech “destroyed Thatcher’s political career”.<sup>2</sup> After his resignation; the opposition to Thatcher increased. It was dual; the opposition from the male MPs in her party, in her cabinet and from the Labour Party. Geoffrey Howe stated in his November 1990 Resignation Speech:

I[Geoffrey Howe] decided to resign solely because of questions of style and not on matters of substance at all... The truth is that, in many aspects of politics, style and substance complement each other. Very often, they are two sides of the same coin... he Prime Minister and I have shared something like 700 meetings of Cabinet or Shadow Cabinet during the past 18 years, and some 400 hours alongside each other, at more than 30 international summit meetings. For both of us, I suspect, it is a pretty daunting record... it must be said that that practical conclusion has been achieved only at the cost of substantial damage to her Administration and, more serious still, to its inflation achievements...<sup>3</sup>

Losing the support from the majority of her ministers (Norman Fowler<sup>4</sup> (born 1938), Geoffrey Howe, Nigel Lawson<sup>1</sup>, Cecil Parkinson<sup>2</sup> (1931-2016) and Nicholas Ridley<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Charles Moore, *Margaret Thatcher The Authorized Biography Volume Three: Herself Alone* (UK: Penguin Random House, 2019), XVII

<sup>2</sup> Jonathan Maitland, “Howezat! The Day a Dead Sheep Turned into a Roaring Lion”, *The Guardian*, November 15, 2020 <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2020/nov/15/geoffrey-howe-dead-sheep-turned-roaring-lion> (Accessed May 15, 2022)

<sup>3</sup> “Geoffrey Howe Resignation Speech”, *Genius* <https://genius.com/Geoffrey-howe-resignation-speech-annotated> (Accessed May 15, 2022)

<sup>4</sup> Norman Fowler served as Secretary of State for Transport (1979 – 81), Secretary of State for Social Services (1981–87) and Secretary of State for Employment (1987–90). Andrew Gilbert, “Major Change ? :

(1929-1993), she was obliged to resign on November 28, 1990.<sup>4</sup> She was, therefore, succeeded by a man John Major. In her resignation speech, she claimed “Now it’s time for a new chapter to open, and I wish John Major all the luck in the world”<sup>5</sup> Before her resignation she was challenged by one of her ministers Michael Haseltine (1966-2001) over the leadership of the Conservative Party. The First Conservative Leadership Election took place on November 20, 1990. Thatcher appeared again as a winner through a landslide victory over Michael. She obtained 204 votes while her rival obtained 152 votes.<sup>6</sup>

Despite that fact that the “Iron Lady” started her tenure as an admired politician embarking on several effective economic policies, at the end she was terribly opposed by men in her cabinet, defeated by a man Geoffrey Howe and succeeded by a man John Major. This revealed a myriad of realities about the presence of women alongside men in politics. She entered the “Men’s House” treating male ministers in an authoritative way. The political domination and political authority of Thatcher in parliamentary politics had a negative impact on her departure in a way that she did not deserve. No one was responsible for the unceremonial departure, but herself. She stated:

On 28 November 1990, as I [Margaret Thatcher] left 10 Downing Street for the last time eleven years, six months and twenty-four days after I first set foot there as Prime Minister, I was tormented by a whirl of conflicting and confused thoughts and emotions. I had passed from the well-lit world of public life where I had lived so long into ... what? Yet, though I may have leapt – or been pushed – into the dark, I was not in free fall. I had my family and my health.<sup>7</sup>

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Family Law and Policy in the Decade Following the Matrimonial and Family Proceedings Act 1984 in *British Conservatism and the Legal Regulation of Intimate Relationships*, ed. Andrew Gilbert (Bloomsbury Publishing, 2018), 86

<sup>1</sup> He served as a Chancellor of the Exchequer from 1983 to 1989. Gilbert, 86.

<sup>2</sup> He served as Secretary of State for Energy (1987 – 89) and for Transport (1989 – 90). Gilbert, 86

<sup>3</sup> He served as Secretary of State for Transport (1983 – 86), for the Environment (1986 – 89) and for Trade and Industry (1989 – 90). Gilbert, 86.

<sup>4</sup> Emma Dibdin, “The Crown’s Version of Margaret Thatcher’s 1990 Downfall Takes a Lot of Liberties with the Truth”, *Elle*, December 9, 2020 <https://www.elle.com/culture/movies-tv/a34773657/the-crown-margaret-thatcher-downfall-geoffrey-howe/> (Accessed December 23, 2021)

<sup>5</sup> Dibdin.

<sup>6</sup> “Conservative Leadership Results, November 1990” <https://johnmajorarchive.org.uk/1990/11/27/conservative-leadership-results-november-1990/> (Accessed January 12, 2022)

<sup>7</sup> Thatcher, *Path to Power*, 455

The political domination she exercised in her cabinet was not only clear in the way she acted, but even the way she spoke, communicated and negotiated. The linguistic domination is another focal factor portraying the domineering aspect of government especially when it comes to a woman leading men.

#### **3.4.4. Thatcher's Political Language**

The election of Thatcher as the first woman PM in the British history represented sweeping changes in the parliamentary environment. A female leader's place in the men's space marked a turning point in gender roles and gender relations. Margaret Thatcher as a political icon succeeded, although finally ousted, in cementing a female power in parliament. Power can be also generated through language. Thatcherite language in the political arena played a vital role in preserving the female political power and a female political reputation as a successful leader.

The political management did not hinge on actions or non-verbal language, but the oral communication between the leader and his/ her team played a very significant role to make from politics a fruitful and workable issue. It is not language which is powerful, but the way it is used can be done either in a powerful or weak way. One's strength or weakness is apparent in the way he/she speaks. Women MPs such as Nancy Astor, Margaret Bonfied, Irene Ward and others relied on language to defend themselves and to defend their political positions granted to them. Most focally, they used language to show their male colleagues that they were powerful; they could stand in front of men and deliver speeches. The first woman Party leader and Prime Minister Margert Thatcher was another outstanding example. She resorted to language as a tool of politically managing England.

Thatcher's language as a "leader" was a medium to communicate, to exercise her political domination and, above all, to run her government. Any ruler, whatever his/her rank, needs a language to exercise his / her power. The relational style of government requires a verbal interaction between the leaders and the led people. Thatcher's communicative style was another issue through which Thatcher adopted a domineering way of leadership. As a politician, not as a woman, her communicative style resembled the male one. The domineering language she resorted to communicate in the parliamentary contest went in tandem with the autocratic leadership style. Thus, her communicative style

was “argumentative”.<sup>1</sup> Whenever orally involved, she preferred to dig deep into the details and presented arguments for everything.

The American linguist Robin Lakoff (born 1942), in her book *Language and Woman's Place* (1975), listed women's speech features. They are as the following “lexical hedgers and fillers, tag questions, rising intonations and declaratives, empty adjectives, precise colour terms, intensifiers, hypercorrect grammar, superpolite forms, avoidance of strong swear words, emphatic stress”.<sup>2</sup> Thatcher's communicative style was overshadowed by those features. Each feature was implemented carefully to achieve different goals.

One important source to have an idea about the way she used to speak is *The Iron Lady Movie*<sup>3</sup> (2011) about Thatcher's life and political career. The first remark about Thatcher's language, as depicted in the Movie, is that she avoided the use of strong, bad and swear words to address people around her<sup>4</sup> and she used a lower voice to address people.<sup>5</sup> The use of the lower voice was not a marker of weakness, but it was one of the effective ways to push the audience to pay attention. She did not always use the lower voice, but the higher voice was also used. At the beginning of her political career, she spoke in a higher voice to politically empower herself in front of men and highly impress the crowds in a male-dominated sphere (parliament), but later she started using the lower voice to better create an attractive discussion environment and to be more influential<sup>6</sup> and

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<sup>1</sup> Brian Leggett, “Profile of a Conviction Speaker: Margert Thatcher Part 1”, *Rhetoric and Leadership Blog Network*, November 09, 2012 <https://blog.iese.edu/leggett/2012/11/09/profile-of-a-conviction-speaker-margaret-thatcher1/> (Accessed December 26, 2021)

<sup>2</sup> Robin Lakoff, *Language and Woman's Place* (New York: Harper Colophon Books, 1975), 208

<sup>3</sup> *The Iron Lady Movie* was directed by Phyllida Lloyd in 2011 and written by Abi Morgan. The character who performed the role of Margert Thatcher was Meryl Streep (born in 1949). Xan Brooks, “The Iron Lady: First Screening”, *The Guardian*, November 14, 2011 <https://www.theguardian.com/film/2011/nov/14/the-iron-lady-first-review> (Accessed May 8, 2022)

<sup>4</sup> Khoirul Umami Mazidah, “Women's Speech Features Used by Character Margeret in the *Iron Lady Movie*” *English Language and Literature Journal* Vol 01, n° 01 (2013): 03

<sup>5</sup> Justin Osborne, “Speak Like Margaret Thatcher: How to Master Public Speaking”, <https://www.classycareergirl.com/public-speaking-margaret-thatcher/> (Accessed December 27, 2021)

<sup>6</sup> Andreas Venetis, “The Importance of Body Language for Politicians”, LinkedIn, January 9, 2018 <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/importance-body-language-politicians-andreas-venetis> (Accessed May 9, 2022)



authoritative.<sup>1</sup> Moving from the higher into a lower pitch was not an easy and overnight task; she started a speech coach in the Royal National theater.<sup>2</sup>

Furthermore, Thatcher used the rising intonation or declaratives in her parliamentary debates and speeches.<sup>3</sup> In the *Movie*, Thatcher speaking with a male MP, she said: “Prime Minister?! Oh no. Oh no no no. In Britain? There will be no female Prime Minister here, not in my lifetime. “No. And I told Airey, I don’t expect to win the leadership, but I am going to run. Just to shake up the party”<sup>4</sup>. Thatcher’s use of declaratives was a way to express her politeness in front of men. At the same time, the use of declarative forms was a way to show her certainty while speaking.

In Thatcher’s parliamentary debates, she used hedges or fillers to make sure the hearers were following and concentrating with her. Additionally, she resorted to fillers when she was not sure about what she was uttering. Among the fillers she used: “well”, “you know”, “etc”. In this vein, Thatcherite use of fillers in her discussions, conversations and speeches to attract the attention of hearers, especially men, revealed her political readiness before being involved in any relational political event. The use of the hedges and fillers by women, Thatcher as an example, was not always a predictor of readiness and power. It can be a symptom of insecurity. Thatcher used “well” sometimes to express her anxiety in the environment in which she was involved. This revealed another issue which was the female insecurity among men.

Furthermore, the female speech is always characterized by the use of tag questions. Margaret Thatcher, as a woman and politician used tag questions for political purposes. In the *Iron Lady Movie*, speaking with one of her male ministers about the coming elections, she said “Ah. Worried about our careers, are we?”<sup>5</sup>, “Gentlemen, if we don’t cut spending we will be bankrupt. Yes the medicine is harsh but the patient requires it in order to live.

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<sup>1</sup> “How to Master Public Speaking: Tips from World Famous Speakers”, *Epicflow*, August 21, 2019 <https://www.epicflow.com/blog/how-to-master-public-speaking-tips-from-world-famous-speakers/> (Accessed May 11, 2022)

<sup>2</sup> Chris Weller, “A Former FBI Profiler Reveals the Secrets Hiding in Trump and Hillary’s Body Language”, *Business Insider*, October 28, 2016 <https://uk.sports.yahoo.com/news/former-fbi-profiler-reveals-secrets-190400447.html> (Accessed May 9, 2022)

<sup>3</sup> Mazidah, 04

<sup>4</sup> Mazidah, 04

<sup>5</sup> Mazidah, 04

Shall we withhold the medicine? No! We are not wrong. We did not seek election and win in order to manage the decline of a great nation”<sup>1</sup>.

The female use of tag question is another way of saying “I am not sure about what I am saying”. The speaker, in this case, is indirectly pushing the hearer to provide an answer. Coming to the nub of the matter, Thatcher’s use of tag questions when addressing her colleagues reflects the fact that women whatever their political authority and whatever the effectiveness of their leadership, they remain in need of supportive intervention and help from those experienced people. A woman could not run a country without the cooperation and intervention of men. The reliance on tag questions was another way by Thatcher to ask about something she might ignore or did not know waiting for male ministers to provide help or suggestion.

Thatcher’s language was described as “egotistical language”<sup>2</sup>. Her egotism was mirrored in her language during debates, interviews and speeches. As discussed before, Margaret Thatcher exercised a great authority over her ministers and even her language mirrored the feelings of being better than the others. “she was a political warrior. She had a love of political combat, a zealotry for the causes she believed in, a reluctance to listen to advice, a conviction that she was always right and never wrong”<sup>3</sup>. This does not mean that she always felt at ease while speaking. Lakoff stated that women got interrupted when speaking in front of men. As a woman, Thatcher, sometimes, got interrupted in interviews.<sup>4</sup>

According to E. Bruce Harrison and Judith Muhlberg in their book *Leadership Communication: How Leaders Communicate and How Communicators Lead in Today’s Global Enterprise* (2014) , “leadership language is situational”.<sup>5</sup> To put it another way, language

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<sup>1</sup> Mazidah,04

<sup>2</sup> Anna Hodgekiss, “Power Really Does Go to the Head: Expert Says That Egos of Thatcher and Blair Were Reflected in Their Self-Obsessed Language”, *Mail Online* , October03,2013  
<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/health/article-2442574/Thatcher-Blairs-egos-reflected-language-says-expert.html> (Accessed December26,2021)

<sup>3</sup> “Margaret Thatcher: The Lady and the Land She Leaves Behind”, *The Guardian*, April 08,2013  
<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2013/apr/08/margaret-thatcher-editorial>(Accessed December27,2021)

<sup>4</sup> Geoffrey W.Beattie, Anne Cutler and Mark Pearson, “Why Is Mrs Thatcher Interrupted so often?”, *Nature*, 1982, 744 <https://www.nature.com/articles/300744a0> (Accessed May11,2022)

<sup>5</sup> E. Bruce Harrison and Judith Muhlberg, *Leadership Communication: How Leaders Communicate and How Communicators Lead in Today’s Global Enterprise* (New York: Business Expert Press, 2014),154

varies from one situation into another relying on the way the speaker addresses the listener. Speakers sometimes trigger the listener's aggressive reaction through an aggressive language and vice versa. Thatcher relied on her leadership language to mirror either her acceptance of what it was said or she shifted to an aggressive response.

One of the pivotal occasions in which “the Iron Lady” used language as a weapon to defend the political authority and justify the political strength was the debate between Prime Minister and the MPs even the MPs of the opposition (1979-1990). It was called Prime Minister Questions (PMQ) or Questions to Prime Minister held each Tuesday and Thursday in the House of Commons<sup>1</sup>. During the PMQ, Prime Minister was asked a number of questions and Thatcher had to provide an answer. The PMQ lasted 15 minutes<sup>2</sup>. What really proved her political and linguistic confidence was that she answered all the questions alone without transferring questions to male ministers in her cabinet. She claimed that until 1990, she answered 7498 questions in 698 Question Times<sup>3</sup>. She stated:

But it is Questions to the Prime Minister every Tuesday and Thursday which are the real test of your authority in the House, your standing with your party, your grip of policy and of the facts to justify it. No head of government anywhere in the world has to face this sort of regular pressure and many go to great lengths to avoid it; no head of government, as I would sometimes remind those at summits, is as accountable as the British prime minister....<sup>4</sup>

To illustrate Thatcherite linguistic behaviour and the nature of her political discourse, PMQ or Question Time (QT) is an important example. Her last Question Time (November 1990) remained an “excellent”<sup>5</sup> source that mirrored the characteristics of her linguistic discourse with men. That is why it is taken as a sample to unveil Thatcherite linguistic political discourse. The last Prime Minister Questions for Thatcher was held on

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<sup>1</sup> Starting from 1997, the Questions to the Prime Minister were not held on Tuesday and Thursday, the Questions Time took place each Wednesday for 30 minutes. Christopher Watson, “House of Commons Trends: Attendance at Prime Minister’s Questions”, UK Parliament, House of Commons Library, November 03, 2020 <https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/house-of-commons-trends-attendance-at-prime-ministers-questions/> (Accessed December 27, 2021)

<sup>2</sup> Watson.

<sup>3</sup> Thatcher, *The Downing Street Years*, 35

<sup>4</sup> Thatcher, *The Downing Street Years*, 35

<sup>5</sup> John Wilson and Anthea Irwin, “Why Can’t a Woman Be More Like a Man?: Margaret Thatcher and the Discourse of Leadership” in *Discourse, Politics and Women as Global Leaders*, ed. John Wilson and Diana Boxer (John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2015), 30

November 27, 1990. She answered all the questions alone without relying on her senior ministers for answers.

She spoke in a high self-confident way in front of men. The leader of the opposition Neil Kinnock (1979-1990) asked her about which of her policies she thought it must be removed by her successor. She answered "I am [Margaret Thatcher] happy that my successor will carry on the excellent policies that have finished with the decline of socialism, brought great prosperity to this country, raised Britain's standing in the world and brought about a truly capital-owning democracy."<sup>1</sup> She uttered the expression "brought great prosperity" in a "loud voice" to emphasize the crowning achievement of her premiership. Language helped Thatcher in front of men and in front of the Speaker of the House to feel proud of her achievements.

The debate room was always crowded and the ministers noisy. Despite the unhelpful noisy circumstances, Thatcher's political self-confidence cemented her efforts to overcome the difficult confrontations alongside men. Her linguistic interaction during the PMQ, described as "combative situation"<sup>2</sup>, was one of the multiple ways hinged on to strengthen her political authority.

In front of men, although sometimes interrupted, she was audacious telling her point of view the way she wanted without fearing the male reaction. This was seen in the same Prime Minister Questions when the leader of the Labour Party Neil Kinnock asked her about what policies should be scabbed after her withdrawal. She turned and looked at him, replying aggressively and publicly criticized socialism that the Labour Party supported. She said "I[Margaret Thatcher] am happy that my successor will carry on the excellent policies that have finished with the decline of socialism"<sup>3</sup>. The way of Thatcher's reply to Kinnock revealed the female power in parliament and the female readiness to interact with men even in a harsh and "humiliating" way. She described her policies as "excellent" feeling proud of her ability to undermine the Labour supported "Socialism".

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<sup>1</sup> UK Parliament , "Margaret Thatcher's Last Prime Minister's Questions: 27 November 1990", *Youtube* Video, 15:55, November25, 2009 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-lSIdJlSHQQ> (Accessed December27,2021)

<sup>2</sup> Courtney Adams Wooten, "Control and Constraint: Margaret Thatcher and the Dynamics of Political Rhetoric During Prime Minister's Questions," *Peitho Journal* Vol22,n°02 (2018): 349

<sup>3</sup> UK Parliament , "Margaret Thatcher's Last Prime Minister's Questions: 27 November 1990", *Youtube* Video, 15:55, November25, 2009 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-lSIdJlSHQQ> (Accessed December27,2021)

The leader of the opposition Neil Kinnock asked her again (November 27, 1990) about what government should go concerning the heavy burden of the Poll tax since Thatcher insisted that nothing would be changed after her resignation. She answered “On the contrary, I really rather thought that they were keeping the poll—the community charge “Oh.”]—the community charge or community policy and, whatever review they have, the result will be infinitely better than going back to the rates, which of course would be the worst of all worlds”<sup>1</sup>. Although the community charge was bitterly opposed by Members of her government and by the population, she repeated the same word twice. This reflected the fact that Thatcher used language to impose her political domination although she knew that it was a flawed decision.

During the last PMQ (November 27, 1990), two male MPs Mr. David Wilshire (1987-2010) and Mr. David Winnick (1979-2017) asked her the same question she previously answered. They asked her “if she would list her official engagements for Tuesday 27”. She answered them in way indirectly telling them to “concentrate next time”. She used her language to make mincemeat of those male ministers who attempted to interrupt her. Thatcher did not re-provide the answer she provided earlier when they were not paying attention. She simply replied: “I refer my hon. Friend to the reply that I gave some moments ago”.<sup>2</sup>

Add to this, Mr. David Winnick asked a very audacious and hurting question to Thatcher. He said “Does not Prime Minister find it the height of hypocrisy and nauseating to be praised by Tory Members when last week they stabbed her in the back”. She did not furiously react. She simply said “I find it very refreshing”.<sup>3</sup> Thatcher used her language sometimes to defend herself during debates. It was not something easy for a woman to lead men in their “House”, but she successfully did. Her parliamentary language served sometimes as a shield to protect herself from the arrows of male hostility and humiliation.

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<sup>1</sup> UK Parliament , “Margaret Thatcher's Last Prime Minister's Questions: 27 November 1990”, *Youtube Video*, 15:55, November 25, 2009 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-ISIdJISHQQ> (Accessed December 27, 2021)

<sup>2</sup> UK Parliament , “Margaret Thatcher's Last Prime Minister's Questions: 27 November 1990”, *Youtube Video*, 15:55, November 25, 2009 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-ISIdJISHQQ> (Accessed December 27, 2021)

<sup>3</sup> “Hansard Volume : House of Commons Debates”, House of Commons, UK Parliament , Session 1990-1991, Volume 181 (November 19, 1990-November 30, 1990)

In brief, Thatcher political language was not used just to interact, but even to govern. Her authoritative style of leadership was reflected in her verbal language. Language was a very important medium to publicly reflect Thatcher's policies, interests and anomalies. Thatcher's verbal language contributed also to double reflections: she could perform hostile or friendly reactions only through language, let alone her non-verbal gestures that mirrored her political leadership.

### **3.4.5. The Iron Lady's Non-Verbal Communication**

Politicians and political leaders do not always rely on the verbal discourse to unveil their political decisions and let the other know about their political programs. Their body language is also of a paramount importance. Billions of ideas, thoughts, responses and reactions are imbedded in a non-verbal way and are stirred without even uttering a single letter. Myriad of political messages are reflected without words. Thus, the body language remains another important key to mirror the strengths and the weaknesses of political leaders all over the world. Margaret Thatcher, as a woman politician was no exception.

There are plenty of important clues that play significant role during the political public performance and through with the speaker tells a lot through gestures not words. Non-verbal communication can be performed through eye contact, facial expression, hand gestures, the language of legs, postures, and even the way of dressing.<sup>1</sup> In most of Thatcher's communicative interactions including speeches or debates with male Ministers, she avoided smiling or laughing.

Avoiding a smiling face in politics reflects the fact that Margaret Thatcher preferred to be more grumpy and aggressive to avoid appearing as submissive.<sup>2</sup> However, in other occasions, she smiled for different purposes. Sometimes, she used her smile as a weapon to win over men in a conversation. Sometimes, she smiled when she was too angry to appear stronger in front of men and to show her ability to accustom herself even in tough political circumstances.<sup>3</sup> In the first smile<sup>1</sup>, her teeth are not shown. The closed-mouth smile was

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<sup>1</sup> Marta Rominiecka, Non-Verbal Cues in Politics : An Analysis of Gestural Signals Sent by American and European Politicians” *Poznan Studies in Contemporary Linguistics* Vol44, n° 02 (2008): 249-254

<sup>2</sup> Allan Pease and Barbara Pease, *The Definitive Book of Body Language: How to Read Others' Thoughts by Their Gestures* (Australia: Pease International,2004),70

<sup>3</sup> Bella Imelda Anarusiska and Lisetyo Ariyanti, “Gestures Used by Margaret Thatcher in *the Iron Lady Movie*”, University of Surabaya, 05 <https://ejournal.unesa.ac.id> (Accessed May9,2022)

used to convince her colleagues about something they are not convinced with and to end the discussions and other questions she found annoying.<sup>2</sup> In picture 2<sup>3</sup>, she was smiling showing her teeth. This smile, known as “felt smile”<sup>4</sup> portrayed the fact that she was happy and she was feeling at ease. The third picture<sup>5</sup>, she was smiling a “fake smile”<sup>6</sup>, she heard something she was not convinced with. She was smiling and feeling angry at the same time. This was clearly apparent in her eyes.

This non-verbal cue represented Thatcher’s awareness to strengthen her political presence that led the others thought thrice to speak with her. For example, in Speech to the Conservative Party Conference held in October 1980, she stated “o those waiting with bated breath for that favourite media catchphrase, the “U” turn, I have only one thing to say. “You turn if you want to. The lady's not for turning.”<sup>7</sup>. All the men MPs , who were present in the House of Commons, laughed loudly , but she did not laugh. She kept silent angrily with her eyes went downwards.<sup>8</sup>

In addition to the different hidden messages behind the different ways Thatcher used to smile, She used her index finger<sup>9</sup> to point her male colleagues when she was very angry to them. This gesture represents the female audacity to express herself freely without being afraid of the male reaction. This was another non-verbal method to exert her power over men. Words were not the sole way to exhibit her political power, but even her gestures.

Another non-verbal gesture done by Thatcher, to strengthen her political presence, was the gestures she done with her legs. Actions speak louder than words, so even her legs “speak”. In her speech entitled “No, No,” in October 1990, she stood with her legs crossed

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<sup>1</sup> See , **PART A “Different Smiles, Different Political Messages”. P 276.**

<sup>2</sup> Anarusiska, 06.

<sup>3</sup> See , **PART A, “Different Smiles, Different Political Messages”. P 276.**

<sup>4</sup> The felt smile is long and intense. It shows all signs of positive feeling associated with amusement, contentment and pleasure. Adrian Furnham and Evgeniya Petrova , *Body Language in Business: Decoding the Signals* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan,2010),34

<sup>5</sup> See , **PART A, “Different Smiles, Different Political Messages”. P 276.**

<sup>6</sup> Anarusiska, 06

<sup>7</sup> Danco 28, Margaret Thatcher “The Lady’s Not for Turning , *Youtube* Video, 00:30. October8,2007. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rQ-M0KEFm9I> (Accessed May9,2022)

<sup>8</sup> See , Part B. P276.

<sup>9</sup> See , Part C. P276.

hinging on her right elbow.<sup>1</sup> This means a total feeling of safety.<sup>2</sup> Feeling safe among men in parliament and above all delivering a speech to them was a vital female achievement in parliamentary politics. Feeling comfortable with men was the seeds of her imposed in the House of Commons.

Furthermore, Margaret Thatcher spoke through moving her head upwards. This gesture indicates a high self-confidence.<sup>3</sup> Holding the head high means an ultimate self-confidence. Margaret Thatcher, repeatedly, spoke with a head high<sup>4</sup> to exhibit her self-confidence in front of the audience. This gesture, in fact, had a very significant link with the power and the ability of women in the masculine-dominated world (parliament). As a woman, Margaret Thatcher delivered a non-spoken message of the female ability to stand in front of men and to join them in decision-making.

The non-verbal communication through the bodily actions was of a paramount importance in politics. It helped the political leaders to reflect a surfeit of political messages in an unspoken way. Margaret Thatcher was one of those political leaders whose body language not only expressed her political thoughts and strengthened her political presence, but it empowered her in front of men MPs.

### **3.5. Conclusion**

The election of Margaret Thatcher as the first woman Prime Minister in 1979 marked a watershed in the female political integration. She represented the political zenith all women MPs desired. As a gifted leader, she embarked on a process of radical change especially in the economic field bringing the heavy burden of consensus politics into an ultimate end. She worked on restoring the political, economic and social stability from over again in Britain. As a woman, she strove to bring greatness again to “Great Britain”. Those crowning achievements were not the outcome of overnight plans; they were the gist of lengthy management of Britain relying on female capabilities and convictions.

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<sup>1</sup> Wall Street Journal, “Highlights from the Iron Lady’s Speeches”, *Youtube* Video, 02:30 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mwzCvuj8XXA> (Accessed May11,2022)

<sup>2</sup> “51 Body Language Gestures and What They Signal” <https://lacinai.se/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/51-Body-Language-Gestures-and-What-They-Signal-.pdf> (Accessed May12,2022)

<sup>3</sup> Vanessa Van Edwards, “26 Head Body Language Gestures to Get You A-Head of the Game”, *Science of people* <https://www.scienceofpeople.com/head-body-language/> (Accessed May11,2022)

<sup>4</sup> See, **Part D.**



The “Iron Lady” was an example of those female politicians who alerted the views of the female unfit for political participation. She did not climb the ladder as a political participant only, but she emerged as a political trailblazer ruling over men in their “House”. Thatcherite unchallengeable political integration represented the female political invasion of men in their own sphere. In fine, her political participation negated the traditional negative stereotypes about women in politics.

What remained debatable is her reluctance to promote other women into politics. In this vein, she represented the zenith of political participation as a PM, but she strengthened the female underrepresentation in politics to its highest point. Although she was a woman, she did nothing to pave the way for other women sharing the same sex to reach the parliamentary world. She represented not only the positive image of women in politics, but also the negative angle of the female involvement in parliament.

Put simply, her premiership posed several political lessons in the history of female political immersion. Thatcherite flawed way of government in her last years brought her overnight downfall. The Poll Tax and Thatcher’s domineering way of leadership pushed men to seize the opportunity to topple her the first moment she committed a great mistake of the Poll Tax. When her political mission was up, she wished a man to carry on her policies. John Major would succeed her and women might be politically empowered during his premiership. This point would be discussed thoroughly in the fourth chapter.



**Chapter**

**Four**

**Chapter Four  
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(1990-1997)**

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#### **4.1. Introduction**

Margaret Thatcher was succeeded by John Major as the youngest Prime Minister of the twentieth century at the age of 47. He would serve from 1990 to 1997. The Conservative Party accomplished another landslide victory in the General Election of 1992. The local government of England was placed at the hands of Major. The latter did not rule Britain by himself, but with the help of numerous Members of Parliament. Those MPs were male and female ones appointed by Major himself to political and Ministerial positions that he wanted after being elected.

As previously mentioned in the third chapter, Margret Thatcher did not grant an opportunity to women to become MPs based on a number of arguments. Sharing the same gender, the female political progress under Thatcher remained an unreachable quest for a number of women. This chapter tries to examine the continuity of Thatcher's feminine touch in politics as a woman. It tries, additionally, to dig deep in Major's attitudes towards the female political integration as a man on the one hand. On the other hand, it throws light on women's political status under a male leader and it mirrors, therefore, male-female relations in parliament.

#### **4.2. John Major as Prime Minister**

In the light of the political laws in parliament, Prime Minister could not hold such position without previously serving as an MP. John Major was one of the male MPs in Margret Thatcher's cabinet. His political perseverance paved the way for his political access as PM.

##### **4.2.1. The Dawn of John Major's Parliamentary Involvement**

John Major was born on March 29, 1943 in Carshalton, Surrey, but he grew up in Brixton. He did not carry on his studies in university because he was obliged to leave school at the age of 16 to financially support his family.<sup>1</sup> His first political experience started in Brixton when he entered as Conservative. He emerged as a candidate for

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<sup>1</sup> Adam Augustyn, "John Major: Prime Minister of United Kingdom"  
<https://www.britannica.com/biography/John-Major> (Accessed January 12,2022)

Lambeth<sup>1</sup> Constituency at the age of 21<sup>2</sup>. In 1964, he started serving as the chairman of Housing Committee. In 1986, he became a Minister of State for Social Security (1986-1987) and his political advancement reached its peak in 1987 when he was offered an opportunity to become a senior minister in Margret Thatcher's cabinet in which he served as Chief Secretary of Treasury (1987-1989). In 1989, he became a Foreign Secretary and later, he was appointed by the Thatcher as Chancellor of the Exchequer (1989-1990). He emerged on the political scene as a senior Minister due to the support of a woman; Margaret Thatcher.

#### **4.2.2. The Contribution of Margret Thatcher to Major's Political Success**

From 1918, when the First woman Nancy Astor became the first female MP in the House of Commons, the political power of women in parliament was terribly undermined. The ceaseless obstacle of underrepresentation became the sole criterion of the female political participation. The Coming of Thatcher as the first woman PM, the role of women in politics and their effectiveness in the "Men's House" increased. Above all, women could have an impact on the political success of men. A good example for this was Thatcher's appointment of John Major in her cabinet. She did not only grant him a golden opportunity to have a word in the process of decision-making, but she fueled his political success. This was the first lesson for the role of women in politics. A woman could lead men to their political success. Major himself admitted the fact that Thatcher played a vital role in bringing up his political success. In the Conservative Party Conference held in 1991, he stated:

Earlier this week, this Conference welcomed Mrs Thatcher. You gave her the most tumultuous reception. She deserved it. She led our country for over 11 years, our Party for over 15. We owe Margaret a great debt. The Britain she left us is immeasurably stronger than the Britain she found. Above all, she helped others to believe in us and us to believe in ourselves. And on those foundations she laid three great election

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<sup>1</sup> Lambeth is an inner Borough of London. "Lambeth", <https://www.britannica.com/place/Lambeth> (Accessed January 06,2022)

<sup>2</sup> "Past Prime Ministers : The Rt Hon Sir John Major KG CH", *GOV.UK* <https://www.gov.uk/government/history/past-prime-ministers/john-major> (Accessed January06,2022)

victories. It's good to applaud; it's grand to cheer. But the greatest tribute we can pay her is to do as she did. To win, and win, and win again....<sup>1</sup>

In her final years in power, Margaret Thatcher desired a man to succeed her and to keep her policies. She chose John Major as her successor. The crux of the matter is that she did not wish a woman as her successor, but a man. To put it another way, this was a message that despite the political breakthrough of Thatcher, but parliament in general and Downing Street in particular remained and would remain a male space. She claimed:

My problem was the lack of a successor whom I could trust to keep my legacy secure and to build on it. I liked John Major and thought that he genuinely shared my approach. But he was relatively untested and his tendency to accept the conventional wisdom had given me pause for thought.....however, no other candidate found greater favour with me<sup>2</sup>

During her tenure as Prime Minister, she admired Major's work in the economic field especially when Thatcher appointed him as the Chancellor of Exchequer on October 26, 1989 after the resignation of Nigel Lawson.<sup>3</sup> She supported him and appointed him as her successor. Most importantly, she advised the members of the Conservative party to electorally backing him. She stated: "He [John Major] will be a superb leader of this country. I want everyone in the party to rally behind him so that he can go on"<sup>4</sup>. The good relation between Thatcher and Major was clear even at the end of her premiership. Major admired her as a "Woman" politician. He stated after his victory as Prime Minister :

It is a very exciting thing to become leader of the Conservative Party, particularly exciting to follow one of the most remarkable leaders the Conservative party has had. I believe that as time proceeds and Margaret Thatcher's period as Prime Minister is seen in proper perspective it will be seen that she has been a very great<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "Leader's Speech", *British Political Speech*, 1991 <http://www.britishpoliticalspeech.org/speech-archive.htm?speech=137> (Accessed February 12,2022)

<sup>2</sup> Thatcher, *The Downing Street Years*,702

<sup>3</sup> Nigel Lawson served as the Chancellor of Exchequer from 1983 to his sudden resignation in October 1989. "Nigel Lawson", *Speakers Associates* <https://www.speakersassociates.com/speaker/nigel-lawson/> (Accessed May12,2022)

<sup>4</sup> "1990: Tories Choose Major for Number 10", *On This Day 1950-2005*, BBC News [http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/november/27/newsid\\_2528000/2528847.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/november/27/newsid_2528000/2528847.stm) (Accessed January 12,2022)

<sup>5</sup> "Written Statement on John Major's election as Party Leader", *Margert Thatcher Foundation*, , November1990 <https://www.margarethatcher.org/document/107871> (Accessed January 12,2022)

The leadership of the Conservative Party was electorally granted to John Major who served as a MP during a woman's tenure, supported by a woman and re-shaped parliament as a male- led space from over again.

#### **4.2.3. Becoming the Leader of the Conservative Party and Prime Minister**

John Major became the leader of the Conservative Party, previously led by Thatcher since 1975, following her unexpected resignation on November 28, 1990. He did not become the leader of the Conservative Party overnight. However, an election to choose a leader was held in 1990. The results of 1990 Conservative Party Leadership Election guaranteed his political success as a leader. This political leadership contest was held on November 27, 1990 as the second ballot that aimed at selecting the new leader of the Conservative Party. The outcome of the ballot mirrored the victory of John Major gaining 185 votes winning over his rivals Michael Heseltine (1966-2001)<sup>1</sup> with 131 votes and the Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd (1979-1995)<sup>2</sup> obtaining 56 votes.<sup>3</sup> The votes for Major represented 55% of the electorate whereas Heseltine 35% and Hurd 15%.<sup>4</sup>The following day, he was appointed Prime Minister in November28,1990.

The first issue he strived to adjust was strengthening the Conservative Party's unity already lost during Thatcher's tenure. Her domineering and autocratic leadership style triggered a bitter opposition and division in the party. This kind of unstable relations between a ruler and a ruled contributed to her downfall. By the same token, the success of a given political party and the effectiveness of its governmental strategies is highly interlinked with a stable relation between its members. A jeopardized relation means a total fiasco of the entire party.

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<sup>1</sup> Michael Haseltine (born in 1933) was a Member of Parliament from 1966 to 2001. He was a Cabinet Minister in various departments from 1979 to 1986 and 1990 to 1997 and Deputy Prime Minister from 1995 to 1997. "Michael Haseltine", *GOV.UK*, <https://www.gov.uk/government/people/michael-heseltine> (Accessed May20,2022)

<sup>2</sup> Douglas Hurd (born 1930) served as an MP standing for the constituency of Witney. During John Major's Tenure, Douglas Hurd served as Secretary of State in Home Office (1989-1995). "Douglas Hurd", *European Leadership Network* <https://www.europeanleadershipnetwork.org/person/douglas-hurd/> (Accessed May20,2022)

<sup>3</sup> "1990: Tories Choose Major for Number 10".

<sup>4</sup> Catherine Haddon, "Conservative Leadership Contests: Past and Present", Institute for Government, July3,2016<https://www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk/blog/conservative-leadership-contests-past-and-present> (Accessed January 12,2022 )

#### **4.2.4. The General Election of 1992**

The 1992 General Election was held on Thursday, April 9, 1992. It was pointed out that this election was the first occasion when the Conservatives got the highest number of votes in history.<sup>1</sup> The conservative Party under John Major received 14 million votes that resulted in 43% of the total electorate.<sup>2</sup> The Conservative Party, again, witnessed a surge in the number of votes. It was estimated that the polls represented 45% of votes for the Conservatives and 39% for the Labour Party under Neil Kinnock.<sup>3</sup> The increased support to the Tories aimed at freeing England from the economic chaos it witnessed under the Thatcher in her final years. John Major declared that an election should take place after the dissolution of parliament. He stated on March 11, 1992:

Good Morning. I [John Major] can now confirm to you that this morning I [John Major] saw Her Majesty The Queen and sought her permission for a dissolution of Parliament and a General Election on 9 April. I am pleased to say that Her Majesty has given her permission for that to go ahead..... I believe the time is now right to go ahead for a decision at a General Election. Up and down the country there is no doubt that business wants such a decision, it needs to know that the Conservative Party are safely back in government so it can proceed with its investment plans and see this country return from recession to recovery. I believe that will be able to go ahead the moment the election is concluded.”<sup>4</sup>

The 1992 election, as any general election in Britain, aimed at electing the 651 members of the House of Commons after the dissolution of parliament since the backbone of any parliament in every corner of the world is its membership. The General Election of 1992 led to the fourth consecutive electoral victory of the Conservative Party since 1979 bagging 21 MPs in the House of Commons and having 41.9 % as a share of the vote.<sup>5</sup> The following table shows the election's results' summary. The focus is on the three main political parties in Britain.

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<sup>1</sup>“Past Prime Ministers: The Rt Hon Sir John Major KG CH”.

<sup>2</sup> Reitan, 151

<sup>3</sup> Reitan, 148.

<sup>4</sup> “Mr Major’s Statement on the General Election – 11 March 1992”, March 1992

<https://johnmajorarchive.org.uk/1992/03/11/mr-majors-statement-on-the-general-election-11-march-1992/>

(Accessed February 11, 2022)

<sup>5</sup> Vernon Bogdanor, “The 1992 General Election and the British Party System” *Government Opposition: An International Journal of Comparative Politics* Vol27,n°03 (1992): 283



**Table 4.1.: The 1992 General Election Results Summary**

	Votes (millions)	Share of the Vote %	Candidates	Seats Won
<b>The Conservative Party</b>	12.80	45.5%	524	319
<b>The Labour Party</b>	9.55	33.9%	524	195
<b>The Liberal Democrats</b>	5.40	1.2%	522	10
<b>Others</b>	0.40	1.4%	758	0

**Source:** Pilling and Cracknell, 20-21

In the light of the Conservative electoral breakthrough, John Major preserved his position as a PM, emerged as a triumphant winner and realized a victory over his rivals Neil Kinnock, the leader of the Labour Party and Paddy Ashdown (born 1941) the leader of the Liberal Democrats. The Conservative Party could not emerge as the victorious governing one without the electoral support of the population. The latter would choose and would elect the ones who deserved, who successfully represented and , above all , would decide who would be qualified to take part in the decision –making machinery. He stated in his electoral campaign manifesto, entitled “The Best Future for Britain”<sup>1</sup>, the significance of the population’s choice of the Conservative Party as the governing one to avoid the aftermath of the Labour’s negative policies.

You know I believe in choice. And in this election, as always, there is another choice. You can vote for our opponents, and watch them take Britain back to the 1970s. Back to socialism. Back to strikes. Back to strife. Back to the world's pity, or worse still, contempt. I don't believe Britain wants that. I know the world doesn't want that for Britain. ....I hope you will choose a different path - to go forward, not back; to go for the best, knowing that Britain can be the best and do it best. My belief is clean only the best is good enough for Britain.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> “1992 Conservative Party General Election Manifesto” <http://www.conservativemanifesto.com/1992/1992-conservative-manifesto.shtml> (Accessed May12,2022)

<sup>2</sup> “1992 Conservative Party General Election Manifesto”, <http://www.conservativemanifesto.com/1992/1992-conservative-manifesto.shtml> (Accessed January13,2022)

Beating the record as another male Premier and a leader of the Conservative Party, John Major had to select what should be kept from Thatcher's policies and what should be eliminated. In another word, he was supposed to represent himself as a "Man in the 'Men's House'" rather than a supporter of a woman's ideas and ideologies.

#### **4.2.5. Major's Legacy Experiencing the Impact of Margaret Thatcher's Policies**

As a male politician, John Major embarked on a policy overshadowed by keeping some of Thatcherite governmental strategies, correcting some, extending some and eliminating some others. It was pointed out that Major would introduce another "Thatcherism without Thatcher"<sup>1</sup>. If compared to his woman predecessor, he was lazier than Thatcher and he was not such a hard worker like her.<sup>2</sup> When it comes to the thorough reading, he did not read much if compared to the detailed Thatcherite reading of any single word having a relation with the domestic or the foreign affairs.

It is worth noting that Major did not keep all Thatcher's policies, but the female touch persisted in his cabinet. He believed that some of Thatcher's policy ingredients were useless and they led to chaos and local dissent. Unlike Thatcher, he supported "unity and inclusion".<sup>3</sup> He relied on some of Thatcher's policies; but the way he imposed them differed. He altered Thatcher's strident and aggressive style to a comfortable one that would bring the population's satisfaction. He would keep, in fact, what Kenneth Clarke (born in 1940)<sup>4</sup> called "Thatcherism with a human face".<sup>5</sup>

Major's political agenda encapsulated some of Thatcher's governmental strategies such as privatization, deregulation, resenting socialism and the right to own.<sup>6</sup> Privatization, as an example, did not meet the public dissatisfaction. The female Thatcherite

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<sup>1</sup> Gilbert, 86

<sup>2</sup> Richard J Aldrich and Rory Cormac, *The Black Door, Spies, Secret Intelligence and British Prime Ministers* (London: William Collins, 2016),490.

<sup>3</sup> Peter Dorey, *The Major Premiership : Politics and Policies under John Major, 1990-97* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1999),XIII

<sup>4</sup> Kenneth Clark was a Conservative MP who served as Secretary of State for Health 1988 to 1990, Secretary of State for Education and Science 1990 to 1992, Home Secretary 1992 to 1993 and Chancellor of the Exchequer 1993 to 1997. "The Rt Hon Kenneth Clarke Qc", *GOV.UK* <https://www.gov.uk/government/people/kenneth-clarke> (Accessed January 07,2022 )

<sup>5</sup> David Haigron, " "Caring" John Major : Portrait of a Thatcherite as a One-Nation Tory", *Observatoire de la société britannique*, 7 (2009) <https://journals.openedition.org/osb/781> (Accessed January 07,2022)

<sup>6</sup> Haigron.

governmental strategy to privatize the industries remained unwanted even after departure. By 1992, coal mines continued to be closed and coal industry continued to be privatized. This led to another kind of instability that reflected the dark side of giving a woman an opportunity to govern. Even under a male PM, the public resentment to Thatcher's policies persisted.

In the light of preserving Thatcher's privatization policy, it was estimated that the closure of more coal mines culminated in the loss of 30,000 jobs.<sup>1</sup> The same year, Major embarked on the last step for privatization. He publicly announced the urgent need to privatize the British Rail.<sup>23</sup> The franchise of railways and the sale of Rail track to private companies created another public resistance. To put it another way, it was another outcry expressed against the seeds of a woman's policies.

It is important to know that Major's preservation of privatization as one of his female predecessors was fruitless. Although privatization was lucrative for government, it was described as "a national disaster"<sup>4</sup> for the British people. Since one of the principles of a successful ruler was to please the ruled people, Major insistence on keeping Privatization placed another heavy burden on people's backs especially the workers already taking part in the privatized industries. Vernon Bogdanor explained the dual role of local government. He stated that the role of government was "to make sure that things are done that the community needs and to secure the wellbeing of the community"<sup>5</sup>

Although Major kept some of Thatcher's policies, he worked on either adjusting some of her policies or breaking them. To see whether people favoured the persistence or the neglect of Thatcher's policies, a poll took place. It was estimated that 69%<sup>6</sup> from those

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<sup>1</sup> Reitan, 157

<sup>2</sup> Reitan, 158

<sup>3</sup> British Rail is the short form of British Railways. The national Railway System was firstly created in 1947 in the light of the Transport Act of 1947. The act stated also the public ownership of railroads. " British Railways", The Editors of Encyclopedia Britannica <https://www.britannica.com/topic/rock-Scotland-1980s-overview-708529> (Accessed January 12,2022 )

<sup>4</sup> Reitan, 160.

<sup>5</sup> Vernon Bogdanor, "The New Localism : Local Government and Constitution", Gresham College, December12,2006 <https://www.gresham.ac.uk/lecture/transcript/print/the-new-localism-local-government-and-the-constitution/> (Accessed January 15,2022).

<sup>6</sup> Karin Davies, "Major 'Im My On Man" , *UPI* , November30,1990 <https://www.upi.com/Archives/1990/11/30/Major-I-am-my-own-man/6875659941200/> (Accessed February 12,2022)

who were asked favoured breaking with her policies. One of her policies to be changed was the Poll Tax. In return, he introduced the Council Tax. In this vein, he stated "I want to bring into being a different kind of country"<sup>1</sup>. Cooperating with his ministers, Major worked on repealing the Poll Tax which was considered as one of the unforgotten blunders of Thatcher that triggered her political demise. Michael Heseltine (born in 1933) , appointed by Major as a Minister for Environment, suggested the replacement of the Poll Tax with Council Tax. He informed his predecessor, through a five-page letter, that ditching her imposed Poll Tax would be inevitable and compulsory because it was "unfair, uncollectable and indefensible"<sup>2</sup> . In his letter to Thatcher, he wrote:

Dear Margaret. The decision to abolish the community charge was not taken lightly... But having consulted widely throughout the party, I am convinced that it would never be accepted as equitable and that it would never be properly collectable either ...I [John Major] do not think we could long defend a situation in which some people were paying more in community charge than in income tax...<sup>3</sup>

Most significantly, the forceful imposition of the Poll Tax did not solely bring the defeat of Thatcher, but it had a negative impact on the political world after her departure. The general election of 1992 devoted to elect the members of the House of Commons, the Conservatives did not receive much votes from people already used to support the Conservative Party. Fearing the persistence of other destructive policies like the community charge, those people, used to opt for the electoral support of the Conservative Party in general elections, shifted their attention to other political parties especially the Labour Party. In this vein, it can be pointed out that female Thatcherite stubborn insistence on the Poll Tax had a tremendous affect on the electoral destiny of the Conservative Party. The latter endured "reduced majority in 1992"<sup>4</sup> . The majority of seats were reduced by 21.<sup>1</sup> The fall in the electorate was one of the outcomes of Thatcher's unbearable policies.

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<sup>1</sup> Reitan, 139

<sup>2</sup> Alan Travis, "Unfair, Uncollectable': How Major Told Thatcher He Was Ditching Poll Tax", *The Guardian for 200 Years*, July20,2017 <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2017/jul/20/unfair-uncollectable-how-major-told-thatcher-ditching-poll-tax> (Accessed January15,2022)

<sup>3</sup> Claire Ellicott, "John Major Tried to Charm Mrs Thatcher with Letter about Carrying Forward the Chances of the Last Ten Years' as He Abandoned Poll Tax and Demolished Her Legacy", *The Daily Mail*, July20,2017 <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-4712072/John-Major-tried-charm-Margaret-Thatcher-letter.html> (Accessed January15,2022)

<sup>4</sup> Jeremy Smith and Iain McLean, "The UK Poll Tax and the Declining Electoral Roll: Unintended Consequences", Paper Presented to University of Warwick , Department of Economics, N°398, October

Despite Thatcher's fury for Major's decision to abolish one of her flagship policies, he did his best to explain in details the dark side of the Poll Tax. The Council Tax was introduced on April 1, 1993 in the light of the Local Government Finance Act (1992). The Act obliged occupants of any property to pay the tax. It was a system in which people were taxed for the ownership of a property (houses). It was an annual fee paid to the local council. This system stated that the more the property is big, the more the owner would be taxed. Each person aged less than 18 years old was exempted from paying the tax. Only the liable persons, above the age of 18, did so. The Council Tax stopped the people's backlash against the previous Thatcherite taxes on individuals. It was a shift from individual-based tax into a property-based tax.

The first woman leader of the Conservative Party imposed taxes on individuals sharing the same house or flat where to live, but the council tax was imposed on the house (property) only without taking into account how many people were living there. The council tax was described as "fair"<sup>2</sup> in which all property owners would be equalized as far as the way they were taxed on the one hand. On the other hand, it was put forward as a "compromise"<sup>3</sup> between the local rates and the already opposed the poll tax.

Although the council tax was concerned with properties, it was a heavy burden on the backs of the poor people who found it very difficult to afford money to be paid. For the poor people, in London for example, the council tax was similar to the Poll Tax despite a series of reduction for the low-income persons. This fact revealed that the botches committed by a woman in politics could be another path to start another political bungle whether the successor would be a man or a woman. Longing for the abolition of the Poll Tax reflected another issue pertinent with the perilous female stubborn intervention in politics. By the same token, Margaret Thatcher doing her best to bring up her downfall mirrored a clear message for women MPs and women leaders not to be over-confident in

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1992) , 01 <https://www.econbiz.de/Record/the-uk-poll-tax-and-the-declining-electoral-roll-unintended-consequences-smith-jeremy/10000844710> (Accessed February 11,2022)

<sup>1</sup> Derek Gillard, "1990-1997 John Major: More of the Same" in *Education in England: A History* ed. Derek Gillard (Queen's Printer for Scotland, 2018).

<sup>2</sup> "Council Tax Reform in the Age of Localism: Why Councils Should Take the Lead", New Policy Institute, , November 2015 [https://www.npi.org.uk/files/3714/4904/8704/CT\\_reform\\_-\\_a\\_discussion\\_paper\\_update\\_Nov\\_15\\_TBB.pdf](https://www.npi.org.uk/files/3714/4904/8704/CT_reform_-_a_discussion_paper_update_Nov_15_TBB.pdf) (Accessed January 15,2022)

<sup>3</sup> Stuart Adam, Louis Hodge, David Phillips and Xiaowei Xu, *Revaluation and Reform: Bringing Council Tax in England into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* ( London:The Institute for Fiscal Studies,2020), 09

imposing harmful policies. Whatever the female leader's unchallengeable powers and whatever the political zenith they reached, but when it comes to politics, a single bungle means a farewell to power and authority.

In the light of Major's political breakthrough as Prime Minister succeeding the longest serving woman Prime Minister in the British history, he was not granted an opportunity to take the lead after the willing departure of his predecessor, but he came to succeed a woman strongly opposed by people and by the Tory MPs. Admittedly, preserving some of her policies, abolishing others dictated Thatcherite personal choice to fail. It was noted that Thatcher taught the female politicians "the freedom to fail"<sup>1</sup>.

This idea is synonymous with the female personal responsibility for being successful, unsuccessful or defeated. After the downfall of Thatcher, the floor was given to a man to pursue another policy in an attempt to overcome the flaws of his predecessor woman. Pursuing that web of policies was not the task of Major only; it was the task of the cooperative political mission of male and female MPs. The latter were terribly excluded from politicians during Thatcher's tenure. However, after her withdrawal, women were re-offered new opportunities to hold higher ministerial positions from over again.

### **4.3. Female Political Participation during Major's Premiership**

The political participation did not refer solely to the direct personal intervention of politicians in parliament to have a word on the local affairs of a given country and even on its foreign affairs. Voting is also one important form of political integration. Major did not emerge as a PM for granted; the support of male and female electors played a pivotal role. Put simply, women were not solely voters; they stood as candidates to be elected for the sake of setting foot in parliament as MPs. The last and final step was the political recruitment as women MPs.

#### **4.3.1. Female Candidacy, Electoral Support and Women MPs in the 1992 General Election**

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<sup>1</sup> Kate Maltby, "Margaret Thatcher gave Britain's Female Politicians the Freedom to Fail", *The Guardian for 200 Years*, May 3, 2019  
<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/may/03/margaret-thatcher-success-britain-female-politicians-fail> (Accessed January 15, 2022)

First and foremost, there was no election that was held without candidates because the gist of parliamentary machinery was the emergence of a victorious political party with a specific number of candidates. Each political party had a certain number of candidates. Statistics showed that there were 2946<sup>1</sup> candidates in the election of 1992 that resulted in the landslide victory of the Conservative Party under John Major. The three main political parties fielded different number of women candidates.

They selected 341<sup>2</sup> women candidates. It is important to mention that the number of women candidates increased if compared to the previous General Election of 1987 when there were 243<sup>3</sup> female candidates. This remarkable surge in the number of women candidates and the improvement of the nature of the female candidacy for political integration mirrored the fact of granting women new chances to climb the ladder as political trailblazers. The Conservative Party appointed 59 women candidates, among them 16 had already served as MPs. Moreover, the Labour Party selected 138 women in which 24 of them used to be MPs. Last but not least, The Social Democrats Party selected 144 women candidates.<sup>4</sup>

As far as the female support to the Conservative Party, led by John Major, was concerned, not all women in England exhibited electoral preference for the Conservatives. Older women supported the Conservatives more than the younger women. Older women, over the age of 35,<sup>5</sup> kept electorally supporting John Major more than older men.<sup>6</sup> Younger women shifted their attention to support the Labour Party. They supported the Labour Party because the latter had glorified the political reforms. It was pointed out that male voters outnumbered female voters in this election.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Byron Criddle, "MPs and Candidates," in *The British General Election of 1992*, ed. David Butler and Dennis Kavanagh (London: Macmillan Press Ltd, 1992),211

<sup>2</sup> Criddle, 219

<sup>3</sup> Criddle, 219.

<sup>4</sup> Criddle, 219

<sup>5</sup> G.E.Maguire, *Conservative Women*,194

<sup>6</sup> Pippa Norris, "Mobilising the 'Women's Vote': The Gender-Generation Gap in Voting Behaviour" *Parliamentary Affairs* Vol 49,n°02 (1996):339

<sup>7</sup> Tracy McVeigh and Toby Helm, "Female Parliamentary Candidates Are on the Rise – but Why Aren't Women Voting?", *The Observer Women in Politics*, March 8,2015  
<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2015/mar/08/female-parliamentary-candidates-rise-why-arent-women-voting> (Accessed February2,2022)

In the light of the 1992 General Election’s results, 60 women<sup>1</sup> candidates were elected to serve as MPs. This number indicated that women represented 10%<sup>2</sup> of the Commons if compared to 90% of male MPS. Those 60 elected women represented 20 ones in the Conservative Party, 37 in the Labour Party, 02 in the Liberal Democrats and another woman was elected for the Scottish National Party (SNP).<sup>3</sup> 21 out of 60 were newly elected to the House; 14 Labour, 6 Conservatives and 1 Liberal Democrats<sup>4</sup>. The Conservative Party, if compared to the opposition Party the Labour one, selected few women and the obstacles to selection always undermined the increased female integration in the party. Most concurrently, the number of women candidates standing in this election was higher<sup>5</sup> to the number of all female candidates in previous elections. The provided table below illustrates the number of women elected MPs in the House of Commons if compared to the whole Commons’ membership.

**Table 4.2.: The Number of the Elected Male and Female MPs in the General Election of 1992**

	<b>Conservative Party</b>	<b>Labour Party</b>	<b>Liberal Democrats</b>	<b>Others</b>
<b>The Number of All MPs</b>	336	271	20	24
<b>The Number of Women MPs</b>	20	37	02	3

**Source:** Mona Lena Crook and Judith Squires, “Gender Quotas in British Politics: Multiple Approaches and Methods in Feminist Research”, *British Politics* 1(2006): 49 10.1057/palgrave.bp.4200002 (Accessed February 2, 2022)

The main way to increase the number of women candidates to run for an election and to be elected for parliament was the resort to electoral gender quotas. The latter is a strategy to increase the number of women candidates and to promote the female representation in political legislatures.

The quota system places the burden of recruitment not on the individual woman, but on those who control the recruitment process. The core idea

<sup>1</sup> For more details about the elected women in the House of Commons in 1992 General Election, see **APPENDIX C, P.263.**

<sup>2</sup> “Women in Parliament: A Guide to the History of Women’s Participation in Parliament and their Representation in the Historical Collections”, 07.

<sup>3</sup> Criddle, 219.

<sup>4</sup> Criddle, 219.

<sup>5</sup> Donley T.Studler and Susan Welch , “ A Giant Step for Womankind: Women Candidates and the 1992 General Election” *Journal of Elections, Public Opinion and Parties* Vol3,n°01 (2007): 216



behind this system is to recruit women into political positions and to ensure that women are not only a token few in political life<sup>1</sup>

Due to the female limited political emancipation, the list of candidates did not encapsulate men only. However, the gender quota system enhanced an unchallengeable women's political integration as an MP. The first step was to be elected. The selection process of candidates went in tandem with selecting even women alongside men. The success of those gender quotas was not guaranteed. It was affected by a series of factors. They included the nature of the political system, the type of electoral or voting system, the type of quota system adopted, cultural attitudes towards the role of women in society, and the nature of the parliamentary environment itself.<sup>2</sup>

Concurrently, the number of women candidates standing in this election was higher<sup>3</sup> to the number of all female candidates in previous elections. Female Candidates quotas played a focal role in this remarkable surge in the number of women candidates. "The adoption of quotas for female candidates in internal party rules has proved one of the most important and successful means for getting more women into office"<sup>4</sup>

When the Conservatives and the Liberal democrats remained reluctant to pursue strategies to increase the number of women MPs in the House of Commons , the Labour Party relied on All-Women Shortlists (AWS) starting from 1993. It was known as the All-Women Shortlists Policy (AWSP) firstly introduced by Harriet Ruth Harman (born 1950). The nub of this policy was to include women solely in the candidates list. The AWS came to an halt in 1996 because it was seen as "illegal"<sup>5</sup> since men were discriminated and deprived from candidacy.

#### **4.3.2. Women's Political Representation in the House of Lords (1990-1997)**

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<sup>1</sup> Drude Dahlerup, "Using Quotas to Increase Women's Political Representation," in "Electoral Quotas for Women: An International Overview" ed. Joy McCann, Parliament of Australia , November 14, 2013, [https://www.aph.gov.au/About\\_Parliament/Parliamentary\\_Departments/Parliamentary\\_Library/pubs/rp/rp13\\_14/ElectoralQuotas](https://www.aph.gov.au/About_Parliament/Parliamentary_Departments/Parliamentary_Library/pubs/rp/rp13_14/ElectoralQuotas) (Accessed February 2, 2022)

<sup>2</sup> McCann.

<sup>3</sup> T. Studler and Welch , " A Giant Step for Womankind", 216

<sup>4</sup> Ronald Inglehart and Pippa Norris, "The Developmental Theory of the Gender Gap: Women's and Men's Voting Behavior in Global Perspective" *International Political Science Review*, Vol. 21, n°4 (2000): 455

<sup>5</sup> Krook and Squires, 48.

As already mentioned, women could not sit as peeresses in the House of Lords until 1958. During John Major years, 29 women<sup>1</sup> were granted Life Peerages who represented 18% of the Lords.<sup>2</sup>In 1992, they represented 6%<sup>3</sup>. There were 75 women appointed in one year from the 826<sup>4</sup> members of the House. Like the House of Commons, women in the Upper House witnessed underrepresentation. Among those female successful appointees in the Upper House during Major's tenure : Phyllis Dorothy James (1920-2014), Sally Rachel Hamwee (born 1947), Jennifer Hilton (born 1936) and Pauline Perry (born 1931).

One of the life peeresses in the House of Lords was Margaret Thatcher. The latter shifted from being a PM into a life peer in the Lords from 1992 to 2013. Despite her unwilling resignation, her interest in politics persisted. She was given a new opportunity to be a political participant during her successor's administration. As a Member in the House of Lords, she took parts in debates over foreign affairs. Thus her political experience as a PM contributed to her easy and fruitful involvement in the Upper House. She told the *Times Newspaper* "I am very much looking forward to being part of Parliament once again,"<sup>5</sup>

Since the House of Lords was also another body where women's political participation was overshadowed by underrepresentation, the limited number of women members represented the elite. As examples of those women in the Lords from the Conservative Party<sup>6</sup>, it can be listed: Daphne Park (1921-2010)<sup>7</sup>, Julia Cumberlege (1943)<sup>1</sup>, Heather Brigstocke (1929-2004)<sup>2</sup>, Detta O'cathain (1938-2021)<sup>3</sup>, Pauline

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<sup>1</sup> For more details about the whole number of women in the House of Lords during Major's years, see **APPENDIX E, P 269.**

<sup>2</sup> "Representation of Women in the House of Lords", House of Lords Library, UK Parliament, February 24,2021 <https://lordslibrary.parliament.uk/representation-of-women-in-the-house-of-lords/> (Accessed February16,2022)

<sup>3</sup> Molinari, 57

<sup>4</sup> Dorothy Hughes, "Women in the House of Lords", House of Lords Library, UK Parliament <https://lordslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/lln-2015-0017/> (Accessed February 20,2022)

<sup>5</sup> "Thatcher to Join the House of Lords", *UPI Archives*, June06,1992<https://www.upi.com/Archives/1992/06/06/Thatcher-to-join-House-of-Lords/3093687411140/> (Accessed February 20,2022)

<sup>6</sup> Those women are chosen from the Conservative Party similar to John Major's victorious party in the General Election of 1992 the Conservative One. Ray Moseley, "Major's Cabinet", *Chicago Tribune*, April26,1992 <https://www.chicagotribune.com/news/ct-xpm-1992-04-26-9202070144-story.html> (Accessed May12,2022)

<sup>7</sup> She joined the House of Lords as a Life Peer in 1990 and left the House in 2010. "All Members of the House of Lords" <https://www.theyworkforyou.com/peers/> (Accessed May12,2022)

<sup>1</sup> She joined the House as a Life Peer in 1990. "All Members of the House of Lords".

Perry (born in 1931)<sup>3</sup>, Lynda Chalker (born in 1942)<sup>4</sup>, Doreen Miller (1933-2014)<sup>5</sup>, Patricia Rawlings (born in 1939)<sup>6</sup>, Pamela Kirkham (born in 1929)<sup>7</sup> and Judith Wilcox (born in 1939)<sup>8</sup>. All in all, women kept joining men in their “House” and this unchallenged entry was fueled by the help and the support of the Prime Ministers.

### **4.3.3. John Major's Attitudes Towards Women's Political Power**

Any leader in the world whether Prime Minister or president supports or totally rejects the female inclusion in the political machinery. John Major, in turn, was one of the male Prime Ministers who exhibited positive attitudes towards women in politics. He supported them and paved the way for their improved political presence through granting few women a golden opportunity to join him in his cabinet and hold high ministerial positions already reserved for men. During his tenure, there were some women who were allowed to enjoy the privilege of “the first woman”.<sup>9</sup> As an example, Gillian Shepherd (born in 1940) ) was the “first woman” serving as Minister of State at Treasury in 1990. Major, as a man, believed in the political merits of women. He did not solely support, but promised them high political positions. He pointed out that “Women will reach the top on merit .....If the honorable gentleman is patient he will find women aplenty in my government in top positions”<sup>10</sup>.

His support to strengthen women's political progress was gradual. When it comes to the female integration in Major's cabinet, he appointed no woman in his first cabinet in

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<sup>1</sup> She joined the House as a Life Peer in 1990 and left in 2004. “All Members of the House of Lords”.

<sup>2</sup> She joined the House of Lords as a Life Peer in 1991 and left in 2021. “All Members of the House of Lords”.

<sup>3</sup> She joined the House as a Life Peer in 1991 and left in 2016. “All Members of the House of Lords” .

<sup>4</sup> She joined the House as a Life Peer in 1992. “All Members of the House of Lords”.

<sup>5</sup> She joined the House in 1993 and left in 2014. “All Members of the House of Lords”.

<sup>6</sup> She joined the House as a Life Peer in 1994. “All Members of the House of Lords”.

<sup>7</sup> She joined the House as a Hereditary Peer in 1995 and left in 1999. “All Members of the House of Lords”.

<sup>8</sup> She joined the House as a Life Peer in 1996 and left in 2020. “All Members of the House of Lords”.

<sup>9</sup> The privilege of the “First Woman” refers to the case when a given woman MP was the first one in the British History to attain a given political position in Parliament. During John Major, there were two women who were the first women to become A female Speaker and Minister of Treasury. The former was Betty Bothroyd and the latter was Gillian Shepherd. “My own explanation”

<sup>10</sup> Davies.

1991. Like his predecessor Margaret Thatcher, John kept the “all-male cabinet”<sup>1</sup> in his first cabinet of 1990 then he realized that he needed to include women. He exempted women from political participation in his first cabinet because he believed that there was a shortage of qualified women to be a Cabinet Minister<sup>2</sup>. But later, Major changed his mind and included experienced women in his cabinet.<sup>3</sup> Equality of representation was still an obstacle that hampered the female full political inclusion. Before Major, the Conservative Party was overshadowed by a very limited female participation under the umbrella of conservatism.

In forming his second ministry in 1992, he resorted to appointing women. He appointed two women in his cabinet in April 1992. He appointed Virginia Bottomley (born in 1948)<sup>4</sup> and Gillian Shephard to his 1992 cabinet.. During Major's premiership, she served as Secretary of State for Health and National Heritage from 1992-1995 and again from 1995-1997 she kept being an MP serving as Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport.

The second woman Gillian Shephard was appointed as Minister of State at the Treasury in 1990. She was the first woman in the British political history to hold such important position. In 1991, her political responsibility was altered to become deputy chair of the Conservative Party. Her political integration reached its peak when she entered Major's cabinet as Secretary of State for Employment in 1992.<sup>5</sup> The same year, she became the first woman as an appointed Minister for Women's Issues.<sup>6</sup> From 1994-1995, she served as Secretary of State for Education and from 1995-1997 as Secretary of State for Employment from over again. She expressed her pleasure for the political success of Major as Prime Minister. She believed that his political breakthrough was not only a

<sup>1</sup> Glenn Frankel, New British Prime Minister Names Haseltine to a Key Post”, *Washington Post*, November 29, 1990 <https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/1990/11/29/new-british-prime-minister-names-heseltine-to-a-key-post/2071b592-c947-4eeb-8dce-703890ed0e31/> (Accessed May 20, 2022)

<sup>2</sup> Moseley, “Major's Cabinet”.

<sup>3</sup> Sylvia Bachevkin, “From Tough Times to Better Times: Feminism, Public Policy, and New Labour Politics in Britain,” *International Political Science Review* Vol 21, n° 4 (2000), 407

<sup>4</sup> Virginia Bottomley served as an MP from 1984 to 2005 during John Major's Administration and even after him. Ginger Strand, “Shephard, Gillian (1940—)”  
, *Encyclopedia.com* <https://www.encyclopedia.com/women/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/shephard-gillian-1940> (Accessed February 11, 2022 )

<sup>5</sup> Strand, “Shephard, Gillian (1940—)”.

<sup>6</sup> “Baroness Shephard of Northwold JP DL”, Centre for Mental Health , September 4, 2018 <https://www.centreformentalhealth.org.uk/baroness-shephard-northwold-jp-dl> (Accessed February 12, 2022)

success for the Conservative Party, but it was a success for women. She stated “I think it is a terrific vote of confidence, personally, but also for women”<sup>1</sup>

In addition to Major's promotion of female inclusion in his cabinet, another woman had beaten the record through being elected as the first woman Speaker of the House of Commons in 1992. She was called Betty Boothroyd (born in 1929). She represented the 155<sup>th</sup> Speaker<sup>2</sup> of the House in the British history. She was the “first” woman to be granted such an important political position already performed by men only. She had been already elected in the general election of April 1992 to be appointed as the first woman Speaker in which she would assume the responsibility of a Speaker until 2000. She obtained 372 votes that empowered her to defeat a man Peter Brooke (born in 1934) obtaining 238 votes.<sup>3</sup> John Major expressed his euphoric sentiments to have a woman as a Speaker for the first time in the British political agenda. He congratulated her saying “Today you have certainly made history”<sup>4</sup>.

The Speaker is the backbone of the Commons. All Speakers, after being elected in a general election as a candidate, had to be re-elected for this position through a secret ballot.<sup>5</sup> He/ she had numerous tasks to perform. Without his or her intervention, debates in the House of Commons never take place. The speaker functions as a chairman during debates. He/ she is the one to choose who speaks. The speaker functions as a “representative” of the House and a liaison between the House of Lords and the Crown.<sup>6</sup> Most importantly, the Speaker represented the Monarch in parliament. “Originally, the monarch appointed the speaker to act as the crown's agent in parliament”<sup>7</sup>. Betty Boothroyd, as a Speaker, had to ensure that debates took place in an organized way

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<sup>1</sup> Davies.

<sup>2</sup> Craig R. Whitney, “British Commons Elects Woman as Its Speaker”, *The New York Times*, April 28, 1992 <https://www.nytimes.com/1992/04/28/world/british-commons-elects-woman-as-its-speaker.html> (Accessed February 12, 2022)

<sup>3</sup> Whitney.

<sup>4</sup> Whitney.

<sup>5</sup> “Speaker of the House of Commons”, Institute for Government, September 9, 2019 <https://www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk/explainers/speaker-house-commons> (Accessed February 12, 2022)

<sup>6</sup> “The Speaker”, House of Commons Information Office, Factsheet M2, August 2010 <https://www.parliament.uk/globalassets/documents/commons-information-office/m02.pdf> (Accessed February 12, 2022)

<sup>7</sup> “Presiding Officers : Speakers and Presidents of Legislatures”, Legislative Research Series Paper 1, National Democratic Institute for International Affairs, 1996, 03 [https://www.ndi.org/sites/default/files/031\\_ww\\_presiding\\_0.pdf](https://www.ndi.org/sites/default/files/031_ww_presiding_0.pdf) (Accessed February 13, 2022)

without an intervention which was not allowed. She was aided by three Deputy Speakers<sup>1</sup>. They are divided into one Chairman of Ways and Means<sup>2</sup> and two Deputy Chairmen.<sup>3</sup>

The Speaker of the Commons exercised authority over all the MPs in the House. As a woman, Betty Boothroyd was given such an outstanding opportunity to exercise authority over men. In this vein, gender roles during Major's tenure did not coincide with gendered discrimination as earlier years. Betty was the second example after Thatcher that was elected to exercise domination and authority over men in their own "House". She did not only manipulate discussions and chair parliamentary debates, but above all she had the right to suspend MPs whatever their political rank.

The Speaker, Betty as an example, had four roles to perform. First and foremost, the Speaker is intended to maintain order through chairing debates. The second role refers to acting as an administrative head. The third one is linked with serving as a ceremonial head. Last but not least, the regulation of the proceeding is one of the most important functions that any Speaker in the UK must fulfill.<sup>4</sup> Being an administrative head means that the Speaker chaired also the House's Commission devoted to manage the House's five departments.<sup>5</sup> Besides being an administrative head, the ceremonial head refers to the case when she chaired also ceremonial occasions such as the parliamentary State Opening<sup>6</sup>. Put simply, the regulation of proceedings goes in tandem with the blind obedience of the orders given by her. This unchallenged privilege of the Speaker to give orders and

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<sup>1</sup> "The Speaker".

<sup>2</sup> The Chairman of Ways and Means presided over the House when the Speaker was absent and chaired the Committee of the whole House. The Chairman's title is derived from their role in the former Committee of Ways and Means, which was abolished in 1967. The term "ways and means" originated with the Parliament of England and refers to the provision of revenue to meet national expenditure requirements and to implement the objectives of economic policy. The ways and means are provided by the imposition of taxation. After 1967, all fiscal and monetary matters became the task of the Chancellor of Exchequer "Chairman of Ways and Means". UK Parliament <https://www.parliament.uk/site-information/glossary/chairman-of-ways-and-means/> (Accessed February13,2022)

<sup>3</sup> Robert Rogers and Rhodri Walters, *How Parliament Works* 7<sup>th</sup> ed (New York: Routledge,2015),53

<sup>4</sup> "Presiding Officers: Speakers and Presidents of Legislatures",04.

<sup>5</sup> The House of Commons Departments includes Department of Clerks of the House, Speakers Office, Department of Sergeant-at-Arms, Department of the Library and Department of Official Records. "Presiding Officers : Speakers and Presidents of Legislatures", 04.

<sup>6</sup> The State Opening in UK parliament marked the beginning of the parliamentary year when the Queen Elizabeth II delivers a speech known as the Queen's Speech. Tom Edgington, "Queen's Speech: What Is It and Why Is It Important?", *NEWS*, May10,2021 <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-politics-32816450> (Accessed February13,2022)

instructions is labeled as Parliamentary Procedure<sup>1</sup>. The latter is described as “Means of reaching decisions on when and how power shall be used”<sup>2</sup>. Those orders given by the Speaker were not her own creation. They were the written rules through which the House functions. They are known as Standing Orders.<sup>3</sup>

Betty Boothroyd did not emerge as a Speaker from scratch, but she used to serve as a Deputy Speaker to Bernard Weatherill (1920-2007)<sup>4</sup>. Thus, she enjoyed a kind of political experience. Add to this, the male support to her was, also, of paramount importance. This fact mirrored the idea that men, sometimes, contributed to the female political breakthrough. Her motto was “I Speak to Serve”.<sup>5</sup> She did not consider maintaining order and managing the House of Commons as a political job for granted, but she focused on the idea that speaking means intervening in serving parliament. By the same token, women politicians had a word and had a hand in changing several things in their country. Being a political participant was synonymous with the capability of positively serving. Like other women political trailblazers who made history like Nancy Astor, Janet Young and Margret Thatcher, she proved herself as an important political figure who was able to serve parliament and to make from the parliamentary game a successful and fruitful one. She stated:

Being speaker has afforded me a unique opportunity to serve parliament, for which I [Betty Boothroyd] am immensely grateful...The function of parliament is to hold the executive to account. We should never overlook the primacy of parliament... Defend your rights, and remember that the privilege of this house was dearly won...<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Robert Marleau and Camille Montpetit, “House of Commons Procedure and Practice”, 2000 <https://www.ourcommons.ca/marleaumontpetit/DocumentViewer.aspx?Print=2&Sec=Ch05&Seq=4&Language=E> (Accessed February 13,2022)

<sup>2</sup> Marleau and Montpetit.

<sup>3</sup> “Standing Orders of the House of Commons”, December 2, 2021 <https://www.ourcommons.ca/about/standingorders/Index-e.htm> (Accessed February 13,2022)

<sup>4</sup> Bernard Weatherill served as the Speaker of the House of Commons from 1983 to 1992. “Lord Bernard Weatherill”, UK Parliament <https://members.parliament.uk/member/1736/career> (Accessed May 20, 2022)

<sup>5</sup> “Betty Boothroyd Speaks Her Mind on Politics, Yorkshire and Making History”, *Yorkshire Post*, <https://www.yorkshirepost.co.uk/news/politics/betty-boothroyd-speaks-her-mind-politics-yorkshire-and-making-history-1778432> (Accessed February 13, 2022)

<sup>6</sup> Sally Bolton, “Boothroyd's Warning to Commons in Farewell Speech”, *UK Politics*, July 26, 2000 <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2000/jul/26/parliament.uk2> (Accessed February 13, 2022)

Although gender disparity in the male and female political representation in parliament persisted, Betty Broothroyd remained one of the women who changed their political destiny rising to a very important ministerial post as a Speaker. The nub of the matter as that John Major Premiership was overshadowed by a continued female political underrepresentation, but the nature of political participation of Betty Boothroyd and other told a lot about a remarkable improvement.

John Major selected also another woman to be his advisor<sup>1</sup> and to be the head of his Policy Unit since she was an economics specialist<sup>2</sup>. She was Sarah Hogg (born in 1946). She would head the Policy Unit until January 1995. What seemed inspiring for women was that Sarah was not only an advisor to the Prime Minister, but the head of all the previous male advisors to Major. Sarah Hogg<sup>3</sup> was another female icon during Major's years that portrayed the continued political improvement of women. Thus, male Prime Minister chose to be advised by a woman contributed to new hopes for an increased female immersion in the "Male House".

Major confessed that Sarah Hogg, in the 10 Downing Street, was an effective woman. Her role in politics as an advisor made her highly needed in parliamentary affairs and, above all, she owed the admiration of Prime Minister himself to be his "strong arm, the most of all Major's eyes and ears through her presence".<sup>4</sup> He stated:

Sarah's job was tough...I[John Major] let it to be known that I expected her to have cooperation from both Central Office and the Civil Service, but she often had to cajole or bully to get it. Forceful and effective, she became a lightning conductor for controversy. Dubbed the 'Deputy Prime Minister', she took many blows intended for me<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Birgit Bujard, *The British Prime Minister in the Core Executive: Political Leadership in British European Policy* (Springer International Publishing AG, 2019), 100

<sup>2</sup> The Policy Unit in British politics refers to the body of advisors to the Prime Minister. *Collins Dictionary* <https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/policy-unit#:~:text=policy%20unit%20in%20British%20English,to%20the%20British%20Prime%20Minister> (Accessed February 24, 2022)

<sup>3</sup> Before being appointed by John Major, she used to be an economic editor of several Newspapers such as the *Times*, the *Daily Telegraph* and the *Economist*. "Sarah Hogg", December 25, 2019 [https://www.sourcewatch.org/index.php/Sarah\\_Hogg](https://www.sourcewatch.org/index.php/Sarah_Hogg) (Accessed March 1, 2022)

<sup>4</sup> Thomas McMeeking, *The Political Leadership of Prime Minister John Major : A Reassessment Using the Greenstein Model* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2021 ), 106-109

<sup>5</sup> McMeeking, 107.



Sarah Hogg pointed out that advising the Prime Ministers about the local affairs of England was one of the heavy workloads she had to perform. By the same token, she was proud being granted such important political position. She clarified:

The function of the Policy Unit is to keep the Prime Ministers in touch with the outside thinking, to work on his own ideas and to act as a sounding board for ministers, advising on the flavor of proposals and counter proposals that pour in continuously. The Policy Unit tries to do both: to be both grit and oil in the government machine <sup>1</sup>

It was during Major's tenure that women felt that they were in an urgent need to fight for their increased political participation. A Conservative MP, Teresa Gorman (1931-2015) said "We[Women MPs] are going to start walking down and plunking ourselves down on the front bench (where cabinet members sit). If they won't give us an official job, we will just have to go there and squat"<sup>2</sup> If light is shed on the characteristics of the female gender, women are always inclined to renewal and change. They "are associated with associated with renewal and...offer a visible break from the past"<sup>3</sup>.

The quest for change and new hopes for more political emancipation characterized their steps to ask for the female advanced political immersion during Major's years in office. Despite their calls for an increased political presence, women still endured the political underrepresentation if compared to their male counterparts.

#### **4.4. Gender Relations and Winds of Change (1992-1997)**

John Major succeeded the first woman Conservative PM in the British history Margaret Thatcher in 1992. Unlike his predecessor, he promoted the female participation in parliament. He offered the two women Virginia Bottomley and Gillian Shepherd a golden opportunity to join him in his cabinet as Secretaries of State. In addition, several women MPs were appointed to other political positions. In this vein, women found themselves from over gain competing with men in their "House" under the leadership of

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<sup>1</sup> McMeeking, 108.

<sup>2</sup> Davies.

<sup>3</sup> Benjamin Worthy, "Ending in Failure?: The Performance of 'Takeover' Prime Ministers 1916–2016," *Political Quarterly* Vol 87,n° 04 (2016): 514

another Conservative leader. The presence of the male and female gender in parliamentary politics under Major coincided with inevitable gender relations.

The gender relations were enhanced through a powerful communicative medium which is language. The latter played a very important role in strengthening gender roles and maintaining gender relations. Through language, the political support and cooperation were reflected. The parliamentary language could even unveil hostile relations between male and female MPs especially when men felt that their positions were threatened by an increased female competition.

#### **4.4.1. Male-Female Parliamentary Relations (1992-1997)**

In the House of Commons and the House of Lords in general and in John Major's cabinet where the gist of the political work was performed, male-female relations were stable and women MPs were not hampered and bothered by men. On the contrary, there were women who were helped and supported by male MPs. One male parliamentarian glorified the role of women in representing other women and acknowledged their political readiness to focus on women interests. He made clear that women played a vital role in better representing other women. He stated "I think that women are more concerned about issues such as more help for families, equal pay and human rights. They also want to see women represented more equally in all areas of life, not least in politics"<sup>1</sup>

Women MPs, who were granted higher ministerial positions, worked together with male MPs without any kind of misunderstandings. Their common aim was to produce successful political legislations. As an illustration, the parliamentary relations of the male MP Jonathan Hill (1992-1994) and the female Head of Policy Unit Sarah Hogg worked together in collaborative circumstances. Jonathan Hill, interviewed by the Senior Lecturer in English at the University of Rennes(France) David Haigron about the 1992 general election campaign and the way it was organized, claimed that his work with Sarah Hogg was such a good occasion. He stated: "Sarah Hogg and I did a lot of the stuff together

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<sup>1</sup> Julie Ballington, *Equality in Politics: A Survey of Women and Men in Parliaments* (Switzerland: Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2008), 33

throughout the campaign. Sometimes she would do the first draft and I'd work on it, sometimes I would and she'd work on it"<sup>1</sup>

Moreover, with regard to women's relations with men in the political arena, the female political underrepresentation meant that patriarchy was still overshadowing their political ties. This fact had to do with the persistence of "public patriarchy"<sup>23</sup>. Women, remained tied with male instructions, control and domination. Women MPs, in turn, avoided any negative behaviour in parliament to better preserve the stable and the friendly relation with men. Women, in both Houses worked on avoiding:

Uncivil behaviours such as shouting, challenging, insulting, arguing and interrupting or talking over opponents. They were seen as, in the words of an article in the *Yorkshire Post*, 'setting new standards', and making the old standards, epitomised by 'men arguing loudly, irascibly', appear 'out of date, superficial, even trivial'<sup>4</sup>

Most importantly, stability was not the only feature that characterized male-female political relations. There were occasions in which men attacked women orally and showed feelings of resentment especially when women were granted an opportunity to work with men in high ministerial positions. Thus, men MPs found themselves obliged to negatively react to the female inclusion in their own matters.

As an example, the appointment of the Deputy Head of the Policy Unit Sarah Hogg triggered gender unstable political relations. Hogg was attacked by men because they believed their political power and political authority would be spoiled under a woman Head<sup>5</sup>. Sarah Hogg's continued presence was resented by the Chancellor Norman Lamont. He saw her presence during his bilateral meetings with John Major as "interference"<sup>6</sup> in

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<sup>1</sup> David Haigron and Jonathan Hill, "Interview with Jonathan Hill, Political Secretary to John Major : " A Journey into Political Communication," *Literature, History of Ideas, Images and Societies of the English-Speaking World E-Journal* (February 18, 2004) <https://journals.openedition.org/lisa/733?lang=fr> (Accessed May 13, 2022)

<sup>2</sup> Mary Holmes, *Gender and Everyday Life* (New York: Routledge Taylor and Francis Group, 2009), 63

<sup>3</sup> There are two types of patriarchy: the private patriarchy and the public patriarchy. The first one refers to the male control and domination over women in the family as fathers, brothers and husbands. The second one refers to the male control; and to the female subordination to men in the place of work. Holmes, 62 (My own paraphrase)

<sup>4</sup> Deborah Cameron, "Women, Civility and the Language of Politics: Realities and Representation" *The Political Quarterly* Vol 93, n° 1 (August 27, 2021): 26

<sup>5</sup> McMeeking, 109.

<sup>6</sup> McMeeking, 108.

their work affairs. Norman Lamont was terribly annoyed during her presence.<sup>1</sup> It was expounded that they became enemies because the male Chancellor could not bear the heavy burden of being under the orders and the personal decision of a female Head.<sup>2</sup>

Needless to say, women MPs were serious in their political work. They did their work to its fullest. Sarah Hogg was not only the Head of the Policy Unit, but the Chairwoman of the Policy Cabinet Committee, established in 1992, devoted to examine in details the public expenditure.<sup>3</sup> The Chancellor Norman Lamont examined the expenditure proposals and the final task was done by Sarah Hogg. It was her onus to draft the final reports and presented them to Prime Minister informing him about every single detail about the public financial income and outcome.

The way Sarah Hogg worked annoyed her male colleagues in the committee. She spend long hours working and discussing without being exhausted. One of the committee members the Chancellor of Exchequer Ken Clarke (1993-1997) felt bored and lost his concentration because he was famished. Ken Clarke sat "impatiently doodling bald heads on the pad before him".<sup>4</sup> Being unable to carry on working hungry, he complained loudly that he needed to eat and stop working. This reflected the female total devotion to the political work rather than men. Sometimes the female punctuality and seriousness in parliament was a source of resentment from men colleagues.

Whatever the factors, the nature of gender relations during John Major's years hinged on the circumstances male and female MPs were involved. Women Ministers shared the political authority of men. Women, in this case, got the lion's share of political work similarly as men Ministers. What really triggered some hostilities from male Mps was the female interference in local issues that should be done by men only.

#### **4.4.2. The Nature of John Major's Political Language with Women MPs**

The crux of the matter is that gender relations were not strengthened without a communicative means. The political language of women and men MPs was very important

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<sup>1</sup> McMeeking, 108.

<sup>2</sup> McMeeking, 109.

<sup>3</sup> McMeeking, 109.

<sup>4</sup> McMeeking, 109.

to make from those relations workable and fruitful ones. As an example in this chapter, the language of John Major, as a male leader, with women MPs is a very pivotal element to be tackled and analyzed for the sake of finding out whether the male political authority over women was guaranteed through language or not.

John Major had a couple of occasions to address women MPs. Firstly, during the parliamentary debates in his cabinet. Secondly, Prime Minister Questions was one of the most public ways that MPs can express their concern and represent the views of their constituents. The parliamentary debates between the PM and other MPs especially women MPs was an important occasion when women could air out their political concerns and prove their political capability to be a political participant. The way Major answered women's questions told a lot about his attitudes toward their parliamentary presence.

The first sample to portray Major's communicative style with women MPs is the first Prime Minister Questions held on November 29, 1990. One of the Question delivered to him by a Labour woman MP Elizabeth Peacock (born in 1937)<sup>1</sup> "After the recent turmoil and my right hon. Friend's uniting of the party, does he agree that his objective of a classless society in the future will be better served by a Conservative Government led by him than by the socialism offered by the Labour Party?"<sup>2</sup>

He answered her in a way<sup>3</sup> that told a lot about his positive attitudes to have women in the House of Commons. He did not answer her directly, but he started thanking for her brilliant question although she was from the Opposition Party. "I [John Major] am happy to agree entirely with my hon. Friend about that."<sup>4</sup>

Another woman MP Margert Ewing (serving from 1974-2001) was one of the female political participants who were present to deliver a question to Prime Minister about a local issue of the way he would deal with homelessness. She spoke in a very polite

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<sup>1</sup> Elizabeth Peacock served as Parliamentary Private Secretary to Nicholas Scott as Minister for Social Security and Disabled People Unit (1992) and she served also as MP for Batley and Spen (1983-1997). "Elizabeth Peacock" <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Elizabeth.Peacock> (Accessed May 20, 2022)

<sup>2</sup> "PMQT – 29 November 1990", "John Major, KG CH: Prime Minister of Great Britain and Northern Ireland 1990-1997", <https://johnmajorarchive.org.uk/1990/11/29/pmqt-29-november-1990/> (Accessed February 24, 2022)

<sup>3</sup> UK Parliament, "John Major's First Prime Minister's Questions: 29 Nov 1990", *Youtube* Video. 15:51, (November 29, 1990) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sDtMlnxv7Xs> (Accessed February 24, 2022)

<sup>4</sup> "PMQT – 29 November 1990".

way slowly paying a great attention to every single word she was uttering. This polite and attentive linguistic intervention portrayed the fact that even the female political language reflected two realities: their continued subordination to male politicians and their respect to male politicians. Her question was:

The Prime Minister in his recent meteoric rise has shown great dignity and pride in his humble origins. What priority will he now give to the problem of homelessness which he inherited from his predecessor? In particular, will he look at the issues of cardboard cities, people who live in damp homes and those who have no hope of a roof over their heads? <sup>1</sup>

His answered her that “Everyone is entitled to dignity and pride. The Government’s policies will endeavour to ensure that they can attain them”<sup>2</sup>. The way of his verbal interaction with the woman MP reflected his polite and insightful answer. He could have told her that he would see how to solve this problem. But, he used his political language to hit two birds with one stone. He expressed his certainty through language. Moreover, the way of his reply reflected the crux of the female inclusion which was the treatment of women MPs the same way men were treated.

The third example and the last one of those women MPs who used their political discourse to unveil Major policies and plans was Mrs Maureen Hicks (a Member in the Conservative Party starting from 1990). She wanted to know his political programs for inner cities. She did not start asking directly. She firstly welcomed the new PM, and then delivered her question. She stated “I warmly welcome my right hon. Friend as Prime Minister...”<sup>3</sup>

The Prime Minister acknowledged the woman’s for her question and he explained that the point she asked about was very important. This indicated that women MPs were aware of the most effective policies to be put forward as soon as possible. The political language, in this case, mirrored the gendered awareness about the useful policies for England in the coming years. John Major commented about the inner cities as “a matter of

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<sup>1</sup> “PMQT – 29 November 1990”.

<sup>2</sup> “PMQT – 29 November 1990”.

<sup>3</sup> “PMQT – 29 November 1990” .

great importance”<sup>1</sup> showing his tremendous interest in the issue brought into question by the woman who asked the question.

Another sample to dig deep into John Major's political discourse addressing women MPs is the PMQ held on March 24, 1994. A woman MP Dame Jill Knight (1923-2022)<sup>2</sup> wondered to know the Prime Minister's engagement's of that day. His answer was detailed. It was not short. This indicated that John Major gave much importance to the questions of women similarly as men MPs. Additionally, he listed all his engagements in the House of Commons and provided her with other engagement even outside the House. He said “.....In addition to my duties in the House, I shall be having further meetings later today”.<sup>3</sup>

During the same PMQ in 1994, a woman Labour MP Jean Corston (born 1942)<sup>4</sup> desired to know Major's views about the public interest immunity. She told the PM about what had been decided by one of the male MPs. Major knew that what she was saying was wrong. He did not harshly addressed Jean Corston saying she was wrong in front of all. He “politely” stated “I think that the hon. Lady may have been misled by some news reports...”<sup>5</sup>. He used the expression “I think” instead of directly saying “you are wrong .... Check your information”. This was a clue of Major's polite replies to women MPs.

John Major's political language with women MPs reflected his positive attitudes towards including women into politics. The way he answered their questions confirmed his belief that men and women MPs should be treated similarly without favouring men over women. The bicameral, during Major's years in office, included men and women. All of them had a hand and a voice on the local legislations and the local management of England. John Major's language reflecting his respect and his acknowledgement of

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<sup>1</sup> “PMQT – 29 November 1990”.

<sup>2</sup> Joan Christabel Jill Knight served as a Member of Parliament for Birmingham Constituency from (1966-1997). Stephen Bates, “Lady Knight of Collingtree Obituary”, *The Guardian*, April 18,2022 <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2022/apr/18/jill-knight-lady-knight-of-collingtree-obituary> (Accessed May 20,2022)

<sup>3</sup> “PMQT – 24 March 1994” <https://johnmajorarchive.org.uk/1994/03/24/pmqt-24-march-1994/> (Accessed May13,2022)

<sup>4</sup> Jean Ann Corston was a Labour MP for Bristol East serving from 1992-2005. “Baroness Jean Corston” <https://www.lse.ac.uk/law/centenary/people/jean-cortston> (Accessed may20,2022)

<sup>5</sup> “PMQT – 24 March 1994”.

women's endeavors in politics pushed women MPs to be more encouraged to orally intervene in parliamentary debates and discussions

#### **4.4.3. Women MPs' Political linguistic Interaction with Men**

The political communicative language in parliamentary politics was not used for granted as a matter of question-answer, but it was a mark of power. It was a way through which men and women exhibit their political power. Women's presence in politics, their political participation in decision-making was not the only way that guaranteed their important role in politics; language is another shield through which women protect their political reputation from the male onslaught. During parliamentary debates, language was the only criterion that revealed who would be the "winner and the loser"<sup>1</sup>. In another article, Shaw focused on the same idea stating that "Speaking out is the business of parliamentary debate. In possibly no profession other than politics does success depend so strongly upon an individual's ability to speak effectively in public and often adversarial contexts"<sup>2</sup>

It was pointed out that men and women used different communicative styles in parliament<sup>3</sup>. Women addressing their leader and their colleagues did not use aggressive language; they spoke in a way that empowered triggered cooperation and avoided conflicts. Several women MPs were interviewed by the Professor of Politics and Gender at the University of London Sarah Childs. They confirmed the fact that they preferred to use a political language which is "less combative and aggressive"<sup>4</sup>. Being so cooperative in their political discourse, women continued to witness the female subordination to men in parliament.

Language in politics was used by some female MPs, the ones who were holding high ministerial posts, to show political power. To exemplify, the parliamentary debate, that took place on February 26, 1997, was an occasion when men and women MPs

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<sup>1</sup> Sylvia Shaw, "Language, Gender and Floor Apportionment in Political Debates" *Discourse and Society* , Vol11,n° 03 (2000), 401

<sup>2</sup> Sylvia Shaw, "Governed by the Rules?: The Female Voice in Parliamentary Debates" in *Speaking Out: The Female Voice in Public Contexts* .ed., Judith Baxter (London: Palgrave Macmillan,2006), 81

<sup>3</sup> Lotte Hargrave and Tone Langengen, "The Gendered Debate : Do Men and Women Communicate Differently in the House of Commons?," *Politics and Gender* Vol17,n° 04(2021):580

<sup>4</sup> Cameron, "Women, Civility and the Language of Politics",25



debated about several points concerned with employment and education. One of Women MPs present was Gillian Shephard. A Conservative male MP, Mr. Richard Burden (1992-2019), asked her if she will make a statement on the extent of job insecurity in Britain<sup>1</sup>. She replied “A number of people rejoice in the name John Major, including an official in ‘my’ Department; all of them have great cause to feel perfectly secure in their jobs.”<sup>2</sup>. Gillian used the personal pronoun “my” instead of saying “the Department”. Through language, she wanted to send a message that she was not only a woman among men, but a responsible woman with a department being in charge of.

The same Male MP asked her about the increase in the number of people in temporary jobs.<sup>3</sup> Her answer really represented the power of a woman in politics in front of men. Gillian Shephard, publicly, expressed her disappointment to what she described as “silly” question that normally should not be asked by a politician. Moreover, she used her political language to remind a ‘man’ to re-think again about this question and re-make it again a courteous one. Her answer stated “I am disappointed by the hon. Gentleman's question. He might have been gracious enough to refer to the fact that unemployment in his constituency has fallen by 17 per cent.”<sup>4</sup>

Another woman MP from the Liberal Democrats was Diana Maddock (1945-2020). During a parliamentary debate on March 17,1990, a male MP wanted to discover her view about an amendment to a bill. She answered “Although I agree with the principles behind the amendments, we are not in a position to get them right today. Therefore, I cannot support the amendments as drafted ”<sup>5</sup>. Through her oral language with a man, she used the personal pronoun ‘I’ to confirm her refusal to support the amendment”.

Diana Maddock firstly mentioned ‘we’ then when it came to her view, she publicly admitted ‘I cannot’. Replying with ‘I cannot support’ means that she was working thoroughly in politics and she knew every single detail about the political issues. She knew

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<sup>1</sup> “Parliamentary Business” , *WWW.Parliament.UK*  
<https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm199697/cmhansrd/vo970226/debtext/70226-15.htm> (Accessed February25,2022)

<sup>2</sup> “Parliamentary Business”.

<sup>3</sup> “Parliamentary Business”.

<sup>4</sup> “Parliamentary Business”.

<sup>5</sup> “Parliamentary Business”.

very well why she must neglect the support of this amendment. In parliament, women MPs used language to reflect the effectiveness of their political work. Their oral words mirrored their actions. Their political language reflected their political experience without saying what they were doing in details. Sometimes from one word, the outcome of their endeavours was mirrored. The political reward for women would take place in 1997 when the Labour Party realized a landslide victory over the Conservative one. The General Election of 1997 marked a watershed in the female political history because their number would be doubled.

Most significantly, women MPs enjoyed friendly relations with John Major as a Prime Minister. This was clearly seen in the PMQ held on March 24, 1994. All the male MPs addressed John Major as “Prime Minister” then carried on their question. As an example, Mr. Barry Jones started his question as “To ask the Prime Minister”<sup>1</sup>. In another question, he asked “Does the Prime Minister ...?”. One of the female MPs, addressing their question to the Prime Minister, Angela Knight instead of starting her question with “Does the Prime Minister...?”, she started her question with “Does my right hon. Friend...”.<sup>2</sup> Another woman MP addressed John Major as “her Honorary Friend” during the PMQ of July 1996. Mrs Jacqui Lait (born in 1947)<sup>3</sup> asked “does my right hon. Friend agree that breaking up the United Kingdom, creating an extra tier of regional government”.<sup>4</sup>

Like the PM John Major whose good treatment of women in parliament was clearly seen through his political language, women MPs political language reflected their trust in their leader. The way women MPs interacted with Major represented the fruitful parliamentary leader-led relations in parliamentary politics. Most critically, men MPs outnumbered women MPs in the whole parliamentary memberships and even during the PMQs, the women political pioneers during the debates with the PM were politically powerful through the political language they used.

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<sup>1</sup> “PMQT – 24 March 1994”.

<sup>2</sup> “PMQT – 24 March 1994”.

<sup>3</sup> Jacqueline Anne Lait served as a Member of Parliament for Hastings and Rye during John Major's years from (1992-1997). “Jacqui Lait”, *Hyperleap*, 2022 [https://hyperleap.com/topic/Jacqui\\_Lait](https://hyperleap.com/topic/Jacqui_Lait) (Accessed May 20, 2022)

<sup>4</sup> “PMQT – 16 July 1996” <https://johnmajorarchive.org.uk/1996/07/16/pmqt-16-july-1996/> (Accessed May 13, 2022)

**4.4.4. Women's Apotheosis in the 1997 General Election**

John Major five years term came to an end in 1997. Another general Election was to take place. This election represented the catalyst for change concerning the female political representation in the House of Commons and the House of Lords. The election was held on May1, 1997. John Major emerged again as a candidate leading the Conservative Party. The Labour Party, in this election, was led by Tony Blair. The latter strove to attract more voters due to the principles stated in his election campaign.

In the light of the 1997 General Election results, the Labour Party realized a landslide victory whereas the Conservative Party suffered a crushing defeat. This political defeat marked the end of the repeated political breakthroughs of the Conservatives since Margaret Thatcher (1979-1990). It was another political chance for the Labour Party to start spicing parliament with the Labour reforms. The gist of the electoral results of 1997 election, the Labour Party got the largest<sup>1</sup> majority of seats since 1945 whereas the Conservatives got the lowest<sup>2</sup> number of seats since 1906. The following table shows the election's results confirming the electoral victory of the Labour Party under Tony Blair gaining 328 seats if compared to the defeated Conservative Party under John Major having 165 seats.<sup>3</sup>

**Table 4.3.: Summary of Voting in the 1997 General Election**

<b>Party</b>	<b>Votes (millions)</b>	<b>Share of Vote %</b>	<b>Candidates</b>	<b>Seats won</b>
<b>The Labour Party</b>	11.35	43.5%	527	328
<b>The Conservative Party</b>	8.78	33.7%	528	165
<b>The Liberal Democrats</b>	4.68	18%	527	34
<b>Others</b>	1.25	4.8%	1363	02

**Source:** Pilling and Cracknell, 20-21

<sup>1</sup> Bryn Morgan, "General Election Results: 1 May1997", The House of Commons Social and General Statistics Section, No68, Britain Votes 6, 1998  
<https://www.parliament.uk/globalassets/documents/commons-information-office/m15.pdf> (Accessed February27, 2022)

<sup>2</sup> Morgan, 02

<sup>3</sup> Pilling and Cracknell, 20-21

The election of 1997 represented a watershed in the female political participation in the House of Commons. 120 women MPs were elected into the House of Commons. Their number was doubled if compared to the 60 ones elected in 1992.<sup>1</sup> Those results portrayed the fact that the percentage of women in parliament increased to reach 18%<sup>2</sup> of the whole parliamentary Members and 24% of the whole number of Labour MPs<sup>3</sup>. The election resulted in the election of 101 women, known as “Blair’s Babies”<sup>4</sup> in the Labour Party that constituted 24.1 % of all Labour MPs. Moreover, 13 women for the Conservative Party that represented 7.9% of the Conservative Members. Furthermore, the third main political Party in England the Liberal Democrats encapsulated 3 women elected MPs that constituted 6.5% of the elected Liberal Democrats.<sup>5</sup>

In the election of 1997, more women voted than men. Statistics revealed that 17.7 million women and 15.8 million men voted.<sup>6</sup> It was pointed out that the Labour Party accomplished the electoral breakthrough in 1997 due to the increased electoral support of women who desired change under Tony Blair.<sup>7</sup> The Labour Party re-relied on all- women shortlists to better increase the number of women candidates and the number of women MPs in parliament. Put simply, women shifted their attention to electorally support the Labour Party rather than the Conservative Party. The percentage of women voters in 1992 decreased by 12%<sup>8</sup> in 1997 and increased by 11%<sup>9</sup> to the Labour Party. The following table illustrates the percentage of male and female voters in this election.

<sup>1</sup> Morgan, 02

<sup>2</sup> Sarah Childs, “The New Labour Women MPs in 1997 British Parliament: Issues of Recruitment and Representation,” *Women’s History Review* Vol09,n° 01 (2000):55

<sup>3</sup> Sarah Childs, “A Feminized Style of Politics : Women MPs in the House of Commons” *The British Journal of Politics and International Relations* Vol06,n° 01 (2004): 04

<sup>4</sup> Maria Teresa Grasso, Stephen Farrall, Coline Hay, Emily Gray and Will Jennings, “Thatcher’s Children, Blair’s Babies, Political Socialization and Trickle-down Value Change : An Age, Period and Cohort Analysis,” *British Journal of Political Science* , Cambridge University Press Vol49,n°1 (2017): 01

<sup>5</sup> Childs, “The New Labour Women MPs in 1997 British Parliament”, 55-56.

<sup>6</sup> Geoffrey Evans and Pippa Norris, “A Critical Election? Understanding the 1997 British Election in Long-Term Perspective” , January9,2016 <https://aceproject.org/ero-en/topics/electoral-participation/turnout/a-gender-generation-gap.pdf> (Accessed February27,2022)

<sup>7</sup> “What Really Happened on May 1 ?” ,*Politics97* , 1997  
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/special/politics97/analysis/kellner.shtml?tblang=english-ca> (Accessed February 27,2022)

<sup>8</sup> “What Really Happened on May 1 ?”

<sup>9</sup> “What Really Happened on May 1 ?”

**Table 4.4.: Vote by Group 1997**

	<b>Conservative Party</b>	<b>Labour Party</b>	<b>Liberal Democrats</b>
<b>Men</b>	31%	45	17
<b>Women</b>	32%	45	17

**Source:** “What Really Happened on May 1?”

The electoral support to John Major in general and the Conservative Party in particular had decimated in this election. The Party was brought to its worst phase when the 1.8 million electors who supported John Major in 1992 election shifted their attention to support the Labour Party.<sup>1</sup> The female shift to the support of the Labour Party did not arise out of the vacuum; there were reasons that strengthened the female support to Tony Blair and their hesitation to support John Major again. First and foremost, Tony Blair did his best to increase the number of women candidates in the election shortlists. This step energized women’s to vote Labour.

Secondly, the parliamentary work of Prime Minister and the series of reforms represented the crux of electoral outcomes. John Major’s tenure was overshadowed by several scandals and economic problems. His internal policy witnessed “scandals, resignations, by-election defeats, a long recession, divisions over Europe, defecting MPs, a rolling leadership contest, ‘sleaze’”<sup>2</sup>. Voters, including women, desired change through supporting another political Party to avoid the unbearable shortcomings of Major’s policy and government. The latter was described as “most unpopular in recent history”<sup>3</sup>

The female candidates in the British General Elections kept increasing from one election into another since 1966. The Labour Party resorted to All-Women Shortlists that aimed at selecting half of the winnable seats for women. The Conservative Party never used this method even in 1997 Election. It was estimated that in 1997 election, 38 women

<sup>1</sup> G.E.Maguire, *Conservative Women*, 199

<sup>2</sup> “The Conservative Campaign”, *Politics 97*, (1997)

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/special/politics97/background/pastelec/ge97con.shtml> (Accessed March01,2022)

<sup>3</sup> “The Conservative Campaign”.

were included in All-women Shortlists. From those 38 candidates, 35 were elected to become MPs<sup>1</sup>.

The AWS was firstly used in this election since it was firstly annulled in 1996. It had a stirring impact on doubling the number of women MPs in the House of Commons on the one hand. On the other hand, it had a destructive impact on the Conservative party since this AWS policy contributed to the attraction of more women voters who believed that the AWS would improve the political position of women in politics. "AWS were first used in selecting candidates for the 1997 election, when the country saw a doubling of the proportion of female MPs in the House of Commons – from 9% to 18%. Since then, the percentage of women in parliament has stayed above 17%"<sup>2</sup>

All in all, the 1997 General Election represented a watershed in the political history and the political agenda of women. It marked the end of Major's years in office, the defeat of the Conservative party by the Labour Party and above, all, it marked the early symptoms of feminizing politics under the Labour leader Tony Blair through doubling the number of women candidates . Doubling the number of women candidates contributed, inevitably, to doubling the number of the elected women MPs to the House of Commons. The more women were elected in a given general election , the more their appointment to the House of Lords increased also.

#### **4.5. Conclusion**

In fine, John Major's tenure, in one way or another, another governmental phase when women went through ups and downs. The female underrepresentation persisted to characterize their political journey in politics. Their quest for more political opportunities to equalize their status with their male counterparts was never a reality during John Major's years in power. As Prime Minister, he granted women a chance to reach high ministerial positions in his cabinet through appointing them as secretaries of state.

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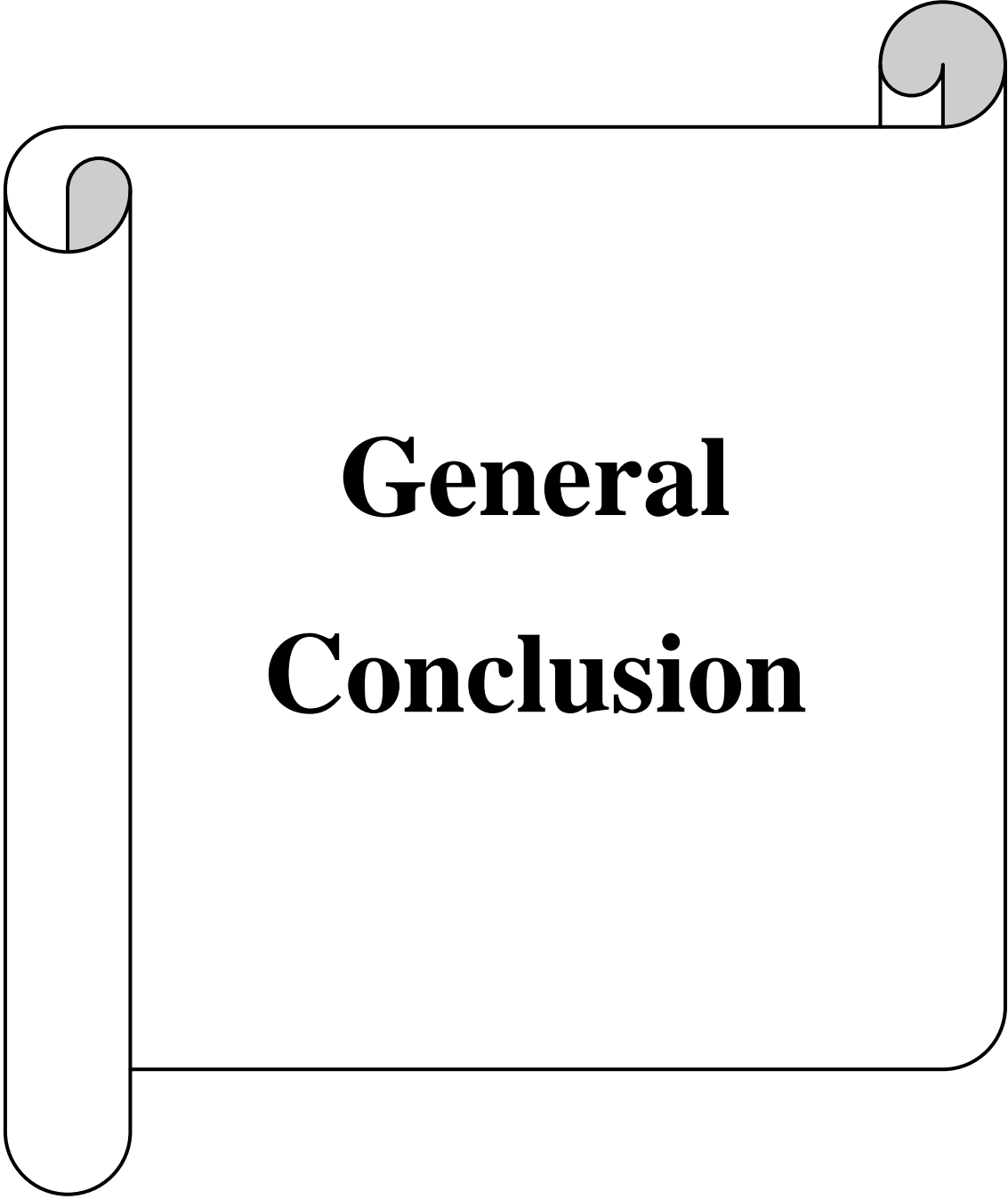
<sup>1</sup> Richard Kelly and Isobel White , "All-Women Shortlists", House of Commons Library, Briefing Paper NUMBER 5057, March7,2016, 08

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<sup>2</sup> Elliot Chappel , "51% of Labour MPs Are Women. What Now for All-women Shortlists?", *LABOURLIST*, December31,2019 <https://labourlist.org/2019/12/51-of-labour-mps-are-women-what-now-for-all-women-shortlists/> (Accessed March 1,2022)

Women, quenching their desire for full acceptance in parliament, remained in question. The remarkable admission of women into Major's cabinet annoyed some male MPs which impacted negatively gender relations in the House of Commons. In this vein, the Political ups women witnessed under the umbrella of Major's government posed a threat to the male political status. He was the first male Prime Minister to appoint a woman as his advisor. This mirrored his willingness to show that women could not be only political participants, but effective ones.

To wrap it up, the Conservative's 18 years of successive electoral victories came to a standstill in 1997 when their successful political history was defeated by Tony Blair. The electoral victory of Tony Blair represented not only the success of Tony Blair, but it started another chapter of women political advancement. Major's March from power added insults to injury for the Conservative women whose number remained low, but it was a golden opportunity for 101 women of the Labour Party to appear on the scene as Labour MPs. Even under Tony Blair' Major's successor, women remained under-represented in the House of Commons and the House of Lords. So, Can women, one day, achieve political equality or will it remain an unreachable quest for women?



**General  
Conclusion**



## General Conclusion

The female integration in the House of Commons, firstly becoming a reality in 1918, was never claimed by women and they never demanded joining men in the House. Their main goal to accomplish was their ability to share the process of decision making through their votes. Women's outcry against the male Prime Ministers serving before 1918 represented their vehement interest in the political participation from a different angle. They battled for a different kind of political participation mainly the electoral political participation. On the contrary, women's vehement interest to stand in the House of Lords pushed them to strive heart and soul to accompany men in the Upper House. Till 1958, women were offered a golden opportunity to join men in the House of Lords.

Accordingly, the governmental intervention to emancipate women politically was dual. It was through the partial and the equal franchise they granted to women, plus the golden opportunity of allowing women to be elected as MPs: opening the "Men's House" to women. Women's setting foot in parliament as politicians was not an easy and overnight accomplished task. It was a long journey full of difficulties, hurdles and opposition.

The female participation in WWII impacted women positively through maximizing the employment opportunities after the war, but the war did not bring sweeping changes for women in parliament. Women MPs kept, from one general election into another (1945-1979), representing a minority in politics. The door of Westminster was opened for them easily, but the governmental promotion of gender parity was in vain. In the light of the female existence with their male colleagues in the bicameral parliament, gender relations were dual depending on the circumstances male and female MPs were involved. The male-female relations during parliamentary debates were an amalgam of friendly as well as hostile relations.

Most importantly, the sole reason that triggered hostile gender relations was the female increased competition with men or doing the same task when women endeavoured to do better than men. In this case, the male MPs' masculine political authority was threatened. Although welcoming women in parliament; the Prime Ministers remained reluctant to maximize women's political representation fearing

## General Conclusion

the feminization of British politics. They did so to keep the masculine public patriarchy still alive in the British parliament.

Taking into account the nature of the female political inclusion, it was overshadowed by one lone criterion which was underrepresentation. The latter was, in fact, a planned issue by the leaders of the political parties to avoid the nightmare of a feminized politics. The early governmental practice of gender-based discrimination and unjust policies towards women candidates started before the female appointment to their political posts. It started during the candidates' selection process through resorting to discriminative strategies to select women candidates in the short-lists. From one general election into another (1945-1997), the male candidates always outnumbered women candidates.

The female trailblazers, climbing the ladder of political participation (1945-1997), did not give up and they did not let that political hurdle spoiling their political mission. They were ceaselessly ready to surmount over gender disparity in politics to keep present in parliament and to cope with the difficulties they encountered. In one way or another, this really mirrored their interest in managing the local affairs of their country. Any woman MP, whatever the constituency she represented and whatever her political beliefs, spiced the parliamentary politics with new issues whether she introduced, proposed or accomplished. Eventually, women MPs believed that reaching the gate of parliament must be pertinent with better representing other women and increasingly speaking out women issues and promoting women interests.

The female political empowerment was very limited. It was coincided with appointing a very few number of women to high ministerial positions such as Speakers and Cabinet Ministers. Statistics revealed the decreased appointment of women MPs into high political positions. From 1945-1979, one female Speaker Betty Boothroyd, One Deputy Speaker Betty Harvie Anderson, one Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher and 9 women cabinet ministers represented the pinnacle of the female political inclusion when the British parliament was flooded with an enormous number of male MPs. In this vein, the British parliament remained a mixed-sex inclusive institution, but not arena where equitable policies were fostered. Gender equality in parliament remained also an unreachable quest.

## General Conclusion

The election of Margaret Thatcher in 1979 as the first woman Prime Minister in the British political history marked a turning point in the female political representation in the House of Commons and the House of Lords. Thatcher's political presence in parliament, her political treatment of her colleagues and, above all, her way of locally managing England was a catalyst for change that impacted on her political relations with her colleagues and triggered the societal unrest. The way Margaret Thatcher began her political career, as a PM, and the way she resigned was totally different. The early political zenith shifted into unceremonious resignation due to her authoritative style of government and the political domination she exercised over the male MPs and Cabinet Ministers.

The female success or failure in the already only-male led parliament was interlinked with the way women MPs behaved, worked and reacted. Any trivial mistake could lead to a total fiasco. Besides, the leadership style was also of great significance when it came to the female competition with men or the attempt to dominate men. In their already-established House, the male MPs and the male leaders of political parties paid tremendous attention to their masculinity rather than their political success. This was clearly experienced during the tenure of Margaret Thatcher. The authoritative leadership style triggered the male opposition against her.

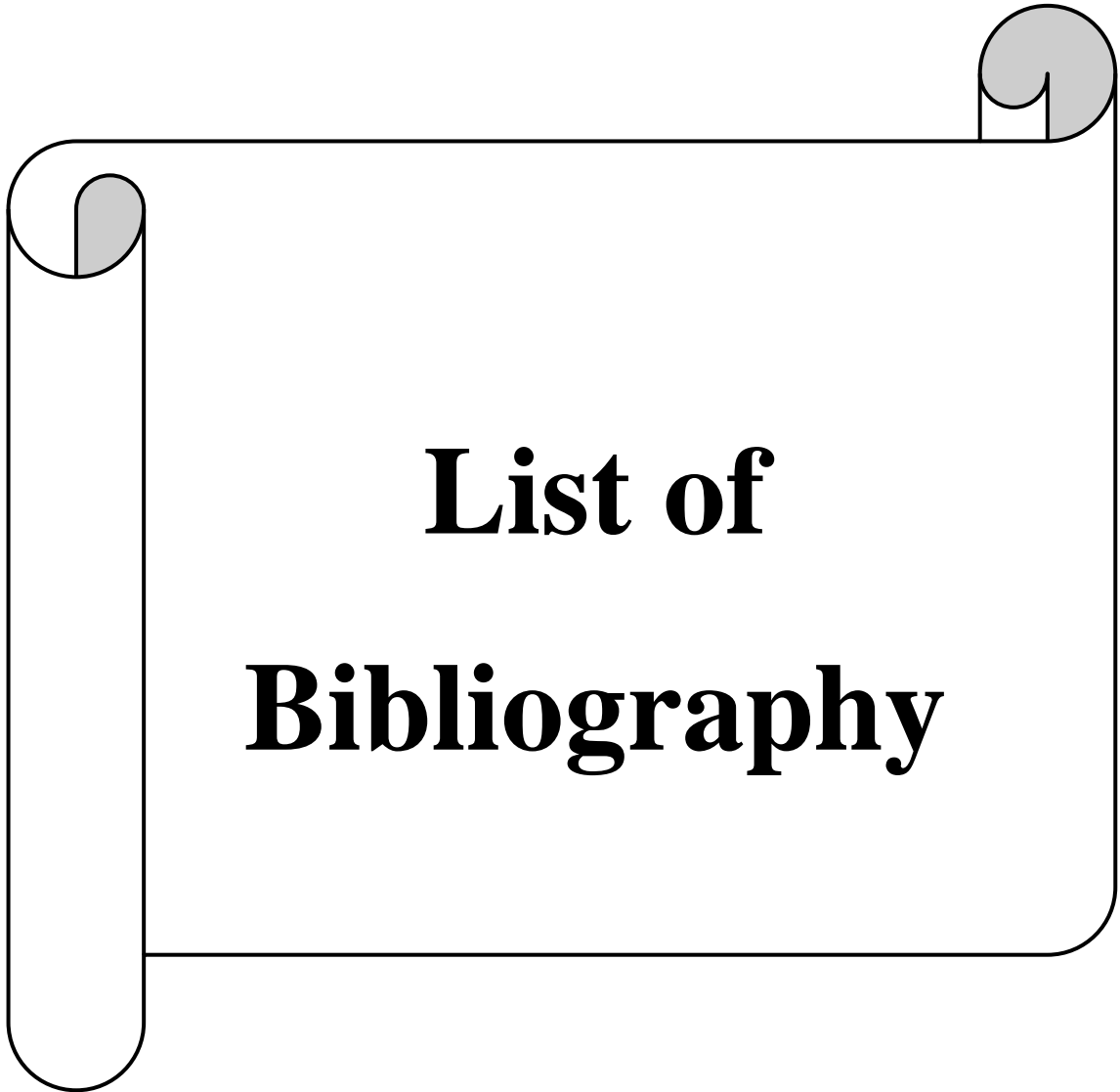
This indicated a single lesson in the British political history; parliament was opened for women for political collaboration, not for political domination. If political patriarchy persisted in the British parliament, it was just because the first day parliament was established, it was dominated by men. When it came to the female political domination over men in parliament, things would take another turn. The inappropriate exercise of political power had its own repercussions.

Most importantly, women's political endeavours and their hard work, although undergoing political inequality, was not negatively impacted. They kept overcoming the planned political underrepresentation hoping for fluctuations as rewards for their political perseverance. Never losing hope, women MPs worked hard and enjoyed the very limited percentage of seats. In 1997, they reaped the fruits of their labour. Due to the Labour Party's, led by Tony Blair, incorporation of the All-Women Shortlists in the General Election of 1997, the number of the elected women MPs was tripled. 101 women MPs entered parliament. Put simply, the female political involvement 1945-

## General Conclusion

1997 as decision-makers indicated that the decision-making could not be a fruitful, workable and successful one without gender cooperation, unity, support in the parliamentary world. Women MPs did not always encounter such supportive environment. Despite tough circumstances, women MPs were there surmounting.

Future research can be conducted delving into other important gender issues in parliamentary politics. One important topic to be tackled would be the investigation of the political journey of the elected 101 Labour MPs in 1997 and compare it with one of the Conservative administrations before 1997 when women were just a minority in politics. Another focal suggestion may consider the effectiveness of the resort to All-Women Shortlists in increasing women's political representation in parliamentary politics. As a case study, two general elections would be chosen after the end of Tony Blair tenure.



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# Glossary

- **By-election** is an election that is held between general elections for the sake of electing a leader to replace the previous one because he dies or resigned.
- **Cabinet** is defined as “team of 20 or so most senior ministers in the Government who are chosen by the Prime Minister. It is the main body that controls policy and coordinates activities of governmental departments. It is chaired by the Prime Minister and consists of most of the ministerial heads of departments.
- **Coalition** is a group of people from different political parties or social groups who are working together and collaborating with each other to accomplish a common and shared aim.
- **Direct Democracy:** people directly intervene to vote for a policy or legislation without resorting to their representatives to do so.
- **Dissolution of parliament** refers to the case when the Prime Minister declared the official end of parliament. Every seat in the House of Commons and the House of Lords became vacant. Dissolving the parliament required holding a general election for the sake of electing the new MPs.
- **Enfranchisement:** refers to the action of granting the suffrage to a given group of people, already deprived of the right to vote. It can be the firstly done or come as an extension to other groups of people who were denied the vote before based on a number of reasons.
- **Franchise**, suffrage, or simply the right to vote refers to the case when people can vote and take part undisputedly in elections to be elected or to choose their representatives.
- **Gender quota:** refer to reserved seats that guarantee a number of seats in parliament for women, or they can be candidate quotas that require a percentage of women on the candidate lists of parties.
- **Great Depression** was a worldwide economic downturn that began in 1929 and lasted until about 1939. It was the longest and most severe depression ever experienced by the industrialized Western world. It was characterized by a decline in production and prices resulting in high rates of poverty and unemployment.

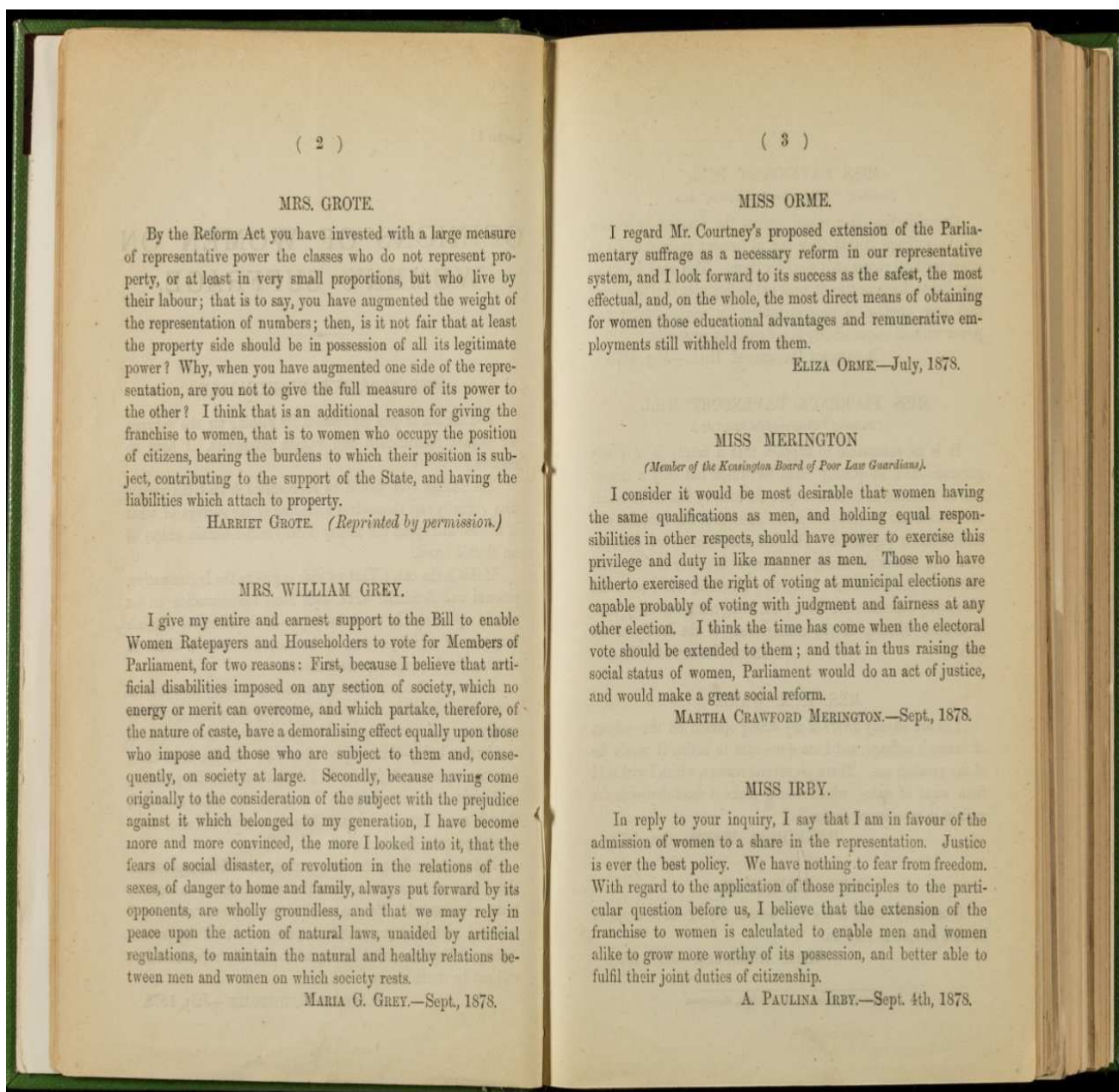
- **Maiden speech** is the first speech delivered by newly elected or appointed Member of parliament in the bicameral parliament.
- **Political Patriarchy**: it was a system when men exercised an absolute authority over women in politics.
- **Queen Bee** is a woman who holds a position of power and authority but does not help other women to reach success in the same field.
- **Representative democracy** known also as **indirect democracy** refers to a system of government in which people are free to elect their representatives in parliamentary politics.
- **Separate Sphere Ideology (SSI)**: it was a belief that glorified gender roles and demarcate gender responsibilities. It stated that men and women should perform their roles in different spheres; women in the home as the private sphere and men outside home through being involved in the public sphere.
- **Snap Election** is an election which is hold earlier before the expected general election.
- **Suffrage** is also known as franchise . it is the right to take part in parliamentary elections.
- **Suffragette** is the name given to women campaigners for suffrage in Britain starting from 1903 who demanded the vote violently resorting to militancy.
- **Suffragist** is someone who vehemently believes in the importance of the right to vote as a symbol of democracy. For anyone who is suffragist, acquiring suffrage is a necessity that should not be denied for citizens.
- **Thatcherism** is an umbrella term encapsulating all the economic policies and the radical changes introduced by Margaret Thatcher during her premiership (1979-1990).
- **Universal suffrage** (Democratic suffrage) refers to granting the right to vote to all adult citizens regardless their ethnicity, age, sex, social class or race.
- **Winter of Discontent**: A series of strikes erupted in Britain from 1978-1979 as an outcry against the Labour Prime Ministers' attempts to curtail wages and their reluctance to increase workers' wages and improving their working conditions.
- **Woman Question** is an umbrella term encapsulating all the campaigns and movements organized by women in Britain in the second half of the ninetieth century claiming for the improvement of their social, economic, political and professional conditions.

A decorative scroll graphic with the word "Appendices" written on it. The scroll is white with a black outline and features three rolled-up ends: one on the left side and two on the top side. The word "Appendices" is written in a large, bold, black serif font in the center of the scroll.

# Appendices

## APPENDIX A

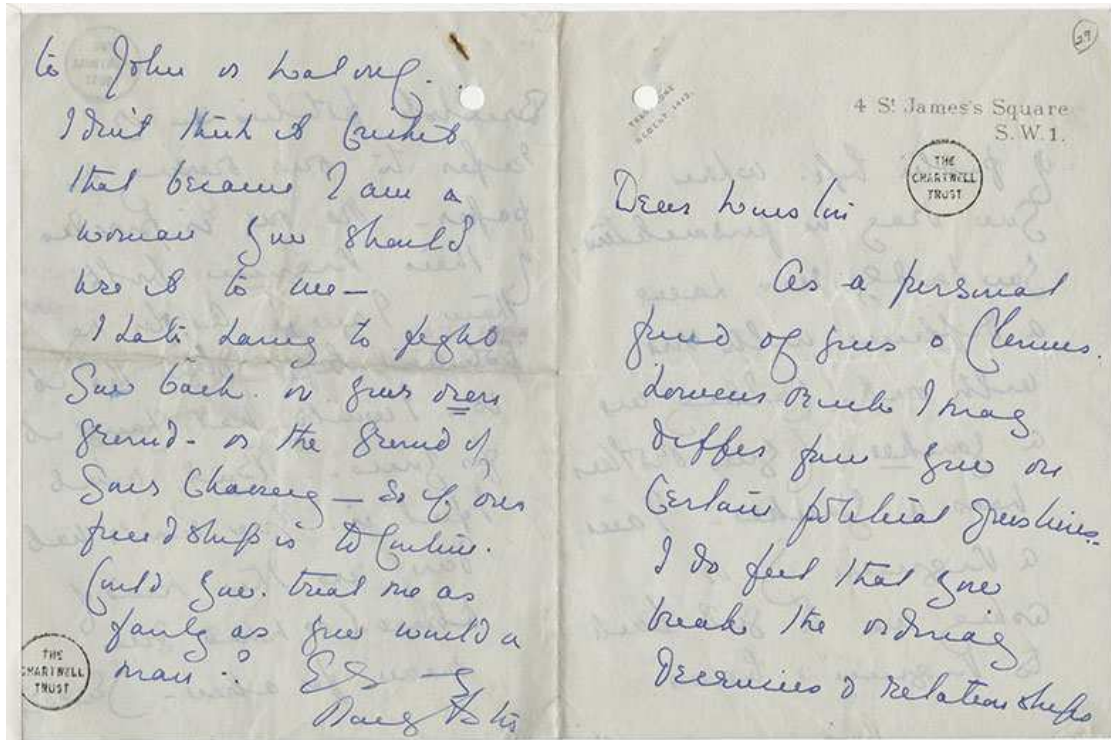
### A Sample of Women Suffragists' Writings in Pro-Suffrage Pamphlets



Source : Women Suffrage Pamphlets. Women Suffrage, Women Rights. LES Digital Library . 1860. CALM:PC/06/396-11/03/ PC/06/396-11/03.  
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## Appendix B

### The First Woman Conservative MP Nancy Astor's Letter Sent to MP Winston Churchill (1931)



#### Transcript

Dear Winston,

As a personal friend of yours and Clemm's, however much I may differ from you on certain political questions, I do feel that you break the ordinary decencies and relationships of public life when you drag in personalities. You hardly ever have a difference with me without calling me a Yankee (your mother was a Yankee - I am a Virginian) or asking me to get back to Virginia and leave British politics - or refer to our owning a paper. No one is prouder of their Virginian birth than I am. As for my political life - dim tho' it is - I would not change it for yours. But what I feel is, you would not dare use this kind of abuse (or what you mean for abuse) either to John or Waldorf. I don't think it cricket that because I am a woman you should use it to me.

I hate having to fight you back on your own ground - on the ground of your choosing - so if our friendship is to continue, could you treat me as fairly as you would a man?

Nancy Astor

**Source :** Letter from Nancy Astor MP to Winston Churchill MP. 12 March 1931. The Papers of Winston S. Churchill CHAR 2/572A/29. Reproduced with permission of Viscount Astor. Cited in "Uphill All the Way: A Century of Women in Parliament".

## APPENDIX C

### The list of All women MPs elected to stand in the House of Commons (1918-1997)

#### Women MPs by date of first election

Name	Date first elected	Party (a)	Constituency	Dates as MP (b)
Constance, Countess MARKIEVICZ (Did not take seat)	14 Dec 1918	SF	Dublin, St Patrick's	1918-22
Narcy, Viscountess ASTOR, CH	15 Nov 1919	Con	Plymouth, Sutton	1919*-45;
Mrs Margaret WINTRINGHAM	22 Sept 1921	Lib	Lincolnshire, Louth	1921*-24
Mrs Mabel PHILIPSON	31 May 1923	Con	Berwick-upon-Tweed	1923*-29
Katharine, Duchess of ATHOLL, DBE	6 Dec 1923	Con	Ferth & Kinross, Kinross & Western	1923-38
Rt Hon Margaret BONDFIELD, CH (First woman Cabinet Minister)	6 Dec 1923	Lab	Northampton;	1923-24;
Miss Dorothea JEWSON	6 Dec 1923	Lab	Walsend (1926-31)	1926*-31
Miss Arabella Susan LAWRENCE	6 Dec 1923	Lab	Norwich	1923-24
			East Ham, North	1923-24;
				1926*-31
Lady Vera TERRINGTON	6 Dec 1923	Lib	Buckinghamshire, Wycombe	1923-24
Rt Hon Ellen WILKINSON	29 Oct 1924	Lab	Middlesbrough, East;	1924-31;
			Jarrow (1935-47)	1935-47
Gwendolen, Countess of IVEAGH, CBE	19 Nov 1927	Con	Southend-on-Sea	1927*-35
Hilda RUNCIMAN (later Viscountess)	6 Mar 1928	Lib	Corwall, St Ives	1928*-29
Mrs Florence DALTON	7 Feb 1929	Lab	Durham, Bishop Auckland	1929*
Rt Hon Miss Jennie LEE (Mrs A Bevan)	21 Mar 1929	Lab	Lanarkshire, Northern;	1929*-31;
Dr Ethel BENTHAM	30 May 1929	Lab	Staffordshire, Cannock (1945-70)	1945-70
Mrs Mary HAMILTON,	30 May 1929	Lab	Islington, East	1929-31
Lady Megan LLOYD GEORGE	30 May 1929	Lib	Blackburn	1929-31
			Anglesey;	1929-51;
			Carmarthen (1957-66)	1957*-66
Lady Cynthia MOSLEY	30 May 1929	Lab	Stoke-on-Trent, Stoke	1929-31
Dr Marion PHILLIPS	30 May 1929	Lab	Sunderland	1929-31
Miss Edith PICTON-TURBERVILL, OBE	30 May 1929	Lab	Shropshire, The Wrekin	1929-31
Miss Eleanor RATHBONE	30 May 1929	Ind	Combined English Universities	1929-46
Lady Lucy NOEL-BUXTON	9 Jul 1930	Lab	Norfolk, North;	1930*-31;
			Norwich (1945-1950)	1945-50
Mrs Leah MANNING	19 Feb 1931	Lab	Islington, East;	1931*
			Essex, Epping (1945-50)	1945-50
Mrs Thelma CAZALET-KEIR, CBE	27 Oct 1931	Con	Islington, East	1931-45
Mrs Ida COPELAND	27 Oct 1931	Con	Stoke-on-Trent, Stoke	1931-35
Miss Marjorie GRAVES	27 Oct 1931	Con	Hackney, South	1931-35
Rt Hon Dame Florence HORSBURGH	27 Oct 1931	Con	Dundee;	1931-45;
(First woman to move the Address in reply to the King's speech)			Manchester, Moss-Side (1950-59)	1950-59
The Hon Mary PICKFORD, CBE	27 Oct 1931	Con	Hammersmith, North	1931-34
Mrs Norah RUNGE, OBE	27 Oct 1931	Con	Bermondsey, Rotherhithe	1931-35
Mrs Helen SHAW, MBE	27 Oct 1931	Con	Lanarkshire, Bothwell	1931-35
Mrs Mavis TATE	27 Oct 1931	Con	Willesden, West; Somerset, Frome (1935-45)	1931-45
Dame Irene WARD, CH	27 Oct 1931	Con	Walsend;	1931-45;
			Tynemouth (1950-74)	1950- Feb 74
Mrs Sarah WARD	27 Oct 1931	Con	Staffordshire, Cannock	1931-35
Frances, Viscountess DAVIDSON	22 Jun 1937	Con	Hertfordshire, Hemel Hempstead	1937*-59
Mrs Agnes HARDIE	7 Sep 1937	Lab	Glasgow, Springburn	1937*-45
Mrs Jennie ADAMSON	7 Nov 1938	Lab	Dartford; Bexley (1945-46)	1938*-46
Rt Hon Dr Edith SUMMERSKILL, CH	6 Apr 1938	Lab	Fullham;	1938*-61
			Warrington (1955-61)	
Mrs Beatrice WRIGHT	11 Mar 1941	Con	Cornwall, Bodmin	1941*-45
Lady Violet APSLEY,	18 Feb 1943	Con	Bristol, Central	1943*-45

Name	Date first elected	Party (a)	Constituency	Dates as MP (b)
Rt Hon Alice BACON, CBE	5 Jul 1945	Lab	Leeds, North East; Leeds, South East (1955-70)	1945-70
Mrs Bessie BRADDOCK	5 Jul 1945	Lab	Liverpool, Exchange	1945-70
Rt Hon Barbara CASTLE	5 Jul 1945	Lab	Blackburn; Blackburn East (1950-55); Blackburn (1955-79)	1945-79
Miss Grace COLMAN	5 Jul 1945	Lab	Tynemouth	1945-50
Mrs Freda CORBET	5 Jul 1945	Lab	Camberwell, North-West; Camberwell, Peckham (1950-74)	1945- Feb 74
Mrs Caroline GANLEY	5 Jul 1945	Lab	Battersea, South	1945-51
Mrs Barbara GOULD	5 Jul 1945	Lab	Hendon, North	1945-50
Rt Hon Miss Margaret HERBISON	5 Jul 1945	Lab	Lanarkshire, North	1945-70
Mrs Jean MANN	5 Jul 1945	Lab	Lanarkshire, Coatbridge; Coatbridge and Airdrie (1950-59)	1945-59
Mrs Lucy MIDDLETON	5 Jul 1945	Lab	Plymouth, Sutton	1945-51
Mrs Muriel NICHOL	5 Jul 1945	Lab	Bradford, North	1945-50
Mrs Florence PATON	5 Jul 1945	Lab	Nottinghamshire, Rushcliffe	1945-50
Mrs Mabel RIDEALGH	5 Jul 1945	Lab	Ilford, North	1945-50
Mrs Clarice SHAW	5 Jul 1945	Lab	Ayrshire & Bute, Kilmarnock	1945-46
Mrs Edith WILLS	5 Jul 1945	Lab	Birmingham, Duddeston	1945-50
Priscilla, Lady TWEEDSMUIR (as Lady Grant of Monymusk to 1948)	26 Nov 1946	Con	Aberdeen, South	1946*-66
Mrs Alice CULLEN	30 Sep 1948	Lab	Glasgow, Gorbals	1948*-69
Miss Elaine BURTON	23 Feb 1950	Lab	Coventry, South	1950-59
Mrs Eveline HILL	23 Feb 1950	Con	Manchester, Wythenshawe	1950-64
Rt Hon Dame Patricia HORNSBY-SMITH, DBE	23 Feb 1950	Con	Kent, Chislehurst	1950-66; 1970- Feb 74
Mrs Dorothy REES	23 Feb 1950	Lab	Glamorgan, Barry	1950-51
Mrs Eirene WHITE	23 Feb 1950	Lab	Flintshire, East	1950-70
Mrs Harriet SLATER (First woman Whip)	31 Mar 1953	Lab	Stoke-on-Trent, North	1953*-66
Mrs Patricia FORD	15 April 1953	UU	Down, North	1953*-55
Dame Edith PITT, DBE	2 Jul 1953	Con	Birmingham, Edgbaston	1953*-66
Mrs Lena JEGER	19 Nov 1953	Lab	Holborn & St Pancras, South	1953*-59; 1964-79
Mrs Joyce BUTLER	26 May 1955	Lab	Wood Green	1955-79
The Hon Mrs Evelyn EMMET	26 May 1955	Con	East Sussex, East Grinstead	1955-64
Mrs Patricia McLAUGHLIN	26 May 1955	UU	Belfast, West	1955-64
Dame Joan VICKERS, DBE	26 May 1955	Con	Plymouth, Devonport	1955- Feb 74
Miss Mervyn PIKE	19 Dec 1956	Con	Leicestershire, Melton	1956*- Feb 74
Lady Muriel GAMMANS	30 May 1957	Con	Hornsey	1957*-66
Mrs Mary McALISTER	13 Mar 1958	Lab	Glasgow, Kelvingrove	1958*-59
Rt Hon Betty HARVIE ANDERSON OBE, TD (Deputy Chairman of Ways and Means)	8 Oct 1959	Con	Renfrewshire, East	1959-79
Rt Hon Dame Judith HART, DBE	8 Oct 1959	Lab	Lanark; Clydesdale (1983-87)	1959-87
Rt Hon Margaret THATCHER (First woman Prime Minister)	8 Oct 1959	Con	Finchley	1959-92
Miss Joan QUENNELL MBE	16 Nov 1960	Con	Petersfield	1960*- Oct 74
Mrs Anne KERR	15 Oct 1964	Lab	Rochester & Chatham	1964-70
Mrs Margaret McKAY	15 Oct 1964	Lab	Wandsworth, Clapham	1964-70
Mrs Renee SHORT	15 Oct 1964	Lab	Wolverhampton, North-East	1964-87
Dr the Hon Shirley SUMMERSKILL	15 Oct 1964	Lab	Halifax	1964-83
Rt Hon Shirley WILLIAMS	15 Oct 1964	Lab	Hertfordshire, Hitchin; Hertford & Stevenage (Feb 1974-79); Crosby (1981-83)	1964-79 1981*-83

Name	Date first elected	Party (a)	Constituency	Dates as MP (b)
Mrs Gwyneth DUNWOODY	31 Mar 1966	Lab	Exeter; Crewe (Feb 1974-83); Crewe & Nantwich (1983-2008)	1966-70; 1974-2008
Dame Jill KNIGHT, DBE	31 Mar 1966	Con	Birmingham, Edgbaston	1966-97
Miss Joan LESTOR	31 Mar 1966	Lab	Eton & Slough; Eccles (1987-97)	1966-83; 1987-97
Mrs Winifred EWING	2 Nov 1967	SNP	Lanarkshire, Hamilton; Moray & Nairn (Feb 1974-79)	1967-70; 1974-79
Miss Bernadette DEVLIN (Youngest woman MP at 21 yrs) (later Mrs Bernadette McALISKEY)	17 Apr 1969	Ind. Unity	Mid-Ulster	1969- Feb 74
Dame Peggy FENNER, DEE	18 Jun 1970	Con	Rochester & Chatham; Medway (1983-97)	1970- Oct 74; 1979-97
Mrs Doris FISHER	18 Jun 1970	Lab	Birmingham, Ladywood	1970- Feb 74
Dame Janet FOOKES, DBE (Second Deputy Chairman of Ways and Means)	18 Jun 1970	Con	Merton & Morden; Plymouth, Drake (Feb 1974-97)	1970-97
Miss Joan HALL	18 Jun 1970	Con	Keighley	1970- Feb 74
Miss Mary HOLT	18 Jun 1970	Con	Preston, North	1970- Feb 74
Dame Elaine KELLETT-BCWMAN, DBE	18 Jun 1970	Con	Lancaster	1970-97
Mrs Constance MONKS OBE	18 Jun 1970	Con	Chorley	1970- Feb 74
Rt Hon Sally OPPENHEIM	18 Jun 1970	Con	Gloucester	1970-87
Rt Hon Betty BOOTHROYD (First woman Speaker)	24 May 1973	Lab	West Bromwich; West Bromwich, West (Feb 1974-2000)	1973-2000
Mrs Margo MACDONALD	8 Nov 1973	SNP	Glasgow, Govan	1973-Feb 74
Rt Hon Lynda CHALKER	28 Feb 1974	Con	Wallasey	Feb 1974-92
Mrs Maureen COLQUHOUN	28 Feb 1974	Lab	Northampton, North	Feb 1974-79
Jo RICHARDSON	28 Feb 1974	Lab	Barking	Feb 1974-94
Audrey WISE	28 Feb 1974	Lab	Coventry, South-West; Preston (1987-2000)	Feb 1974-79; 1987-2000
Mrs Margaret BAIN (later Mrs EWING)	10 Oct 1974	SNP	East Dunbartonshire; Moray (1987-2001)	Oct 1974-79; 1987-2001
Mrs Helene HAYMAN	10 Oct 1974	Lab	Welwyn & Hatfield	Oct 1974-79
Miss Margaret JACKSON (later Mrs BECKETT, then Rt Hon Dame Margaret BECKETT)	10 Oct 1974	Lab	Lincoln; Derby, South (1983-)	Oct 1974-79; 1983-
Miss Joan MAYNARD	10 Oct 1974	Lab	Sheffield, Brightside	Oct 1974-87
Mrs Millie MILLER	10 Oct 1974	Lab	Ilford North	Oct 1974-77
Rt Hon Ann TAYLOR (First woman Chief Whip)	10 Oct 1974	Lab	Bolton, West; Dewsbury (1987-)	Oct 1974-83; 1987-2005
Dr Oonagh McDONALD	15 Jul 1976	Lab	Thurrock	1976-87
Mrs Sheila FAITH	3 May 1979	Con	Belper	1979-83
Miss Sheila WRIGHT	3 May 1979	Lab	Birmingham, Handsworth	1979-83
Dame Angela RUMBOLD, DBE	3 Jun 1982	Con	Merton, Mitcham and Morden; Mitcham and Morden (1983-97)	1982-97
Rt Hon Harriet HARMAN	28 Oct 1982	Lab	Peckham; Camberwell & Peckham (1997-)	1982-
Mrs Helen McELHONE	2 Dec 1982	Lab	Glasgow, Queen's Park	1982-83
Mrs Edwina CURRIE	9 Jun 1983	Con	South Derbyshire	1983-97
Mrs Anna McCURLEY	9 Jun 1983	Con	Renfrew West & Inverclyde	1983-87
Mrs Elizabeth PEACOCK	9 Jun 1983	Con	Batley & Spen	1983-97
Mrs Marion ROE	9 Jun 1983	Con	Broxbourne	1983-2005
Rt Hon Clare SHORT	9 Jun 1983	Lab	Birmingham, Ladywood	1983-2010
Mrs Ann WINTERTON	9 Jun 1983	Con	Congleton	1983-2010
Rt Hon Virginia BOTTOMLEY	3 May 1984	Con	South West Surrey	1984-2005
Rt Hon Ann CLWYD	3 May 1984	Lab	Cynon Valley	1984-
Mrs Elizabeth SHIELDS	8 May 1986	Lib	Ryedale	1986-87



Name	Date first elected	Party (a)	Constituency	Dates as MP (b)
Mrs Llin GOLDING	17 Jul 1986	Lab	Newcastle-under-Lyme	1986*-2001
Mrs Rosie BARNES	26 Feb 1987	SDP	Greenwich	1987*-92
Miss Diane ABBOTT	11 Jun 1987	Lab	Hackney North & Stoke Newington	1987-
Rt Hon Hilary ARMSTRONG	11 Jun 1987	Lab	North West Durham	1987-2010
Mrs Maria FYFE	11 Jun 1987	Lab	Glasgow, Maryhill	1987-2001
Mrs Mildred GORDON	11 Jun 1987	Lab	Bow & Poplar	1987-97
Mrs Teresa GORMAN	11 Jun 1987	Con	Billericay	1987-2001
Mrs Maureen HICKS	11 Jun 1987	Con	Wolverhampton, North East	1987-92
Mrs Alice MAHON	11 Jun 1987	Lab	Halifax	1987-2005
Mrs Ray MICHIE	11 Jun 1987	LD	Argyll & Bute	1987-2001
Rt Hon Marjorie MCWLAM	11 Jun 1987	Lab	Redcar	1987-2001
Emma NICHOLSON	11 Jun 1987	Con	Devon, West & Torridge	1987-97
Rt Hon Dame Dawn PRIMAROLO (Second Deputy Chairman of Ways and Means)	11 Jun 1987	Lab	Bristol South	1987-
Rt Hon Joyce QUIN	11 Jun 1987	Lab	Gateshead, East; Gateshead East and Washington West (1997-2005)	1987-2005
Rt Hon Dame Joan RUDDOCK	11 Jun 1987	Lab	Lewisham, Deptford	1987-
Rt Hon Gillian SHEPHARD	11 Jun 1987	Con	South West Norfolk	1987-2005
Ms Joan WALLEY	11 Jun 1987	Lab	Stoke-on-Trent North	1987-
Rt Hon Ann WIDDECOMBE	11 Jun 1987	Con	Maidstone; Maidstone and the Weald (1997-2010)	1987-2010
Miss Kate HOEY	15 Jun 1989	Lab	Vauxhall	1989*-
Mrs Sylvia HEAL (Deputy Chairman of Ways and Means)	22 Mar 1990	Lab	Mid-Staffordshire; Halesowen and Rowley Regis (1997-2010)	1990*-92; 1997-2010
Irene ADAMS	29 Nov 1990	Lab	Paisley North	1990*-2005
Janet ANDERSON	9 Apr 1992	Lab	Rossendale & Darwen	1992-2010
Mrs Angela BROWNING	9 Apr 1992	Con	Tiverton; Tiverton & Honiton (1997-2010)	1992-2010
Mrs Anne CAMPBELL	9 Apr 1992	Lab	Cambridge	1992-2005
Mrs Judith CHAPLIN	9 Apr 1992	Con	Newbury	1992-93
Ms Ann COFFEY	9 Apr 1992	Lab	Stockport	1992-
Rt Hon Jean CORSTON	9 Apr 1992	Lab	Bristol East	1992-2005
Angela EAGLE	9 Apr 1992	Lab	Wallasey	1992-
Rt Hon Cheryl GILLAN	9 Apr 1992	Con	Chesham & Amersham	1992-
Ms Glenda JACKSON	9 Apr 1992	Lab	Hampstead & Highgate; Hampstead and Kilburn (2010-)	1992-
Helen JACKSON	9 Apr 1992	Lab	Sheffield, Hillsborough	1992-2005
Dr Lynne JONES	9 Apr 1992	Lab	Birmingham, Selly Oak	1992-2010
Rt Hon Dame Tessa JOWELL	9 Apr 1992	Lab	Dulwich; Dulwich & West Norwood (1997-)	1992-
Rt Hon Jane KENNEDY	9 Apr 1992	Lab	Liverpool, Broad Green; Liverpool Wavertree (1997-2010)	1992-2010
Mrs Angela KNIGHT	9 Apr 1992	Con	Erewash	1992-97
Mrs Jacqui LAIT	9 Apr 1992	Con	Hastings & Rye; Beckenham (1997*-2010)	1992-97; 1997*-2010
Ms Liz LYNNE	9 Apr 1992	LD	Rochdale	1992-97
Lady Olga MAITLAND	9 Apr 1992	Con	Sutton & Cheam	1992-97
Rt Hon Estelle MORRIS	9 Apr 1992	Lab	Birmingham, Yardley	1992-2005
Ms Bricget PRENTICE	9 Apr 1992	Lab	Lewisham East	1992-2010
Mrs Barbara ROCHE	9 Apr 1992	Lab	Hornsey & Wood Green	1992-2005
Ms Rachel SQUIRE	9 Apr 1992	Lab	Dunfermline West, Dunfermline and West Fife (2005-06)	1992-2006
Mrs Diana MADDOCK	29 Jul 1993	LD	Christchurch	1993*-97
Ms Judith CHURCH	9 Jun 1994	Lab	Dagenham	1994*-2001

Name	Date	First	Party	Constituency	Dates as MP
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	<b>Elected</b>			
Rt Hon Helen Liddell	30 Jun 1994	Lab	Monklands East, Airdrie and Shotts	1994-2005
Roseanna Cunningham	25 Jun 1995	Lab	Perth and Kinross	1995-2002

### ✓ **The Abbreviations of the Political Parties**

**Con** - Conservative

**DUP** - Democrat Unionist Party

**Lab** - Labour

**LD** - Liberal Democrat

**Lib** - Liberal

**PC** - Plaid Cymru

**SDP** - Social Democratic Party

**SF** - Sinn Féin

**SNP** - Scottish National Party

**SDLP** - Social Democratic Labour Party

**UUP** - Ulster Unionist Party

**Source:** Female Members of Parliament. House of Commons Library. CBP 6652. March 7, 2022

## APPENDIX D

### The List of All Female Cabinet Ministers (1929-1997)

<b>Minister</b>	<b>Years of service</b>
Margaret Bondfield	1929-31
Ellen Wilkinson	1945-47
Florence Horsburgh	1953-54
Barbra Castle	1964-70 & 1974-76
Judith Hart	1968-69
Margaret Thatcher	1970-74 & 1970-90
Shirley Williams	1974-79
Baroness Young	1981-83
Gillian Shephard	1992-97
Virginia Bottomley	1992-97

**Source:** Uberoi, Elise, Chris Watson, Shadi Daneshi, Paul Bolton and Richard Tunnicliffe. "Women in Politics and Public Life". Research Briefing . House of Commons Library Number01250, March04,2022, P.15

## APPENDIX E

### The List of All Women Life and Hereditary Peeresses Appointed to the House of Lords (1958-1997)

Title	Name	Date Announced	MP in power	Party at Creation
Elliot of Harwood	Dame Katherine Elliot	24-Jul-58	Macmillan	Con
Ravensdale of Kedleston	Mary Irene Curzon	24-Jul-58	Macmillan	XB
Swanborough	Dame Stella Isaacs	24-Jul-58	Macmillan	XB
Wootton of Abinger	Barbara Frances Wootton Wright	24-Jul-58	Macmillan	Lab
Horsburgh	Dame Florence Gertrude Horsburgh	19-Sep-59	Macmillan	Con
Summerskill	Edith Clara Summerskill	16-Jan-61	Macmillan	Lab
Burton of Coventry	Elaine Frances Burton	29-Mar-62	Macmillan	Lab
Gaitskell	Anna Dora Gaitskell	23-Dec-63	Douglas-Home	Lab
Northchurch	Dame Frances Joan Davidson	23-Dec-63	Douglas-Home	Con
Brooke of Ystradfellte	Dame Barbara Muriel Brooke	01-Dec-64	Wilson	Con
Emmet of Amberley	Evelyn Violet Elizabeth Emmet	01-Dec-64	Wilson	Con
Asquith of Yarnbury	Dame Helen Violet Bonham-Carter	04-Dec-64	Wilson	Liberal
Phillips	Norah Phillips	04-Dec-64	Wilson	Lab
Plummer	Beatrice Plummer	01-May-65	Wilson	Lab
Spencer-Churchill	Dame Clementine Ogilvy Spencer-Churchill	01-May-65	Wilson	Con
Hylton-Foster	Audrey Pellow Hylton-Foster	26-Oct-65	Wilson	XB
Stocks	Mary Danvers Stocks	01-Jan-66	Wilson	Lab
Sharp	Dame Evelyn Adelaide Sharp	11-Jun-66	Wilson	XB
Serota	Beatrice Serota	01-Jan-67	Wilson	Lab
Birk	Alma Lillian Birk	03-Aug-67	Wilson	Lab

Llewelyn-Davies of Hastoe	Anne Patricia Llewelyn-Davies	03-Aug-67	Wilson	Lab
Masham of Ilton	Susan Lillian Primrose Cunliffe-Lister	01-Jan-70	Wilson	XB
Tweedsmuir of Belhelvie	Priscilla Jean Fortescue Buchan	02-Jun-70	Wilson	Con
Bacon	Alice Martha Bacon	07-Aug-70	Heath	Lab
Lee of Asheridge	Jennie Lee	07-Aug-70	Heath	Lab
White	Eirene Lloyd White	07-Aug-70	Heath	Lab
MacLeod of Borve	Evelyn Hester MacLeod	08-Apr-71	Heath	XB
Seear	Beatrice Nancy Seear	08-Apr-71	Heath	Liberal
Young	Janet Mary Young	08-Apr-71	Heath	Con
Elles	Diana Louie Elles	30-Mar-72	Heath	Con
Sharples	Pamela Sharples	31-May-73	Heath	XB
Hornsby-Smith	Dame Margaret Patricia Hornsby-Smith	05-Apr-74	Wilson	Con
Pike	Dame Irene Mervyn Parmicott Pike	05-Apr-74	Wilson	Con
Robson of Kiddington	Inga-Stina Robson	11-Apr-74	Wilson	Liberal
Falkender	Marcia Matilda Williams	02-May-74	Wilson	Lab
Fisher of Rednal	Doris Mary Gertrude Fisher	02-May-74	Wilson	Lab
Stedman	Phyllis Stedman	02-May-74	Wilson	Lab
Delacourt-Smith of Alteryen	Margaret Rosalind Delacourt-Smith	15-Jun-74	Wilson	Lab
Stewart of Alvechurch	Mary Elizabeth Henderson Stewart	06-Dec-74	Wilson	Lab
Vickers	Dame Joan Helen Vickers	06-Dec-74	Wilson	Con
Ward of North Tyneside	Dame Irene Mary Bewick Ward	06-Dec-74	Wilson	Con
Faithfull	Lucy Faithfull	18-Dec-75	Wilson	Con

Jackson of Lodsworth	Dame Barbara Mary Jackson	12-Jun-76	Callaghan	Lab
Lockwood	Betty Lockwood	31-Dec-77	Callaghan	Lab
David	Nora Radcliff David	21-Mar-78	Callaghan	Lab
Denington	Dame Evelyn Joyce Denington	03-Jun-78	Callaghan	Lab
Ryder of Warsaw	Margaret Susan Ryder	03-Jun-78	Callaghan	XB
Jeger	Lena May Jeger	15-Jun-79	Thatcher	Lab
Airey of Abingdon	Diana Josceline Barbara Neave	26-Jun-79	Thatcher	Con
McFarlane of Llandaff	Jean Kennedy McFarlane	26-Jun-79	Thatcher	XB
Skrimshire of Quarter	Margaret Betty Harvie Anderson	26-Jun-79	Thatcher	Con
Trumpington	Jean Alys Barker	08-Jan-80	Thatcher	Con
Ewart-Biggs	Felicity Jane Ewart-Biggs	14-Apr-81	Thatcher	Lab
Gardner of Parkes	Rachel Trixie Anne Gardner	14-Apr-81	Thatcher	Con
Lane-Fox	Felicity Lane-Fox	14-Apr-81	Thatcher	Con
Platt of Writtle	Beryl Catherine Platt	14-Apr-81	Thatcher	Con
Carnegy of Lour	Elizabeth Patricia Carnegy	12-Jun-82	Thatcher	Con
Cox	Caroline Ann Cox	15-Dec-82	Thatcher	Con
Nicol	Olive Mary Wendy Nicol	15-Dec-82	Thatcher	Lab
Warnock	Dame Helen Mary Warnock	31-Dec-84	Thatcher	XB
Hooper	Gloria Dorothy Hooper	03-Apr-85	Thatcher	Con
Turner of Camden	Muriel Winifred Turner	03-Apr-85	Thatcher	Lab
Blatch	Emily May Blatch	12-Feb-87	Thatcher	Con
Blackstone	Tessa Ann Vosper Blackstone	13-Feb-87	Thatcher	Lab
Hart of South Lanark	Dame Judith Hart	31-Jul-87	Thatcher	Lab
Oppenheim-Barnes	Sally Oppenheim-Barnes	31-Dec-88	Thatcher	Con

Park of Monmouth	Daphne Margaret Sybil Desiree Park	30-Dec-89	Thatcher	Con
Brigstocke	Heather Renwick Brigstocke	04-Apr-90	Thatcher	Con
Cumberlege	Julia Frances Cumberledge	04-Apr-90	Thatcher	Con
Eccles of Moulton	Diana Catherine Eccles	04-Apr-90	Thatcher	Con
Flather	Shreela Flather	04-Apr-90	Thatcher	Con
Hollis of Heigham	Patricia Lesley Hollis	04-Apr-90	Thatcher	Lab
Castle of Blackburn	Barbara Anne Castle	16-Jun-90	Thatcher	Lab
Dunn	Dame Lydia Dunn	16-Jun-90	Thatcher	XB
Seccombe	Dame Joan Anna Dalziel Seccombe	20-Dec-90	Major	Con
James of Holland Park	Phyllis Dorothy James	31-Dec-90	Major	Con
Denton of Wakefield	Jean Denton	29-Apr-91	Major	Con
Hamwee	Sally Rachel Hamwee	29-Apr-91	Major	LibDem
Hilton of Eggardon	Jennifer Hilton	29-Apr-91	Major	Lab
Mallalieu	Ann Mallalieu	29-Apr-91	Major	Lab
O'Cathain	Detta O'Cathain	29-Apr-91	Major	Con
Perry of Southwark	Pauline Perry	15-Jun-91	Major	Con
Chalker of Wallasey	Lynda Chalker	13-Apr-92	Major	Con
Thatcher	Margaret Hilda Thatcher	06-Jun-92	Major	Con
Jay of Paddington	Margaret Ann Jay	13-Jun-92	Major	Lab
Williams of Crosby	Shirley Vivien Teresa Brittain Williams	31-Dec-92	Major	LibDem
Dean of Thornton-le-Fylde	Brenda McDowall	13-Aug-93	Major	Lab

Gould of Potternewton	Joyce Brenda Gould	13-Aug-93	Major	Lab
Miller of Hendon	Doreen Miller	13-Aug-93	Major	Con
Farrington of Ribbleton	Josephine Farrington	20-Aug-94	Major	Lab
Rawlings	Patricia Elizabeth Rawlings	20-Aug-94	Major	Con
Thomas of Walliswood	Susan Petronella Thomas	20-Aug-94	Major	LibDem
Hogg	Sarah Elizabeth Mary Hogg	30-Dec-94	Major	Con
Smith of Gilmorehill	Elizabeth Margaret Smith	30-Dec-94	Major	Lab
Hayman	Helene Valerie Hayman	17-Nov-95	Major	Lab
Wilcox	Judith Ann Wilcox	17-Nov-95	Major	Con
Lloyd of Highbury	Dame June Kathleen Lloyd	15-Jun-96	Major	XB
Anelay of St. Johns	Dame Joyce Anne Anelay	21-Aug-96	Major	Con
Byford	Dame Hazel Byford	21-Aug-96	Major	Con
Ramsay of Cartvale	Meta Ramsay	21-Aug-96	Major	Lab
Symons of Vernham Dean	Elizabeth Conway Symons	21-Aug-96	Major	Lab
Emerton	Dame Audrey Caroline Emerton	30-Dec-96	Major	XB
Lestor of Eccles	Joan Lestor	18-Apr-97	Major	Lab

**Source:** Taylor, Russel. "Lords Membership: How Many Women Have Sat in the House of Lords". House of Lords Library. Library Briefing. February 22, 2021  
<https://lordslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/ln-2018-0014/> (Accessed March 22, 2022)



## APPENDIX F

### **The First Woman MP Nancy Astor's Maiden Speech in Parliament (1920)**

I shall not begin by craving the indulgence of the House. I am only too conscious of the indulgence and the courtesy of the House. I know that it was very difficult for some hon. Members to receive the first Lady M.P. into the House. It was almost as difficult for some of them as it was for the lady M.P. herself to come in. Hon. Members, however, should not be frightened of what Plymouth sends out into the world. After all, I suppose when Drake and Raleigh wanted to set out on their venturesome careers some cautious person said, "Do not do it; it has never been tried before. Stay at home, cruising in home waters." I have no doubt that the same thing occurred when the Pilgrim Fathers set out. I have no doubt that there were cautious Christian brethren who did not understand their going into the wide seas to worship God in their own way. But, on the whole, the world is all the better for those venturesome and courageous West Country people, and I would like to say that I am quite certain that the women of the whole world will not forget that it was the fighting men of Devon who dared to send the first woman to the Mother of Parliaments. It is only right that she should show some courage, and I am perfectly aware that it needs courage to address the House on that vexed question, Drink. However, I dare do it.

... I do not think the country is ripe for Prohibition, but I am certain it is ripe for drastic drink reforms. (Hon. Members: "No!") I know what I am talking about, and you must remember that women have got votes now and we mean to use them, and use them wisely, not for the benefit of any section, but for the benefit of the whole of society.

**Source:** "Nancy Astor Maiden Speech in Parliament", 1920 <https://www.tbr.fun/nancy-astor-maiden-speech-in-parliament-1920/> (Accessed May18,2022)

## APPENDIX G

### **Margaret Thatcher First Speech , as Prime Minister, to Conservative Party Conference, October 12, 1979**

I am, as you may know, the first ... research chemist to hold this great position...The job you have given me is a supreme honour and the greatest possible challenge.. I know that you understand that and would not wish it otherwise. But before we turn to the tasks that face our country we can allow ourselves to say “thank you”.On Thursday, 3rd of May, we won a great victory... An election victory such as ours is impossible without teamwork...Finally I wish to say a personal thank you to someone who was and is always there to give strength and authority to our cause. No leader of a Party can ever have been given more sound or more loyal advice than I have had from my friend and deputy, Willie Whitelaw. And Denis Thatcher my husband ... . The victory to which all of you in this hall gave so much was five years coming, but when it came it was handsome. ..Winning an election is a splendid thing but it is only the prologue to the vital business of governing. We have not wasted time. ..But all this is only the beginning. ..We have to move this country in a new direction, to change the way we look at things, to create a wholly new attitude of mind. Can it be done?Well, the people have taken the first step by electing us, some, like us, with passionate conviction...The world has never offered us an easy living. There is no reason why it should. We have always had to go out and earn our living—the hard way.Our success was not based on Government hand-outs...Not everyone who votes for a political party has read everything in its manifesto. But when a voter takes his decision and slips his paper into the ballot box he does know broadly speaking what the party of his choice stands for...What madness it is, that winter after winter we have the great set-piece battles, in which the powerful unions do so much damage to the industries on which their members' living standards depend; The key to prosperity lies not in higher pay but in higher output. The reason why Britain is today the third poorest nation in the European Community has little to do with pay but it has everything to do with production..And that is exactly what has been happening.This Government want the greatest possible co-operation with both sides ...I hope that the union leaders who have said that they will work with the elected government of the day will accept them too... Today strikes affect trade union members and their families just like the rest of us. One union can deprive us all of coal, or food, or transport easily enough. What it cannot do is defend its members against similar action by other unions... Let me say a word about these matters. We place special emphasis on the secret ballot. We believe that the great power wielded by unions calls for greater accountability to their members. We are particularly concerned about the working of the closed shop. The closed shop, together with secondary picketing, makes it possible for small groups to close down whole industries with which they have no direct connection...It is coming from the trade unionists themselves. They want to escape from the rule of the militants. We heard this in the conference hall yesterday. They look to us to help them. Today trade unions have more power over working people and their families than any boss has. The irony is that unions can exist only in a free society. Those who seek freedom for their own purposes should not deny that same freedom to others...I have been speaking of the deep and difficult problems of industry—most of it big industry. But the future of this country depends largely on the success of small businesses. ..So far I have spoken of matters of absolutely vital concern to us here at home. But we have important responsibilities overseas as well, particularly Rhodesia. In his speech on Wednesday, Peter Carrington described the progress which has been made in our efforts to bring Rhodesia to independence with the widest possible

international recognition. I understand and share your impatience to bring this about. The entire Government and party care deeply about the future of Rhodesia. There have been too many wasted opportunities...Nearer home, in Europe, we are part of a Community of some 250 million people. It is no use joining anything half-heartedly. Five months after taking office we have done much to restore the trust and confidence that the last Conservative Government enjoyed with our partners in Europe, and which the Labour Government did not...We in Europe have unrivalled freedom. But we must never take it for granted. The dangers to it are greater now than they have ever been since 1945. The threat of the Soviet Union is ever present. It is growing continually. Their military spending goes up by 5 per cent. a year. A Russian nuclear submarine is launched every six weeks. Every year the Russians turn out over 3,000 tanks and 1,500 combat aircraft. Their military research and development is enormous...We who believe in the one true freedom—freedom under the law—far outnumber and outweigh, in the strength of our resolve, those who set out to murder and to main. No ends could justify such means. The act of murder can have no moral basis whatsoever...The British Government is doing everything possible to strengthen the security forces in the fight against the men of violence. Our goal is the same peace for which the Pope appealed so movingly during his visit to Ireland...We come to the closing moments of our victory Conference. It has been a Conference to remember, and it was a victory to remember...Throughout most of my life, the chief complaint against politicians has been that they shrank from telling the truth when the truth was in the least unpleasant or controversial, that they were inclined to woo when it was their duty to warn, and to please when it was their business to prophesy. Early in my career, I decided that that was one mistake that I would not make. My harshest critics will perhaps agree that I have succeeded in that modest ambition...For the complaint that they have against me is the opposite one—apparently I am inclined to speak my mind, even occasionally to nag...Today I have again pointed to the dangers as I see them and I have said what I believe the source of those dangers to be. But let us remember that we are a nation, and that a nation is an extended family. Families go through their hard times; they have to postpone cherished ambitions until they have the means to satisfy them...At times like these, the strength of the family is truly tested. It is then that the temptation is greatest for its members to start blaming one another and dissipating their strength in bitterness and bickering. Let us do all in our power to see one another's point of view and to widen the common ground on which we stand...As we close our conference, a caring and united party, I think for a moment of last week's events at Brighton. I think of those members of the Labour Party and trade unionists who see the movement they serve abandoning the ideals to which they have devoted their lives. They do not yet share our Conservative ideals—at least they think they do not—but they do want free and responsible trade unions to play an honourable part in the life of a free and responsible society. So do we...I give them my pledge that my colleagues and I will continue to talk to them, to listen to their views, so long as it is understood that national policy is the sole responsibility of Government and Parliament. In return I would ask every man and woman who is called on in the next few months to take part in disruptive industrial action to consider the consequences for themselves, their children and their fellow countrymen. But our supreme loyalty is to the country and the things for which it stands...Let us work together in hope and above all in friendship. On behalf of the Government to which you have given the task of leading this country out of the shadows let me close with these words: You gave us your trust. Be patient. We shall not betray that trust.

**Source** : Margaret Thatcher Speech to Conservative Party Conference. Thatcher Archive CCOPR 1059/79 <https://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/104147> (Accessed May20, 2022)

## Appendix H

### Pictures representing some cues of Margaret Thatcher's Body Language in Parliament

#### A. Different Smiles, Different Political Messages



**Source:** [https://www.google.com/search?q=Margaret+Thatcher+smile&source=lnms&tbm=isch&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwjTwL-RwNP3AhUDhv0HHQcA9gQ\\_AUoAXoECAEQAw&biw=1366&bih=657&dpr=1#imgrc=KyHqvXf-a\\_rcmM](https://www.google.com/search?q=Margaret+Thatcher+smile&source=lnms&tbm=isch&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwjTwL-RwNP3AhUDhv0HHQcA9gQ_AUoAXoECAEQAw&biw=1366&bih=657&dpr=1#imgrc=KyHqvXf-a_rcmM)  
(Accessed May9, 2022)

#### B. Thatcher's Eyes downwards when All male MPs were Laughing in her 1980 speech "The Lady's not for Turning"



**Source:** <https://www.google.com/search?q=thatcher+speech+the+lady%27s+not+for+turning&sour>

[ce=lnms&tbm=isch&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwjU1ee7xdP3AhWr8LsIHRX2DucQ\\_AUoAnoECAEQBA&biw=1366&bih=600&dpr=1#imgrc=jXaxgmSYMBNpfM](https://www.google.com/search?q=Margaret+Thatcher+pointing+finger&rlz=1C1GCEwU1ee7xdP3AhWr8LsIHRX2DucQ_AUoAnoECAEQBA&biw=1366&bih=600&dpr=1#imgrc=jXaxgmSYMBNpfM) (Accessed May9, 2022)

**C. Thatcher's Use of Index Finger to point at men while speaking as a mark of political Domination**



**D. Margaret Thatcher's Head High**



**Source:**

<https://www.google.com/search?q=Margaret+Thatcher+debating+with+men&tbm=isch&tbs=rimg:Ce5tGGF6cOZdYSB7yTaXtyvsgIMCgIIABAAOgQIABAA&hl=fr&sa=X&ved=0CBsQuIIBahcKEwjomOC4rNj3AhUAAAAAHQAAAAAQHg&biw=1349&bih=600#imgrc=pOqJfTp74MH25M> (Accessed May11,2022)

## Abstract

The bicameral parliament in England, before 1918, was managed by male MPs and male Prime Ministers only without any possibility to include women. Allowing women to stand as MPs to be elected in 1918 represented a turning point in the history of women's political participation. After WWII, the female employment opportunities were maximized, however their increased political integration remained in question. The aim of this research is twofold. On the one hand, it attempts to investigate the female political immersion from 1945 till 1997 shedding light on the ups and downs women went through in the House of Commons and the House of Lords. On the other hand, it tries to elucidate the nature of gender relations and the impact of the female entry to the "Men's House" on male-female political relations. To meet this end, the qualitative method is relied on through resorting to books, articles, blogs and archive materials. The findings show that the female involvement in parliamentary politics was overshadowed by a lone criterion which is underrepresentation. Despite some high ministerial positions granted to women, the female appointees continued to represent the elite and underrepresented minority in the bicameral parliament. Put simply, the female integration's impact was dual. It was a double-edged sword. It strengthened fruitful male-female relations and, inevitably, triggered hostile and unstable reactions in other cases.

## Résumé

Le parlement bicaméral en Angleterre, avant 1918, était dirigé uniquement par des hommes députés et des hommes Premiers ministres sans aucune possibilité d'inclure des femmes. Permettre aux femmes de se présenter comme députées pour être élues en 1918 a constitué un tournant dans l'histoire de la participation politique des femmes. Après la Seconde Guerre mondiale, les opportunités d'emploi pour les femmes ont été exploitées au maximum, mais leur intégration politique accrue est demeurée en question. L'objectif de cette recherche est double. D'une part, elle tente d'explorer l'immersion politique des femmes et ce de 1945 à 1997 en mettant la lumière sur les hauts et les bas que les femmes ont traversés et à la Chambre des communes et à la Chambre des lords. D'autre part, elle essaye d'élucider la nature des rapports de genre et l'impact de l'entrée des femmes à la 'Maison des hommes' sur les relations politiques hommes-femmes. Pour atteindre cela, la présente recherche s'appuie sur la méthode qualitative en recourant à des livres, articles, blogs et des documents d'archives. Les résultats montrent que l'implication des femmes dans la politique parlementaire a été ombragée par un seul critère qui est la sous-représentation. Malgré certains postes supérieurs ministériels accordés aux femmes, les femmes nommées ont continué à représenter l'élite et la minorité sous-représentées au sein du parlement bicaméral. En bref, l'effet de l'intégration des femmes était double. C'était une arme à double tranchant. Elle renforçait les fructueuses relations hommes-femmes et, inévitablement, déclenchait des réactions hostiles et instables dans d'autres cas.

## ملخص

كان البرلمان المكوّن من مجلسين في إنجلترا قبل العام 1918، يديره نواب ورؤساء حكومات رجال فقط دون أي إمكانية لضم النساء. لقد شكّل السماح للنساء بالترشح كنواب لئنتخبين في البرلمان عام 1918 نقطة تحول في تاريخ المشاركة السياسية للمرأة. وبعد الحرب العالمية الثانية، تم الزيادة إلى حد أعلى فرص العمل بالنسبة للنساء، إلا أنّ اندماجهن السياسي المتزايد ظل موضع تساؤل. يكمن الهدف من هذا البحث في شقين، فمن الناحية الأولى يحاول التحري عن الانغماس النسوي في الحياة السياسية من عام 1945 حتى عام 1997، مع إلقاء الضوء على التقلبات التي مرت بها النساء في مجلس العموم ومجلس اللوردات. ويسعى من ناحية أخرى إلى توضيح طبيعة العلاقات بين الجنسين، وتأثير دخول الإناث إلى 'بيت الرجال' على العلاقات السياسية بين الرجل والمرأة. وبغية تحقيق هذه الغاية، تم الاعتماد على المنهج الكيفي من خلال اللجوء إلى كتب ومقالات ومدونات ومواد أرشيفية. تظهر النتائج أن مشاركة المرأة في السياسة البرلمانية قد طغى عليها معيار وحيد هو التمثيل ناقص. وعلى الرغم من بعض المناصب الوزارية الرفيعة التي مُنحت للنساء، فقد استمررن في تمثيل النخبة والأقلية الممثلة تمثيلاً ناقصاً في البرلمان المكوّن من مجلسين. لقد كان تأثير اندماج الإناث، ببساطة، مزدوجاً بوصفه سلاحاً ذو حدين، فقد عزز العلاقات المثمرة بين الرجل والمرأة، وأثار -على نحو محتوم- ردود فعل معادية وغير مستقرة في حالات أخرى.

**People's Democratic Republic of Algeria  
Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research  
University of Abou Bekr Belkaid -Tlemcen-**



**Faculty of Letters and Languages  
Department of English**

**SUMMARY OF DOCTORAL THESIS ENTITLED:  
Women's Political Participation in England and its  
Impact on Gender Relations in Parliamentary  
Politics (1945-1997)**

**Presented by:**  
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**Supervised by:**  
Prof. Faiza SENOUCI MEBERBECHÉ

**Academic Year : 2021 -2022**

The bicameral parliament in England, before 1918, was managed by male MPs and male Prime Ministers only without any possibility to include women. Allowing women to stand as MPs to be elected in 1918 represented a turning point in the history of women's political participation. After WWII, the female employment opportunities were maximized, however their increased political integration remained in question. The aim of this research is twofold. On the one hand, it attempts to investigate the female political immersion from 1945 till 1997 shedding light on the ups and downs women went through in the House of Commons and the House of Lords. On the other hand, it tries to elucidate the nature of gender relations and the impact of the female entry to the "Men's House" on male-female political relations.

To meet this end, the qualitative method is relied on through resorting to books, articles, and blogs and archive materials. The findings show that the female involvement in parliamentary politics was overshadowed by a lone criterion which is underrepresentation. Despite some high ministerial positions granted to women, the female appointees continued to represent the elite and underrepresented minority in the bicameral parliament. Put simply, the female integration's impact was dual. It was a double-edged sword. It strengthened fruitful male-female relations and, inevitably, triggered hostile and unstable reactions in other cases.

In the nineteenth century Britain, women lived in a patriarchal society exhibiting their responsibilities and capabilities in the home serving their fathers, husbands, brothers performing a myriad of domestic tasks in the family. The British zeitgeist concerning gender roles and gender relations glorified the separate sphere ideology (the Private and the public spheres). Working outside home was the onus of men only in the Public Sphere; they were the breadwinners not women. Women, therefore, had to enjoy their femininity and their ideal role of caring for the family in the Private Sphere (home). In this regard, women were subjected to the male authority and dominance being prevented from the democratic principles alongside men.



The public patriarchy, coincided with the private patriarchy, persisted in the second half of the nineteenth century without granting women any opportunity to make economic, social or political progress. The female awareness of the heavy burden of gender disparity and the tremendous marginalization of women rights in the British society signaled the beginning of un-going women movements claiming for social, political, economic and educational emancipation. What added insult to the injury in nineteenth century Britain was the increased political and economic progress for men only. The diversity of Reform Acts extending suffrage for men mirrored the marginalization and the tyranny expressed towards women.

One of the focal female movements was the suffrage movement firstly began in 1866. Women, in England, believed that the right to vote (also called suffrage or franchise) was a pivotal prerequisite for political emancipation on the one hand. On the other hand, it served as important principle of genuine democracy. Women suffragists thrived to gain the franchise through which they could choose their representatives in parliament and air out their voices in parliamentary politics. Reaching no result in their pro-suffrage campaign, women resorted to violence and civil disobedience as a method to gain their political rights similarly as men. After years of vain attempts to gain the vote, the male ministers finally got convinced to grant women the partial suffrage in 1918 then the equal vote on the same terms as men in 1928.

The partial enfranchisement of women in 1918 prompted a radical change in the female political status in the already-male led sphere of politics. Shortly after the partial enfranchisement, Women's Qualification Act was enacted allowing women reaching the age of 21 to stand as candidates to share the process of decision- making with men. This Act opened new horizons for women to start enjoying the seeds of their political emancipation in England. Starting from 1918, parliament became a mixed sex institution where gender political roles would be performed. Before 1918, the British parliament as was solely led by men without

any possibility to include women. Even its establishment in the thirteenth century (1295) was accomplished by men.

The female political participation as MPs, Cabinet Ministers, advisers and Speakers had broken the male-dominated political mould where gender competition for fruitful political decision –making became a defining principle of the parliamentary environment. Thus, women’s political immersion reached the zenith due to the female ceaseless endeavours when a woman became the first woman Prime Minister in the twentieth century Britain represented by Margaret Thatcher.

The story of women’s involvement in parliament was the same story of the involvement of strangers or groups of people in a new environment in which they were neither familiar with the environment nor familiar with the people there. The way of accustoming themselves into the new arena can be short or lengthy mission. The reaction to the new comers differed from one recipient into another. They could be friendly, hostile or both at the same time. By the same token, they could welcome or resent the strangers’ coming. The same thing happened in the British parliament when women joined men in their “House” in 1918. The female political integration was a new chapter concerning gender co-existence in parliamentary politics. Women started to experience difficult political circumstances full of ups and downs. After WWII, the female political integration increased, but women kept representing the elite among male MPs and male Prime Ministers.

This research is devoted to mirror the female parliamentarians’ ups and downs surrounded by men in parliament. Parliamentary politics, in England, is a field that proved the female capabilities in doing men’s work. The gist of this thesis revolves around digging deep into the female involvement in the bicameral parliament in an era extended from 1945 to 1997. That is to say it tries to elucidate the female immersion in the House of Commons and the House of Lords after the Second World War, when the female political under-representation persisted, till 1997 when politics became “feminized” in the light of increasing the number of women in parliament.

Women, whether married, widowed or single supported the war efforts through the myriad of tasks they performed and the vacant male jobs they filled when men were outside joining the military forces. WWII represented a turning point concerning the role that women MPs played during the war. Eventually, a progress in the female political involvement was expected after the war as a reward for their war work, but in vain. This thesis, additionally, attempts to reveal the way women MPs were treated by their male colleagues and the male Prime Ministers focusing on the breakthroughs women achieved and the hurdles they encountered in their political journey. Last but not least, it tries to examine the impact of the female political involvement on gender relations in parliament. To meet this end, the following research questions are put forward:

1. Was women's political integration in the House of Commons maximized or minimized after the Second World War?
2. What characterized the female political participation in the bicameral parliament?
3. How did women's immersion in politics impact gender relations in parliament?

To answer the above-mentioned research questions, this research is compartmentalized into four chapters. The aim of the first chapter is threefold. Firstly, it provides a historical background of women's early calls for their involvement in the process of representation in which they strove to have a voice in shaping the political representation through being able to vote in parliamentary election. This was peacefully and later on violently demanded from the male politicians. Secondly, it showcases the dawn of the female political involvement as MPs for the first time through the enactment of the People Representation Act in 1918. The latter was considered as a political apotheosis in the political history of women. Last but not least, the chapter traces the nature of women's political journey in the House of Commons after joining men in their "House". Their journey was overshadowed by ups and downs, but WWII served as

important landmark when women proved themselves able to assume male responsibilities and ready to represent other women in the House of Commons.

The kernel of the second chapter is to dig deep into the female political status after WWII. It investigates the different Conservative and Labour Prime Ministers' attitudes towards either maximizing or minimizing women's political presence. The chapter seeks to analyze the number of women voters, candidates and elected MPs to better expound the nature of the female political representation and compare it with their male counterparts. Moreover, the chapter attempts to examine the different barriers women encountered in parliament and the hurdles outside parliament that really thwarted their successful political involvement. The last issue the second chapter tackles is the nature of male-female political relations in parliament.

The nub of the third chapter is to tackle the political breakthrough achieved by the first woman Prime Minister (1979-1990) in the British history Margaret Thatcher. It tries to analyze the political presence of Thatcher as a politician and as a leader over men in their "House". Light is shed on her as a sample to reflect the positive and the negative aspects of the female political immersion in parliamentary politics. Margaret Thatcher is an example of those women who had beaten the record through entering parliament not as a Member of Parliament, but the leader of all MPs. Margaret Thatcher represented the power of a woman in politics, but her tenure posed several paradoxical facts when it comes to the promotion of women political progress and the way she treated men in their "House".

Last but not least, the fourth chapter mirrors the shift from a woman Prime Minister into another male Prime Minister John Major. It tries to shed light on the way Thatcher's successor John major treated women MPs and the nature of the female political involvement under a male leader from over again since his predecessor strengthened discriminative policies to indirectly exclude women from politics. Put simply, the chapter clarifies gender relations in parliament. The final part of the chapter mirrors the political watershed in the women's political agenda triggered by the general election of 1997.

For the sake of data collection, the qualitative method is relied on to conduct this historical research. To find out the answers to the aforementioned questions, several knowledge sources are of paramount importance. The primary sources and the secondary ones played a vital role. The Acts, speeches, reports , books, blogs’ articles, journal articles, websites and YouTube videos carry among their a myriad of realities about women in the “Men’s House”.

As far as the first chapter is concerned, it is entitled “Historical background of Women’s Political Integration in England’s Parliament (1918-1945). It provides a historical overview of women’s political status before 1945. It is, therefore, divided into three main big titles. The first part tackles the female shift from suffrage acquisition( Partial enfranchisement in 1918 and equal enfranchisement in 1928) into parliamentary admission. That is to say from acquiring the right to vote in 1918 in the light of the enactment of People’s Representation Act into acquiring the right to stand as MPs in parliamentary elections. The latter was guaranteed through the parliamentary passage of Women’s Qualification Act of 1918.

The second part of the first chapter examines the evolution of the female political representation in the House of Commons. It is important to mention that the British parliament is divided into two chambers: the House of Commons and the House of Lords. Politically speaking, women enjoyed firstly their representation in the House of Commons only. The House of Lords remained a male-led institution until 1958. The first woman elected into the House of Commons was the American-born Nancy Astor. She was the first woman in the British History to beat the record as the first British female MP among men.

What really overshadowed the female political immersion after Astor was the political nightmare of “underrepresentation”. Women MPs until 1945 constituted the “elite” if compared to their male counterparts. This political underrepresentation which was a heavy burden on the backs of women MPs was not a sudden outcome. It was a planned strategy to keep the number of women low in parliament. It was

the outcome of the male Prime Ministers and the male Party leaders resort to discriminative procedures when it came to the selection of women candidates before the General elections. The decreased number of women, elected from one general election into another, did not live their political experience to its fullest. Most of them were appointed to low political positions. Only few women politicians were granted very high political positions such as cabinet Ministers and speakers. The chapter ends with expounding in details the female political experiences (1929-1945). This era was pertinent with the female political integration from the first general election they voted on the similar terms as men in the election of 1929 until the end of WWII. The same obstacle characterized their political parliamentary life which was gender disparity and political underrepresentation.

Moreover, the second chapter entitled “Women Political Status during the Post Second World Era (1945-1979). Women employment opportunities increased after the end of the war as a reward for women’s contribution to serve the home front, however the female increased political representation remained in question. Despite the high ministerial positions offered to some women, but gender parity in parliament remained an unreachable quest.

The chapter opens with comparing between gender and sex. The former refers to the way males and females behave and act. The latter represents the biological constraints from the first day any one was born whether male or female. This nub of this thesis is the analysis of how both genders interacted and behaved in politics. This led us to analyze the male-female relations and the impact of the female entry to the “Men’s House” on their relations. Moreover, the female political underrepresentation was the outcome of abundant negative stereotypes about the unsuitability of women for politics on the one hand. On the other hand, the continued female admission into parliament was strengthened by positive stereotypes.

One of the important aims of the second chapter is to dig deep into the nature of obstacles and barriers that strengthened the female political underrepresentation and made from women a “minority in parliament” if compared to the huge number of men MPs in the House of Commons. Those barriers are divided into four types: Socio-Cultural Barriers, Political Barriers, Structural and Institutional Barriers, Knowledge and Information Barriers. The female underrepresentation in the House of Commons kept overshadowing women political involvement during the administration of all the Prime Ministers who ruled England until 1979. They were: Clement Attlee, Winston Churchill, Harold Wilson, James Callaghan and Alec Douglass Home and Harold Macmillan.

Women, in England, did not keep being MPs in the House of Commons only. In 1958, things took another turn. They were allowed to stand as life peers in the House of Lords and then as hereditary peers in 1963. In this case, the female political admission was extended to women after their endeavours to join men in the Upper House (House of Lords).

The third chapter entitled “The Female Political Immersion Reaching the Zenith: Margaret Thatcher Not a Party Member but a Party Leader Being the First Female Prime Minister in the British Politics (1979-1990)” carries among its folding a detailed analysis of the political immersion of Margaret Thatcher as the first woman Prime Minister in Britain. She served for 11 years as a Prime Minister and the leader of the Conservative Party. She reversed the role of women in politics upside down. From denying women increased political involvement into a woman ruling over men and politically dominating them.

The chapter starts with shedding light on the career of Thatcher before being a Prime Minister then the importance is placed on her political career as a prime Minister and the nature of the male-female electoral support to her in the three consecutive elections (1979-1983-1987). Women voters played a vital role in electorally supporting Margaret Thatcher although she did not promote the political

Participation of women nor she supported female issues and female interests in parliament.

What characterized her political experience as a PM was that she was aggressive with men and politically dominating them. She preferred to be aggressive to better impose her political power over men. She indirectly delivered a message in the whole world that women were powerful enough not only to join men in their “House” and remained subjected to them, but they were strong enough to rule over them, guide them and get rid of the unjust political patriarchy in parliament. Her body language was another tool to show her strength over men. The dissertation provides figures that show examples of her powerful treatment of men. Through analyzing Thatcher political language with men, it was apparent that her language served as a shield to protect herself from the male domination. Her aggressive language showed a lot about her power as a female politician.

The fourth chapter titled “From the First Female Conservative Prime Minister to Another Male Conservative Leader: Women’s Political Stances during John Major’s Tenure (1990-1997)” provides realities about Margert Thatcher successor as another Conservative Prime Minister. The aim of this chapter is to compare the way Thatcher’s successor John Major treated women MPs and the strategies he resorted to welcome women in parliament with his predecessor known as the “Queen Bee”. John Major showed positive attitudes towards women in politics and through the analysis of his political discourse with women; he never showed his negative treatment of his female colleagues. Women still represented the “elite” during John Major’s tenure.

As important findings achieved after conducting this historical research, it is concluded that The female integration in the House of Commons, firstly becoming a reality in 1918, was never claimed by women and they never demanded joining men in the House. Their main goal to accomplish was their ability to share the process of decision making through their votes. Women’s outcry against the male Prime Ministers serving before 1918 represented their vehement interest in the political participation from a different angle. They battled for a different kind of political participation mainly the electoral political participation. On the contrary, women’s vehement interest to stand in the



House of Lords pushed them to strive heart and soul to accompany men in the Upper House. Till 1958, women were offered a golden opportunity to join men in the House of Lords.

Accordingly, the governmental intervention to emancipate women politically was dual. It was through the partial and the equal franchise they granted to women, plus the golden opportunity of allowing women to be elected as MPs: opening the “Men’s House” to women. Women’s setting foot in parliament as politicians was not an easy and overnight accomplished task. It was a long journey full of difficulties, hurdles and opposition.

The female participation in WWII impacted women positively through maximizing the employment opportunities after the war, but the war did not bring sweeping changes for women in parliament. Women MPs kept, from one general election into another (1945-1979), representing a minority in politics. The door of Westminster was opened for them easily, but the governmental promotion of gender parity was in vain. In the light of the female existence with their male colleagues in the bicameral parliament, gender relations were dual depending on the circumstances male and female MPs were involved. The male-female relations during parliamentary debates were an amalgam of friendly as well as hostile relations.

Most importantly, the sole reason that triggered hostile gender relations was the female increased competition with men or doing the same task when women endeavoured to do better than men. In this case, the male MPs’ masculine political authority was threatened. Although welcoming women in parliament; the Prime Ministers remained reluctant to maximize women’s political representation fearing the feminization of British politics. They did so to keep the masculine public patriarchy still alive in the British parliament.

Taking into account the nature of the female political inclusion, it was overshadowed by one lone criterion which was underrepresentation. The latter was, in fact, a planned issue by the leaders of the political parties to avoid the nightmare of a feminized politics. The early governmental practice of gender-based discrimination and unjust policies towards women candidates started before the female appointment to their political posts. It started during the candidates’ selection process through resorting to discriminative strategies to select women candidates in the short-lists. From one general election into another (1945-1997), the male candidates always outnumbered women candidates.

The female trailblazers, climbing the ladder of political participation (1945-1997), did not give up and they did not let that political hurdle spoiling their political mission. They were ceaselessly ready to surmount over gender disparity in politics to keep present in parliament and to cope with the difficulties they encountered. In one way or another, this really mirrored their interest in managing the local affairs of their country. Any woman MP, whatever the constituency she represented and whatever her political beliefs, spiced the parliamentary politics with new issues whether she introduced, proposed or accomplished. Eventually, women MPs believed that reaching the gate of parliament must be pertinent with better representing other women and increasingly speaking out women issues and promoting women interests.

The female political empowerment was very limited. It was coincided with appointing a very few number of women to high ministerial positions such as Speakers and Cabinet Ministers. Statistics revealed the decreased appointment of women MPs into high political positions. From 1945-1979, one female Speaker Betty Boothroyd, One Deputy Speaker Betty Harvie Anderson, one Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher and 9 women cabinet ministers represented the pinnacle of the female political inclusion when the British parliament was flooded with an enormous number of male MPs. In this vein, the British parliament remained a mixed-sex inclusive institution, but not arena where equitable policies were fostered. Gender equality in parliament remained also an unreachable quest.

The election of Margaret Thatcher in 1979 as the first woman Prime Minister in the British political history marked a turning point in the female political representation in the House of Commons and the House of Lords. Thatcher's political presence in parliament, her political treatment of her colleagues and, above all, her way of locally managing England was a catalyst for change that impacted on her political relations with her colleagues and triggered the societal unrest. The way Margaret Thatcher began her political career, as a PM, and the way she resigned was totally different. The early political zenith shifted into unceremonious resignation due to her authoritative style of government and the political domination she exercised over the male MPs and Cabinet Ministers.

The female success or failure in the already only-male led parliament was interlinked with the way women MPs behaved, worked and reacted. Any trivial mistake could lead to a total fiasco. Besides, the leadership style was also of great significance when it came to

the female competition with men or the attempt to dominate men. In their already-established House, the male MPs and the male leaders of political parties paid tremendous attention to their masculinity rather than their political success. This was clearly experienced during the tenure of Margaret Thatcher. The authoritative leadership style triggered the male opposition against her.

This indicated a single lesson in the British political history; parliament was opened for women for political collaboration, not for political domination. If political patriarchy persisted in the British parliament, it was just because the first day parliament was established, it was dominated by men. When it came to the female political domination over men in parliament, things would take another turn. The inappropriate exercise of political power had its own repercussions.

Most importantly, women's political endeavours and their hard work, although undergoing political inequality, was not negatively impacted. They kept overcoming the planned political underrepresentation hoping for fluctuations as rewards for their political perseverance. Never losing hope, women MPs worked hard and enjoyed the very limited percentage of seats. In 1997, they reaped the fruits of their labour. Due to the Labour Party's, led by Tony Blair, incorporation of the All-Women Shortlists in the General Election of 1997, the number of the elected women MPs was tripled. 101 women MPs entered parliament. Put simply, the female political involvement 1945-1997 as decision-makers indicated that the decision-making could not be a fruitful, workable and successful one without gender cooperation, unity, and support in the parliamentary world. Women MPs did not always encounter such supportive environment. Despite tough circumstances, women MPs were there surmounting.

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كلمة مدير المجلة

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم، والصلاة والسلام على من بعثه الله رحمة للعالمين

إيماناً من مجلة دراسات-التابعة لمخبر كلية الآداب واللغات بجامعة طاهري محمد بشار-بشمولية الفكر والحقول المعرفية، في عددها هذا من مقالات أدبية، لغوية، تاريخية، اجتماعية وفلسفية باللغات الثلاث: العربية-الفرنسية-الإنجليزية فتحت المجال أمام الباحثين الأكاديميين من الجامعات الوطنية والخارجية، وهو تنوع يعكس مكانة المجلة. فكانت المقالات من الجزائر العاصمة-الأغواط-سكيكدة أم البواقي وقسنطينة، البويرة.. وغيرها من ربوع الوطن المفدى وحتى من الخارج في هذا العدد المتميز يجدر بنا أن ننوه بجهود جنود الخفاء الذين عملوا على إعادة المجلة إلى مكانتها الأولى، فأنا مدين لهؤلاء الذين ضحوا بالوقت والجهد، وأخص منهم: عميد الكلية أ.د. كمال رقيق، والسيد رئيس التحرير: د. شريف بن دحان، والمحرر المساعد: د. سعاد قصابر فلهم مني جزيل الشكر والاحترام.

حددت المجلة فترة استقبال المقالات على المنصة، ولم يحترم بعض الباحثين هذه الفترة ورفضت مقالاتهم، كما لم يحترم آخرون شروط النشر فرفضت مقالاتهم كذلك، ولهذا أهيب بالجميع احترام شروط النشر والقالب تفادياً لأي رفض. لقد أصبحت مجلة دراسات تشكل ثورة معرفية ثقافية، أسهمت في إضافة لبنة جديدة في حقول معرفية شتى، من خلال المقالات التي تنشرها

وفي الأخير لا يسعني إلا أن أثني على السادة المحكمين في الجامعات الجزائرية أو في الخارج على مجهوداتهم القيمة وإسهاماتهم في تفعيل الحركة الثقافية.

مدير المجلة

أ.د. الطيب بن دحان

كلمة رئيس التحرير

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم والصلاة والسلام على خير البشر وبعد:

هاهو ذا العدد الثاني من المجلد العاشر من مجلة دراسات يصدر ببرد قشيب، يتمثل في اعتمادها ضمن المجلات المصنفة صنف ج وفقاً للقرار الوزاري المحدد للمجلات المصنفة في آخر تحديث شهر أبريل نيسان المنصرم، وهو مكسب حازت كلية الآداب واللغات ومن ورائها مخبر الدراسات الصحراوية على شرفه بفضل جهود خيرة القائمين على المجلة، يحذوهم بصدق وإخلاص طموح ترقيةها إلى أصناف أرقى بعون الله، وما ذلك بعزيز بعد كل الجهود المبذولة والتي ستبذل لتحقيق الهدف.

ضمّ العدد بين دفتيه مقالات شتى توزعت على الميادين التي تختص المجلة بالنشر فيها، فكانت المقالات في اللسانيات والنقد والأدب والفلسفة والتاريخ وعلم الاجتماع

وما كانت هذه المقالات وهذه المادة العلمية لتري النور لولا جهود السادة المحكمين الأفاضل، من داخل الوطن وخارجه، فلهم مني أسمى آيات التقدير والشكر والعرفان اعترافاً بفضلهم في صدور هذا العدد

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رئيس التحرير

د. شريف بن دحان

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## The Contribution of Margaret Thatcher as a “Woman” in the Debacle of the “Male-Led” 1984-1985 Strike in England

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### Abstract

In 1984, the governmental reaction against a male-led 1984-1985 Strike represented a watershed in the British history. Margaret Thatcher, the first female Prime Minister, worked on crushing the strike and the strikers although being a “woman” whereas the previous male Prime Ministers, before Thatcher, failed to crush the previous strikes although being “men”. This paper, in fact, aims at expounding the reasons behind the strike. Put simply, it attempts to find out the way Thatcher reacted to the miners’ unrest. Furthermore; it sheds light on whether the debacle of the strike was because of the power of the “female” political intervention itself or only a result of changing the gist of governmental dissent against the strikers. To meet this end, the qualitative method is appropriately hinged on. The findings show that the debacle of the strike went in tandem with the power and role a woman can play in politics.

**Key Words:** 1984-1985 Strike, Margaret Thatcher, Male-led, debacle, politics.

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**Introduction:**

Strikes did not and, in fact, do not take place out of a vacuum, there is always a reason or a number of reasons that triggered a number of people to be involved in their direct action or riots expressing their unwillingness to accept something imposed on them. Strikes represent an occasion to echo for change, calling for a right or an attempt to prevent something before it happens. They are considered as a protest in which the strikers expressed their rebellion, anger and wrath against someone or a number of people.

The twentieth century Britain witnessed a plenty of strikes against government or governmental decisions. They embarked on a process of averting governmental plans to be fulfilled or calling for change. The Miners Strike (1984-1985) is an example. The miners went on strike against a governmental plan to close coal pits. The strike was extended from 1984 and officially ended in 1985 resulting in a total fiasco for the miners and a great success for government.

The Miners Strike (1984-1985) flared up when Margaret Thatcher was the Prime Minister and the leader of the Conservative Party (1979-1990). She was the first elected woman as a prime minister. This female entry to such outstanding political position marked the zenith of female political participation. As a political trailblazer, she introduced radical changes not introduced by her male predecessors and , above all, exercised her authority over the strikers who reacted furiously to one of her political decisions which was the closure of a number of coal pits. Her political power, against male strikers, mirrored her successful intervention in silencing the strikers and made their plans void and invalid.

This paper attempts to shed light on the nature and the reasons that triggered the miners in England to involve themselves in this strike against Margaret Thatcher. Additionally, it tries to investigate the nature of Thatcher's reaction during a one year chaotic era. The most focal point to be elucidated is to know whether the fiasco the strikers encountered had something to do with the unchallengeable role Margaret Thatcher played in politics as a "woman" or the miners' failure was just because of the altered tactics to stop the riots. To meet this end, the following research question are raised. First and foremost, why did the Miners' Strike take place? How did the British government, under Thatcher, react? What about the outcome of the strike? Since the strikers were harshly crushed by Margaret Thatcher, what were the reasons that contributed to the governmental breakthrough against the strikers? Was the fiasco the strikers endured due to the importance of female gender in politics or just a result of changing governmental tactics to overcome the threat of the strikers?

What seemed debatable is the intervention of the female Prime Minister in crushing the strike leading to its debacle. She represented the female authority over the male strikers although being successful in their strikes under previous male Prime Ministers. To meet this end, the following hypothesis is formulated. The only reason that culminated in the debacle of the Miners Strike was the authority that a woman played in politics. To be able to confirm or fail to confirm the

aforementioned hypothesis, the researcher resorts to the reliance on the qualitative method. The latter refers to relying on historical sources and grasp only what is relevant.

### **1. Margaret Thatcher as a Prime Minister (1979-1990):**

Margaret Thatcher became the first female Prime Minister after achieving a landslide victory in the General Election of 1979. She represented the victory of the Conservative Party as the leading one acquiring the majority of seats in parliament. As a Prime Minister and the leader of the Conservative Party, she introduced radical changes especially in the economic field.

#### **1.1.Margaret Thatcher: Brief Biography:**

She was born Margaret Hilda Roberts on October 13, 1925 in Grantham, and England. She was educated in Grantham Girls' High School. She was the daughter of a businessman. Her first and early inclination to politics took place due to her father who used to be a member in their town's council. Later on, she was accepted at Oxford University and she studied chemistry at Somerville College. She graduated in 1947 and she started practicing her speciality as a research chemist in Colchester.

She was nicknamed "the Iron lady". The term describes a "strong willed" woman. The iron metaphor was most famously applied to Margaret Thatcher, and was coined by Captain Yuri Gavrillov in 1976 in the Soviet newspaper *Red Star* for her staunch opposition to the Soviet Union and socialism (Definitions for Iron Lady). The Expression "Iron Lady" has a bad connotation in the Soviet Union, but it started to be used in Britain as a kind of glorifying Margaret Thatcher. In a speech at Salborne Hall in London, she celebrated her new nickname. She announced "I stand before you tonight, my face softly made up and my fair hair gently waved, the Iron Lady of the Western World... yes I'm an iron lady" (Fisher, 2013)

The dawn of her foray into politics in general and the Conservative Party in particular dated back to 1950 when she emerged as conservative candidate for a Dartford parliamentary seat in 1950 election, but in vain. In 1952, she started studying another specialty which was law. Later, she became a barrister in 1953. Her first political crowning achievement came in 1959 when she won a seat in the House of Commons. In 1961, she became secretary for pensions and national insurance and secretary of state for education and science in 1970. Her political participation reached its zenith in 1975 when she was elected leader of the Conservative Party in 1975 in the general election. She emerged as the first woman Prime Minister in the British history. (Margaret Thatcher, 2014)

#### **1.2.The 1979 General Election Results:**

It was the first election in the British history whose results culminated in appointing a woman as a Prime Minister. It took place on Thursday, May 3, 1979. The Conservatives scored a decisive victory over the Labour Party led by James Callaghan (1912-1990) Prime Minister (1976-1979) and the Liberal Party led by David Steel as Prime Minister from (1976-1988). The results showed also that the leading political Party in parliament was the Conservative Party led by Margaret

Thatcher scoring 13,697,923 seats which represented 339 winnable seats in parliament. (Election news summary, 1997) The following table shows the results of the 1979 Election.

**Table 1: The 1979 General Election Results**

Party	Votes	Seats	UK Vote Share %
Conservative	13,697,923	339	43,9
Labour	11,532,218	269	36.9
Liberal	4,313,804	11	13,8
Others	1,677,417	16	5,4

**Source:** (Election news summary, 1997)

During her electoral campaign, Margaret Thatcher promised crushing the trade unions and curbing their power. Even before being a political trailblazer in parliament, her enmity with trade unions was inevitable. She commented “I shall have something more to say when things are entirely clear....” (Apple, 1979). The election was not only a moment that gave the conservative Party an opportunity to win over the other parties, but it opened new horizons for Margaret Thatcher to hold power. It was described as “the most domineering of all post-war Prime Ministers and the longest-serving ...” (Blamont & Paquette, 2000, p. 84)

### **1.3.The Establishment of the Conservative Party:**

The origins of the Conservative Party dated back to the seventeenth century 1783-1830 and originated from the older “Tory Party”. The word “conservative” was suggested by John Wilson Croker (1780-1857) in the 1830’s. The latter was one of the writers writing articles to be published in the *Quarterly Review*. He claims that it was referred to as “conservative” because the party glorified traditional values and practices. (Moulin, 2006, p. 74). The party was established in 1832 going in tandem with the 1832 General Election. It was dissolved in 1834 to restart its political work the same year when it was officially founded. The first conservative government was formed by Robert Peel (1788-1850). The program of the party was ingrained in Tamworth Manifesto written by Robert Peel himself. (Louth)

Tamworth Manifesto refers to the electoral speech delivered by Robert Peel in 1834. One of the issues addressed in the speech was the establishment of the Conservative Party and the beginning of its government. The UK Dictionary defines Tamworth Manifesto as “an election speech by Sir Robert Peel in 1834 in his Tamworth constituency, in which he accepted the changes instituted by the Reform Act and expressed his belief in moderate political reform. The manifesto is widely held to signal the emergence of the Conservative Party from the old loose grouping of Tory interests” (Tamworth Manifesto)

### **1.4.Thatcherite Economic Policy and the Seeds of Thatcherism:**

The economic management of any country in the world is the way to its progress or demise. Thatcher’s government was overshadowed by a series of economic radical reforms. Helen Thompson (1996) points out that the way of economically managing a country determined whether the good or the bad governmental performance. (Thompson, 1996, p. 167)



Margaret Thatcher presided over the Conservative Party and introduced a number of changes that resulted in economic watershed. Her style of government and the policies she introduced and the process of maintaining political and economic sweeping reforms came to be known as Thatcherism. The latter is defined as “Thatcher’s style of leadership and the policies she promoted and enforced.....This was somewhat loose concept which encompassed her policies of strengthening the powers of central government, curbing the power of trade unions and local government and the active advocacy of individualism and private enterprise” (Moulin, 2006, p. 76).

This article, in fact, is not concerned with all the economic strategies Thatcher promoted and enforced, but it attempts to shed light on Thatcher animosity towards the trade unions and the appropriate economic remedy she resorted to for the sake of ceasing their threat to the state. Moreover, the thatcherite government supported the privatisation of industries and the promotion of individualism. The state’s thirst for controlling and owning coal industry triggered the thatcherite attempts to thwart the authority of the miners in the 1984-5 strike.

Climbing the ladder of politics, Margaret Thatcher firstly introduced new economic policy. She encouraged the independence of the individual from the state and curbed the governmental intervention in economy. She worked on turning Britain from a dependent on the state to a self-dependent nation. She glorified the idea of individualism. She supports the fact that the population were no longer in need of the state in every step they would do. Individuals should be free to live their life without the government intervention. She makes it clear “Let me give you my vision: a man's right to work as he will, to spend what he earns, to own property, to have the state as servant and not as master: these are the British inheritance. They are the essence of a free country, and on that freedom all our other freedoms depend” (Bollick, 1995, p. 533)

Additionally ,she embarked on the process of privatizing state-owned industries such as coal as an example. Privatization refers to the case when a government-owned business or property becomes owned by private companies .The Encyclopaedia Britannica (2018) defines privatization as “the transfer of government services or assets to the private sector .State-owned assets may be sold to private owners ,or statutory restrictions on competition between privately and publicly owned enterprises may be lifted” (Britannica, 2018).

If light is shed on labour and trade unions during pre-Thatcher years as a Prime Minister, those unions were saddled with great power that paved the way for them to avoid stark challenges. It was estimated that 55% of workers were members of labour unions. (Bollick, 1995, p. 530) In this vein, trade unions exercised an unchallenged power even over politicians. They were involved in strikes against male MPs in which they were successful. From the start of her government, she expressed her struggle against trade unions believing that the management of the country is the onus of parliament and government, but not the onus of trade unions. Above all, trade unions should be under the authority of government.

She could also be highly pragmatic behind the scenes, moving step-by-step when that seemed like the best way of getting what she wanted: the trade unions, for example, were slowly strangled by a combination of job-losses and separate pieces of legislation before she finally finished them off by confronting the miners in the mid-eighties. (Bale, 2013, p. 10)

It is important to mention that Margaret Thatcher was victorious over the miners in their strike being launched in 1984. Thus, the strikers before Thatcher's administration were powerful to the extent that male Prime Ministers could not overcome their increased authority. Thatcher, as a woman, did her best to make from her gender a key to forestall the threat of the miners.

## **2. The Female Prime Minister's Reaction to the Miners' Strike (1984-1985):**

Margaret Thatcher was the first woman in the UK to serve as a Prime Minister from 1979-1990. Her era of government marked a turning point in the history of trade unions. Her policy was overshadowed by anti-unionism. By the same token, her attitudes towards the miners came to mirror the vendetta against the strikers who wanted to keep exercising an unchallengeable power alongside the parliamentary power. As a political trailblazer and as a woman, she thrived to diminish their efforts

### **2.1. Miners' Strike: A Key Opening the Gate of Chaos in England:**

The Miners Strike was one of the terrible industrial strikes England had ever witnessed. It was an anarchical era not only in England, but also in Scotland and Wales in which coal miners went on strike against a governmental decision by Margaret Thatcher. The strike, in turn, "served as the longest and the most significant dispute in modern industrial history..." (Towers, 1985). It dictated that 25 coal pits (Elin, 2015) should be closed. The strikers were under the leadership of Arthur Scargill (born in 1938) who declared that the strike is a "social and industrial Battle of Britain" (Cowell, 2014). He founded the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) to protest against the state-owned National Coal Board's (NCB) closure of coal mines.

Since the NUM and the NCB were the organizations that represented the confronting parts namely the strikers and the state, it is of great significance to have an idea about each one of them. First and foremost, the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) was not firstly established in the twentieth century. It was firstly established in 1889 being called The Miners Federation of Great Britain (MFGB). Until 1945, its name was altered to become labeled as National Union of Mineworkers (NUM). It took place in three male-led strikes against government 1972, 1974 and the last fruitless one 1984.

Moreover, the second institution representing the state against the strikers was the National Coal Board (NCB). It was not created for granted. Its establishment was pertinent with strengthening the government's ownership and control of the nationalized coal industry. It was formed in 1947 after the nationalization of Coal industry in 1946. It was pointed out that the onus of NCB was to "supply coal in such quantities and at such prices as may seem to them best

calculated to further the public interest in all respects, including the avoidance of any undue or unreasonable preference or advantage..." (Posner, 1962, p. 43)

Things started to change after the nationalization of coal industry during the administration of Clement Atlee as a Prime Minister (1945-1951). The process of transferring coal industry as a state-owned industry took place in 1946 through the parliamentary enactment of the Coal Industry Nationalization Act (1946). It was followed by the establishment of National Coal Board (NCB) responsible for managing coal mining and coal industry.

The strike action did not occur from scratch. There were a number of reasons that triggered the coal miners to strike against government trying, unsuccessfully, to prevent the prime Minister from closing coal mines on the one hand. On the other hand, Margaret Thatcher, represented by NCB, did not resort to closing several coal mines for granted. It is of great importance to note that the NCB's decision to close 20 coal mines meant the loss of 20.000 jobs; that is why the workers in those coal mines found themselves obliged to express their refusal and protest against the closure. (Miners Strike 1984-1985) The table mentioned below shows statistics of jobs' loss in collieries before, during and even after the strike. The closure of the coal pits had a catastrophic impact on the workers in coal mines. Losing their jobs in coal pits will, with no doubt, lead to unemployment.

**Table Two: Loss of Coal Jobs, 1981-2004**

Coalfield	Male Job Loss 1981-2004
Yorkshire	67000
Nottinghamshire	40300
Durham	22800
Derbyshire	13700
Northumberland	10100
S Derbyshire/NW Leicestershire	9600
North Staffordshire	8600
Lancashire	7100
South Staffordshire	5700
North Warwickshire	5500
Kent	3200
England and Wales coalfields	222000

**Source:** (Beatty, Fothergill, & Powell, 2007, p. 1660)

The Coal Industry Nationalization Act received parliamentary approval and governmental enactment on July12, 1946 for the sake of granting coal industry to public ownership. The placement of coal industry under the state's control went in tandem with a remarkable halt to the activities of the previous coal companies. This was a turning point that radically attracted the attention of the female Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher to be ready to act. The governmental nationalization of coal mines and coal industry was a must that needed to be urgently accomplished "The Government's view was that any delay in the take-over of the industry would only result in prolonging the period of uncertainty" (Saxena, 1955, p. 27)

In the light of the placement of coal mining and coal industry at the state's hands, it was the onus of the government to finance the newly-owned industry. By 1980, the local coal production became unprofitable and coal industry itself had been referred to as "unprofitable industry" (Producers, Performance Profiles of Major Energy, 1993). Since the industry required government subsidies, the government decided to shut coal pits.

Instead of financing unprofitable coal industry, money would be invested to run other profitable industries such as gas and oil. The government, in this vein, spent huge funds on coal industry through providing new equipment and new mining strategies. The remarkable decreased need of coal led the governmental decision to shut coal mines and rather financing other profitable sectors. Thus, the decline in the demand for coal was a prelude to a chaotic phase under the umbrella of the miners' strike (1984-1985).

Gouiffess, P (2009, 14) called Coal "the black gold". During the nineteenth and early twentieth century Britain, coal enjoyed multiple functions. It was a source of heat, energy and lighting. Above all, Britain was the cradle of the industrial Revolution that tremendously hinging on coal as a raw material. "the British production of coal jumped from 2.5 million tons (1700) to 10 million tons (1800), 73 million tons (1850) and 230 million tons at the beginning of the 20th century." Through the upcoming years, coal production reached its apogee through a remarkable increase yearly. (GOUIFFES, 2009, p. 14). George Orwell shared the same view about the necessity of coal in peoples' life. He make is clear:

Our civilization, pace Chesterton, is founded on coal, more completely than one realizes until one stops to think about it. The machines that keep us alive, and the machines that make machines, are all directly or indirectly dependent upon coal. In the metabolism of the Western world the coal-miner is second in importance only to the man who ploughs the soil. He is a sort of caryatid upon whose shoulders nearly everything that is not grimy is supported.... (Pettinger, 2016)

All in all, the strike of 1984 was an occasion when male miners emerged as a united class against government to prevent Thatcher from closing the coal pits. The female Prime Minister, if compared to previous male Prime Ministers, did not stand hand-tied. Even before her administration, she started working on surmounting over the power of trade unions. The strike of 1984 was a golden opportunity for her to confront the strikers as a governor and as a woman.

### **2.2.The Female Opponent to the Strike Action: Bringing the Strikers to their knees:**

Margaret Thatcher introduced a plethora of economic reform legislations focusing on curbing the power of trade unions. She perceived their authority as "tyranny" (Bollick, 1995, p. 537). What added insult to the injury was that trade unions did not welcome those economic legislations and those stark governmental challenges on the one hand. On the other hand, they wanted their authority to remain untouched.

**a. The Origin of the Governmental Hostility to Trade Unions:**

The 1984 Strike was not the first occasions portraying the governmental negative response to the strikers. The Conservatives' hostility and opposition to trade unionism dated back to 1977 through introducing the Ridley Report. As a political leader, she exercised her power against trade unions. "Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher maintained publicly that she had no choice but to stand up to the country's most powerful union, the leaders of which, she argued, were ignoring economic necessity by trying to maintain a raft of uneconomic, nationalized industries" (Rawsthorne, 2018, p. 156)

The Ridley Report known as "Ridley Plan" was not the personal creation of Margaret Thatcher and it was not even introduced during her mandate. It was drafted in 1977 by Nicholas Ridley under the title of "Financial Report of the Nationalized Industries Policy Group" (Berry, 2019). Nicholas Ridley, the one who drafted the report, shared a common issue with Thatcher that was his struggle against the nationalization of industries. His family's coal and steel were nationalized during Clement Attlee period as a Prime Minister. (Berry, 2019). It was pointed out that Margaret Thatcher vehemently favoured privatization and she really did and applied on all the already nationalized industries. By the same token, she absorbed the ideas of privatization from this written report before being a Prime Minister. It can be said that she was conscious and aware of the threat of trade unions before setting foot in parliament as a Prime Minister.

The report was a written document carrying among its folding a detailed version of the conditions and the strategies how to confront the trade unions on the one hand. The report is defined by Phil Rawsthorne as "a Conservative think-tank paper produced in 1977, which appeared to include a detailed blueprint on how to provoke, and secondly win, a battle against Britain's powerful miners' union" (Rawsthorne, 2018, p. 156).

On the other hand, it elucidated the way how to be victorious against trade unions. Furthermore, the most pivotal part in the report sheds light on how to privatize industries.

"It outlines a plan to prepare the ground for privatization by introducing market measures in the running of nationalized industries (such as changes of leadership, targets for return on capital, and new incentives for managers), and fragmenting the public sector into independent units that could later be sold off..." (Berry, 2019)

In this vein, Margaret Thatcher got the theoretical principles of undermining the power of the unions from the 1977 Report and when being a prime minister, it was a golden opportunity to make practice the kernel of the report. Since she was acquainted with the way how to crush and face the threat of trade unions, the strike was an important occasion to practically express her struggle with them

**b. Thatcher's Tactics to Crush the Strikers:**

Whenever focusing on someone or a group a people being opponents to another one or other group of people, it is preferable always to shed light on the

“how” being against, the “why” being against and the “outcome” of being against. The first female Prime Minister unstable relation with the strikers is one example. From the early stages of the strike, she expressed her hostility to strikers, branded its leader and gave the green light for the outbreak of a war against the minors. She represented herself as a real impediment in the path of strikers on the one hand. She claimed in her resignation speech “one of her greatest achievement in office had been defeating the strikers”. (Shaw, 2015). On the other hand, she devoted her policy to forestall the danger of trade unions that threatened her authority.

Margaret Thatcher worked on avoiding the screeching results of the pre-1984 strikes during the administration of male prime Ministers. As a woman on politics, she wanted to alter the governmental reaction to those peace-breakers through their chaotic riots. She introduced several tactics to make from her intervention in crushing the strike a fruitful one. Before the closure of coal pits, Margaret Thatcher thought of providing coal quantities for future use. She resorted to storing coal supplies for local use before being forcefully stored by the strikers.

It is worth mentioning that the opposition against someone or a group of people took a number of forms depending on the circumstances and the nature of the strike. Thatcher mobilized police and heavily relied on the military power to bitterly crush the strikers:

The government mobilized the police in a highly coordinated military-style offensive against the miners, designed to isolate the Nottinghamshire area and break picket lines elsewhere, for example using mounted police with truncheons to charge down pickets at Orgreave. They occupied mining villages, arrested 11,312 people and tried 5,653 in the courts for alleged offences (most of them miners) (Darlington, 2005)

### **2.3. The “Female” Gender in Politics: A Fruitful Response to Male Action**

The unchallenged female participation in parliamentary politics and the focal role women MP’s played in parliament mirrored the female ability to legislate, to decide and why not to change the local affairs of the country. Not only men were qualified for the political management. Meanwhile, the female perspectives in politics are very pivotal when it comes to the responsiveness to citizens’ needs. If this idea is linked with the kernel of this paper, Margaret Thatcher is proved successful when it comes to her responsiveness to chaos the miners thrived to spread in England. Being able to crush the male miners means, in one way or another, the role a woman leader in the Conservative Party had accomplished. Although women and men did not share a political equality and women were repeatedly characterized by their underrepresentation in parliament, the presence of the female minority in politics contributed to endless goals women realized as political participants. (Didi, 2020)

On the top of that, one of the occupations in which women excel is being a minister and political participant. According to the psychologist John Holland in

his book *Making Vocational Choices* (1992), there are six types of occupations: realistic, investigative, artistic, social, enterprising and conventional. Being a minister or Member of Parliament is classified as a social occupation. In a study conducted by Richard A. Lippa about gender and performance; he found out that women prefer social work more than men. The study encapsulated 14,000 participants. In this vein, one of the jobs in which women can do better and fruitfully involved is being a minister. (A.Lippa, 2005, p. 31)

Shedding light on the female successful political intervention to fruitfully encounter local issues, gender played an integral part in this success through the crowning accomplishments of Margaret Thatcher crushing the Miners' Strike of 1984. Mariane Jane Simms (2008) emphasized the role women played in politics. She depicted the female political leaders as "parliamentary mothers" in politics as "a gendered occupation". Women assuming responsibilities as political leaders will do the same thing as mothers in the home. Being a woman was never a hurdle for her political engagement, but a source of strength. In this paper, the researcher always links the power of that woman in crushing the miners' strikes already threatening her male predecessors in politics "hence being a woman, a mother and a diminutive, even fragile, appearance were turned into political pluses" (Simms, 2008)

As it is previously mentioned, the 1984 strike was not the sole one to take place against government echoing change or forestalling governmental local decisions. It was preceded by other strikes when "male" prime ministers were holding power. But those strikes were not crushed and the strikers were not harshly treated like what happened when a "female" Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher was holding power. As an example, the strikes of 1972 and 1974 was represented a total success for strikers against "male" Prime ministers but when Margaret Thatcher in office, she wanted to take revenge and never grant the strikers an opportunity to spoil the governmental authority and defeated the conservative government. (Spence & Stephensen, 2009). Gender played a vital role during this strike. The latter witnessed the intervention of the two genders men and women. Men strikers supported by women expressing their hostility against a woman in cabinet. Thus, the female gender was of great importance in terms of support and reaction.

Margaret Thatcher, though a woman, but appeared as a winner against millions of male strikers. She described the strikers as being an enemy to be defeated in one way or another. In her speech in July 1984, she claimed "We always have to be aware of the enemy within, which is much more difficult to fight and more dangerous to liberty," (Travis, 2013). She did not solely confront the strikers and forestall the threat of trade unions to the state, but she introduced radical changes never introduced before. Additionally, she governed the UK in ways totally different from the previous leaders.

“The very fact that Thatcher can be lauded as the woman who broke the mould tells its own story, confirming that even today it is thought unlikely that a woman – a mere woman! – can be politically driven, willing to dispense with the advice of more moderate colleagues, and capable of leading a society in new and unanticipated direction” (Phillips, 2013, p. 13)

Being a woman in the corridors of power did not make from her a hesitant administrator to position herself against men. On the contrary, being a female strengthened her to be always ready to overcome any kind of threat to local stability of Britain. Her involvement and her iron will against male strikers in 1984 reflected the idea that even a woman can contribute to the debacle of a plan solely set up by men. Her brave reaction against the strikers mirrored her strong personality and her ceaseless will to be a powerful leader in any kind of war being involved in. Her bitter reaction during a bitter one year of confrontations with male strikers expounds the fact that it is not a matter of being a male or female and it is not a matter of the nature of someone's gender, but the real matter is the role that gender plays. Golder (2019) provided a detailed description of Thatcher as a qualified woman for political participation in a sphere used to be reserved for men only. He wrote:

Margaret Thatcher's portrayal as a strong personality who was, even if excessively, determined to follow her own track puts forward an image of political will and power. As power is generally seen as a political asset, it seems that the caricature elaborated by Spitting Image came to reinforce Margaret Thatcher's legitimacy and reputation (Golder, 2019)

Ostracizing the male-led strike, although supported by women, was one of Thatcher's glass ceiling-shattering accomplishments. Although she did her best to achieve her task as “a Prime Minister” not as “a woman Prime Minister”, the female gender presence in the already male-led political sphere (parliament) proved as a fruitful one and one of the crowning achievements of the female fabrication of political decisions. “Thatcher made an indelible mark on how women candidates are measured.....She was a very successful politician and politicians are manipulators” (Metzler, 2013). She exhibited her ability as a woman to manipulate the chaotic era England had witnessed and dominate the male strikers' rising hostilities.

The male strikers, led by Arthur Scargill, endeavoured to bitterly oppose the female decision of closing coal mines and ousting a great number of workers but in vain due to the unchallengeable intervention of the first woman prime Minister. “Mrs. Thatcher was confident when the strike began that she could outlast Mr. Scargill” (Jr., 1984). It was pointed out that the reason that triggered the governmental reaction against the strike was mainly political not economic.



Thatcher in power, worked on making it impossible for the previous flaws to re-happen. If the government keep welcoming and quenching the strikers' thirst for fulfilling their demands, this means curbing the power and the political authority. Edward Heath (1979-1974), one of the Prime Ministers who served as leaders of the Conservative party, although a man, but he failed to defeat the strikers twice in 1972 and 1974.

### **Conclusion:**

In a nutshell, the strike of 1984-1985 against Margaret Thatcher was an occasion that portrayed several realities about the role played by the female gender in politics. In this vein, Margaret Thatcher contributed to the debacle of the 1984-1985 strike through her female touch and her principles as a woman and as a Prime Minister. Gender, in this case, demarcated the political responsibilities and is considered as defining factor in political equality between both genders although never been realized.

To wrap it up, the female success in crushing the male strikers, thwarting the danger of trade unions does not mirror the ability of Margaret Thatcher as a political leader but , undeniably, as a female successful political trailblazer. This was guaranteed through the defeat of the Conservative party by strikers in the Pre-Thatcher's era. The party was led by a man but easily defeated. Margaret Thatcher, although a woman, proved herself as a successful fighter against the male strikers. In this case, the role of women in politics remains always a debatable topic due to the myriad of contradicting views that women were, are and never be qualified to run political mission. The female gender coexistence with the male gender in politics is not a hurdle to be omitted, but according to this research that encapsulated among its folding realities about the unchallengeable role Margaret Thatcher played in politics, women have to be welcomed in politics and encouraged to climb the ladder of the process of decision-making.

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