STRATHCLYDE PAPERS ON GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS
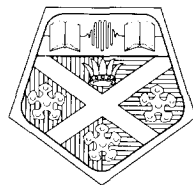
UNIVERSITY OF STRATHCLYDE

FEMINISM, POLITICS AND POLITICAL SCIENCE

by

Jenny Chapman

No. 103

1995

STRATHCLYDE PAPERS ON GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS

No. 103

FEMINISM, POLITICS AND POLITICAL SCIENCE

by

Jenny Chapman
(University of Strathclyde)

Department of Government
University of Strathclyde
GLASGOW G1 1XQ

Introduction[1]

The emergence of radical feminism and the women's liberation movement in the late 1960s and early 1970s had a profound influence on how politics is defined by political scientists, as well as more diffuse effects on cultural values throughout the western world. The political character of male-female relations and the idea that 'the personal is political' are widely accepted, and great changes have taken place in the way the law, the media and millions of ordinary people approach the subjects of sex and gender. Women's experience is accepted as valid and a field of study in the new area of 'Women's Studies' and in traditional disciplines. Issues which go to the heart of male power over women, but were treated as 'non-political' and therefore as 'non-issues' in the dominant culture - like abortion, rape and other forms of violence against women - have been re-defined and put squarely on the political agenda. Feminism also has become an object of political analysis in its own right, researched and taught by feminists and the subject of an ever-growing literature, written almost exclusively by feminists.

The fact remains, however, that much of the original feminist agenda for political analysis has still not been worked through by feminist political scientists, let alone the mainstream. With the passage of time, too, the radical ideas which had so much impact are radical no longer, while the vast amount of feminist theorising, publication and debate which has taken place since the 1970s has not only fragmented the women's movement but obscured its original, unequivocably political character. In fact, it has led feminism in so many, diverse directions that many feminists today would question whether a coherent 'feminist approach' to anything is either possible or desirable.

If I did not believe in the possibility of a 'feminist approach' to politics, I would not be writing this. However, the feminist perspective could never be easy to define, for it has always been a relative and shifting one. For well over a century feminism has been an active social movement, constantly promoting change and changing shape itself, in response to changes in society and the other social movements (like socialism and the greens) with which it interacts. Patterns of internal conflict and diversity, reflecting women's dependence on men in a male-dominated society as well as the strategic dilemmas and conflicting goals which flow from their experience as women,

---

[1] This is a longer version of a paper that was published in D Marsh and G Stoker (eds) *Theory and Methods in Political Science,* Macmillan, 1995. This paper appears by permission of Macmillan Ltd.

were established long ago. The modern movement is also affected by its international character. Ideas and practice are rapidly communicated, but differences in social and political context produce distinctly different kinds of feminism. Thus, for example, Nordic state feminism in the 1980s clearly reflects its social democratic context and distinguishes it sharply from the philosophical bent of some French feminism, the strength of liberal feminism and diverse radical movements in the USA and the anguished fragmentation of the British women's movement.

It is impossible to do justice to such a complex subject in a short space, and what follows is a selective account which reflects my own standpoint, as feminist and political scientist. It is arranged in three sections. The first introduces the original political agenda of modern feminism, from its origins in gender theory to its core political concepts such as 'the personal is political', the 'public and private spheres' and feminist democracy. The second section looks at some of the problems raised by this agenda and the subsequent fragmentation of feminism. The third section focuses on the uneven feminist presence in selected fields of political science and the challenges still to be met.

Radical Feminism and the Original Political Agenda of Modern Feminism

The radical feminism which emerged in the late 1960s was a holistic vision of the political, social, economic, psychological and cultural world of men which identified the oppressive dualism of gender as the common factor underlying the whole and raised revolutionary hopes that women's liberation could transform it all. There was nothing mystical about this; it was grounded in women's experience of the limitations of 'equal rights', of their marginalisation in left-wing and radical male-dominated movements and above all in the advances in knowledge and understanding made by women over the decades since access to education had been opened up. Few of the key concepts of modern feminism were either wholly new or even originally 'feminist'; it was their association in a new political perspective which was a revelation.

The concept of **gender** is a case in point. Although the distinction between biological sex and the cultural construction of gender was crucial to the radical perspective and is the fundamental distinction between radical feminism and its equal rights and socialist precursors, its roots lay further back. It was anthropologists, studying and comparing the wide range of non-

2

'modern' societies which survived up till the middle of this century, who first realised how 'sex-roles' varied from one society to another and identified the part played by culture in forming the assumptions made in all societies about what is naturally 'masculine' and 'feminine'.

Awareness of cultural relativity goes back almost to the origins of Western culture (Rachels 1986), but gained great impetus from the Voyages of Discovery and the resulting contacts with diverse peoples and ancient oriental civilisations. In fact, the sense of relativity and scepticism which these produced were pre-requisites for the emergence of the European Enlightenment, and co-existed with the logical positivism which is its defining characteristic for sociologists like Bauman (1992). It was only isolated individuals (like Rousseau), however, who paid more than superficial attention to the implications of cultural relativity for male-female relations until the twentieth century and the entry of women to careers in anthropology and social sciences.

There are many slightly different versions of the gender theory which these women produced, but the following account (which follows Mead) identifies the essentials on which feminism was to draw. What they found was that all societies react to the biological difference between men and women by elaborating a dichotomy of male and female gender upon it. There is amazing variation, however, in how the sexes are perceived in different cultures; what is proper to one sex in one society may be assigned to the other elsewhere and the amount of 'difference' between the sexes may be much greater in some cases than others. The result is an almost infinite variety of gender stereotypes, which tell us little or nothing about the innate propensities of the individuals who are expected to conform to them but are deeply-rooted in society through its structures, and in individuals through the complex processes of socialisation (learning, identification and experience), in which we learn to see ourselves through interaction with society.

However, there is also a common thread in the way that 'male' and 'female' are shaped and valued. Firstly, women's reproductive role (childbearing and lactation) is always at the core of female gender, while maleness is defined in terms of difference from the female. The result is that the acquired values of nurturing, service and subordination to the needs of others, always to a greater or lesser extent identified with women in extension of their reproductive role, are correspondingly absent from the male; in their place are competition, self-assertion and achievement. However, the activities and attributes peculiar to men, whatever they are held to be, are not just

different from those of women; they are more highly-valued too. Gender is not just a dichotomy of male and female, but a **hierarchy** of male *over* female. As a result, caring and nurturing values and activities are devalued, while competition and achievement, along with the inequality they inevitably produce *among men* as well as between the sexes, are highly-prized.

Why did societies elaborate on reproductive difference and turn it into inequality? An existential tendency to dualism was one theory and innate male aggression another, but the crucial explanations were those advanced by post-Freudian anthropologists like Mead, which located the male drive for status and achievement in the response of men to women's exclusive mothering. Lacking the secure, unsought identity that women had, and to a greater or lesser extent excluded from the experience of 'mothering', men defined themselves in terms of an elusive masculinity which must constantly be re-asserted and imposed, not only on women, but on other men, who otherwise might prove more masculine. This need to *assert* their difference from women and compensate for their own insecure masculinity (the 'fractured psyche' of men) plausibly explained both the hierarchical character of gender and the fact that men so often secure the sphere of 'male' attributes and achievements by deliberately keeping women out. There was no reason, however, to believe it was innate, any more than women's exclusive mothering must extend beyond their basic reproductive role.

The fact that this kind of gender theory is contentious now (see below) does not alter the fact that it was absolutely crucial to the emergence of modern feminism and its core political concepts. If gender roles and values were cultural constructs (i.e. not 'natural' and fixed), *they could be changed.* What radical feminism did was recast this as a political theory, by substituting 'power' and 'domination' for 'achievement' and 'superiority' in the account of male values and translating women's unequal status and restricted role into political terms of subordination, powerlessness and oppression. This was what gave the statement that **'the personal is political'** (originally a concept of the US Civil Rights movement) its enormous significance for modern feminism. Suddenly, the negative experience of so many women who could not 'fit' their gender stereotype or value their 'inferiority' was no longer seen as something purely personal, for which their individual failure 'as a woman' was to blame, but as part of a political relationship with men. Conversely, if the oppressive nature of female gender was political in character, then so was every woman's discontent. However, in order to realise this and make common cause with other women, she had to escape from her own

internalisation of female gender and the low self-esteem, apathy and sense of helplessness which went with it. This was **consciousness-raising**, a form of adult political socialisation in which women meeting separately from men could overcome their marginalisation and recognise each other as full individuals whose experience was as valid as that of men. Problems they previously thought of as personal were general to their sex and flowed not from their nature, but from the political system of gender in which they were oppressed *by men* (McWilliams 1974, Chapman, 1987).

The very old distinction in Western civilisation between **the private and the public sphere** also acquired a radically new significance for feminism as the structural expression of male gender values (with women located in the 'private', largely domestic sphere while virtually all valued, non-nurturing activities were reserved to the 'public' sphere from which women could be excluded either outright or indirectly by their domestic ties and lack of 'public' skills). It was also the basis of male-constructed politics. The object of equal rights feminists had been to gain access to the 'public' sphere on the same terms as men by overcoming the discrimination which excluded them, while socialists promised to do away with the 'private' sphere altogether, by communalising its domestic and childcare functions; in both these kinds of feminism, the values of the 'public' sphere were taken as the norm and the goal for women was the right to be like men.

From a gender perspective, however, the 'public' sphere was the product of male gender, reflecting its competitive and inegalitarian values both in its regulation of the private sphere (through laws and customs and the personal power of men in families) *and* in the hierarchical structuring of political, social and economic status among men. The dominant culture was permeated through and through with **sexism** - the assumption of male superiority - while **patriarchy** was originally adopted as the feminist term for male power and politics precisely because it captured the integral connection between the domination of women by men *and* the domination of men by other men (Millett 1972, Randall 1987). Female gender values had been left out in the formation of the public sphere, but men as well as women have to pay for this.

Thus the task of feminists was not to join the 'public' sphere, which would simply reinforce its dominance, turn women into yet another of its many 'out-groups' and continue to exclude the 'female' values which had been tied up and devalued in the 'private' sphere. Instead, the **women's liberation movement** was to be a profoundly revolutionary movement,

5

which would not only liberate women from male oppression and their gender socialization (the 'outposts of the enemy in one's head'), but overcome the barriers between the public and private spheres and recreate society, culture and politics in new, non-patriarchal forms.

What Went Wrong; Fragmentation and the 'Feminist Perspective'

This immense project of women's liberation was to expose the whole gender-based system of sexism and patriarchal power, expressed in social, economic and political structures, in language and cultural images of men and women, in the alienation of women from their bodies, the repression of their sexuality and male control of women's reproduction, and in male violence against women. Sometimes exhilarating, but often deeply disturbing and painful, this labour has revealed inconsistencies and ambiguities in the strategy and goals of feminism which are inextricably bound up with both the theory and experience of gender. Some of these problems are illustrated by two fundamental issues which have never been resolved: motherhood and feminist democracy.

The logical strategy for motherhood indicated by gender theory was to promote **'shared parenting'** which, by giving men an almost equal role in nurturing, could minimise their need for difference and expose both sexes to the same formative experiences which would shape a more androgynous society (Mead 1962, Chodorow 1978, Harding, 1984). From the start, however, feminists found it impossible to agree on how to value motherhood or fit it into their conception of a new society. In Firestone's vision of an **androgynous** society free from artificial 'difference' and repression, motherhood was a biological trap which could only be overcome by the advance of science to the point where the human foetus could be reared outside the body (an increasingly credible option nowadays). In complete contrast, Rich equated the liberation of women with the liberation of **mothering** from the **institution of motherhood** (i.e. from male control). Although Rich paid lip service to the goal of 'shared parenting', her vision of sisterhood and its basis in the bonds between mothers and daughters seemed to have more to do with women's traditional role and the elusive ideal of genders that are **'different but equal'**. It certainly touched a chord with women who were reluctant to share their traditional sphere of fulfilment and maternal power with men. In addition, in societies where the incidence of women's single-parenthood is rapidly increasing, whether from choice or necessity,

6

even advocates of shared parenting have found themselves obliged to support women in a form of motherhood which entails the ultimate exclusion of men from parenting and can only reinforce the system of 'different' but unequal (Chapman 1993).

These positions taken in respect of motherhood signal many of the most divisive episodes in feminism over the last twenty-five years. The link between sex and gender - the point of departure of modern feminism - has become a battleground over the issue of **essentialism**, i.e. blurring the distinction between biological sex and gender, so that the characteristics of men and women produced by culture are treated as fixed and 'natural', either because men and women are believed to be innately different, or because their different reproductive roles have ineluctable effects.

Thus the assertion of mothering is at the root of some extremely essentialist positions which depart from gender theory to identify women with nature, maternal power and a fixed cultural superiority to men (e.g. Alpert 1973, Daly 1979) and seem to offer feminists ' . . .a permanence and an immediately rich identity that radical feminism, with its call to a long, often negative struggle of resistance, [can] not' (Snitow 1990). They also let feminists out of the necessity for changing *men*.

Although very few feminists would endorse these claims, the fears aroused by this kind of essentialism have helped to generate a drive to disassociate feminism and women's futures from any biological constraints, a tendency which may also have been fuelled by the natural inclination of feminists to prioritise their own pre-occupations. Thus the 'long, often negative struggle' faced by the pioneers of personal politics suggested to Young (1984) that if shared parenting 'entails monumental changes in all institutions in society' then 'relations of parenting cannot be changed without *first* changing other structures' (my italics), a non-sequitur which in its turn led her to the proposition (subsequently treated as a firm conclusion) that 'women's mothering may be less fundamental than other institutions of domination'. From here it is but a short step to the categorical insistence of some contemporary feminists that gender is not derived from sex at all, but has been imposed on it; 'gender precedes sex' says Delphy (1993), an extreme anti-essentialism which to my mind implies more than a trace of wishful thinking and involves a re-definition of 'gender' so profound that she ought to use a different word. Even this can look like a bulwark, however, against the postmodernism which has swept America in last few years and returned to Europe in a politically paralysing form of intellectual disassociation of

meaning from any kind of structure, including that of human bodies (Hoff 1994).

An overlapping set of problems arose in terms of feminist political alternatives. A new, feminist definition of politics was implicit in the idea of 'the personal is political'; politics is in *all* the decisions that shape our lives, not only those made in the restricted arena conventionally described as 'politics'. This is not merely a matter of widening the focus from central institutions and political elites to local politics and community groups; it means that relations between individuals, even of the most personal and intimate kind, reflect the general situation of the broader groups to which they belong. However, if conventional ideas of politics are based on male gender values, there must be feminist alternatives. A feminist perspective should acknowledge the dualism of power *and* powerlessness, conflict *and* co-operation, and propose political forms which eschew power, conflict and the hierarchies which these produce.

Rejecting existing politics, many feminists set out to build a new political world of **non-hierarchical, unstructured** political forms and relationships which would reflect the web of particular relationships and personal responsibilities in women's nurturing role and form the basis of a new **feminist democracy**. These ideas found immediate practical expression in the women's movement, as feminist groups learned to operate without the office-bearers and procedures which structure hierarchy in conventional groups and sought a form of decision-making which involved all members equally. Two serious problems soon emerged (Freeman 1974). If no attempt was made to the regulate the working of a group, informal structuring occurred, producing the ungovernable tyranny of informal in-groups. Secondly, lack of formal decision-making procedures meant the absence of the authoritative statements and spokespersons expected by existing public bodies and demanded by the media; the result was the external imposition of a 'star system' which gave undue 'authority' to the views of outstanding individuals.

The first problem arose from the misconception of political equality as something which would emerge spontaneously in unregulated groups and although the term 'structurelessness' was never dropped, inventive movement women soon found ways of structuring for equality of participation in their groups and, in the wider context of the movement as a whole, evolved the practice of 'networking' to enable some degree of co-ordination in the movement as a whole. These innovations have had an immense impact on the

political practice of feminism and the 'alternatives' proposed by other social movements throughout the western world, with effects ranging from the continuing, general practice of women's groups in the USA and the UK (where a structured national organisation has never been set up) to the creative intervention of feminists in local and national Icelandic politics (Chapman 1993, pp 258-66) and their influence on West German Green alternatives.

The second problem was more intractable, reflecting the fact that feminist alternatives did not produce an immediate transformation of male structures; instead feminists had to pursue their conception of democracy within the context of another, dominant form of politics. The rejection of male politics also pointed to an underlying ambiguity in strategy and goals. By drawing alternatives to male politics from women's traditional role, were feminists not betraying themselves as trapped within their female gender, and perpetuating a male-constructed 'difference'? Worse still, they might be falling into the trap of essentialism. If feminists believed that 'female' alternatives were better, were they not just seeking a *reversal* of dominance, female over male instead of the other way about? Confusion about goals overlapped with anxieties about how far **separatism** (the creation of a separate space in which women could act and interact autonomously outside male-dominated structures) should go. While some women saw this in terms of organisational strategy, either as a temporary stage until a more androgynous (i.e. ungendered) society emerged or involving a combination of separate organisation with participation in mixed structures and alliances with men, others were more pessimistic, especially if they took an essentialist view of 'men the enemy'; for them, separatism was not a means but the end, and should be as complete and final as could be.

Accusations of essentialism were to be a constant refrain of the debates that sprang up around the issues of feminist strategy and goals. Charges of **reductionism** were another. Gender theory certainly was reductionist in the explanatory sense, accounting for behaviour at one level by a theory of gender formation at a more fundamental level. However, this was increasingly seen as reductionist in its pejorative senses, i.e. as fallacious reasoning which understands the whole in terms of its parts or as in metaphysical reductionism which holds that processes at one level are *nothing more than* manifestations of processes at a lower level (Woodhouse 1994). Feminists are especially exposed to charges of this kind by the anomalous position of women in a male-dominated society. Although their gender sets women apart from, and in a sense makes them 'outsiders' in, this society, their dependence on men makes

them 'insiders' too, divided by all the same dimensions - of tribe, class, religion, race etc. that divide men. In the reality of a prolonged struggle which had to take place inside the very society they were being 'liberated' from, feminists were soon to find that their early hopes of **sisterhood** gave way under attack both from established and oppositionist male interests, and from within their own ranks, for promoting feminism at the expense of other aims and reducing everything to the 'woman' question.

Many feminists came from the Marxist left, where they had been disillusioned by the sexism of male socialists. These recruits, especially in the UK, found it difficult to abandon their conviction of the primacy of class struggle and deference to Marxist authority. Socialism, like liberalism, has always sought to 'disempower' feminism by marginalising it (Barth 1986); the claim that there could be no solution to the 'woman question' until after a successful socialist revolution meant that feminism must be subordinated to the socialist movement. Now feminism seemed to be reversing these priorities; no real change in the nature of relations among men could be achieved without a fundamental change in gender. For socialists, it was essential to reconcile feminism and Marxism in some way that avoided this conclusion, a project which was a dominant theme in feminism for many years.

The term 'patriarchy' was adopted enthusiastically by many socialist-feminists, but a fierce debate erupted as to its historical or ahistorical (universal, transhistorical) character, its relationship to paternalist forms of political power, social contract theory and capitalism and the extent to which it is bound up with the history of the family as a social, political and economic unit (Pateman, 1988, pp 19-38). Whereas the original feminist premise was that the power of *men over men* as well as that of men over women derived from gender, socialist recruits were anxious to separate the two, pointing to the family as the main sphere and instrument of women's subordination and leaving the rest of the field clear for the intellectual hegemony of Marxist class analysis (e.g. Barrett 1988, pp.126-7). 'Dual systems theory' was one form of this approach, regarding patriarchy and capitalism as two separate but mutually accommodating systems of dominance (Eisenstein, 1981). In practice, Marxist-feminist research tended to refute central socialist-feminist hypotheses about the harmony of interests between the patriarchal family and capitalist development and socialist critiques of 'the family' came to be seen as somewhat misconceived (Mark-Lawson and Witz 1990, Barrett 1988). By then, however, the feminist movement was already divided into apparently irreconcilable camps, radical and socialist.

The rise of black feminism, identifying racism as yet another distinct oppressive system, compounded the problem. Black feminism was the expression of a new confidence on the part of black women in the USA and Europe which not only mobilised black feminists but also added the effects of racism on women's situation to the feminist perspective and identified over-generalisations (e.g. about the role of the family, the state and the labour market) stemming from the leading role of white women in the women's movement. It also led to links with Third World feminists, which opened up new worlds of women's experience and aims to Western feminism and exposed the ethnocentricity of some of its assumptions. Sadly, black feminism also had a negative impact. Its core was the assertion that the experience of black women was unique because of racism; white women could not speak for black. However, racism is experienced by black men as well as black women, and white women as well as men can be racists (even if white feminists have always had strong links with anti-racist movements); even the feminism of white women was a form of racism. The result was that black feminists ended by insisting that racism, like class relations for socialists, must be treated as a separate system of oppression from that of gender and that black women must organise apart from white.

This tendency to fragment can partly be attributed to two divisive influences which each new wave of feminist recruits exerted on the women's movement. One is that of guilt. Middle-class feminists already knew they were guilty of not being working-class; now *all* white feminists bore the guilt of not being black. The result, re-inforced by sympathy with Third World liberation and lesbian feminists, was to create a 'hierarchy of oppression', in which the most valued were the most oppressed. The fact that those judged least oppressed - white, middle-class feminists - were exactly the kind of women who had created modern feminism was ironical and certainly did not help them to defend the feminist perspective. Instead, their voices were subdued by their own (perhaps over-ready) admission of involuntary social guilt and the increasingly intolerant atmosphere which developed. Although few were prepared to agree that support for the PLO (or the IRA) should be regarded as a measure of one's feminism, it was noticeable by the latter-1980s that a kind of anticipatory 'political correctness' was creeping in; it was not uncommon for feminist works to be introduced with deferential references to black feminism, even if the latter had had little or no detectable influence on what was in the text (e.g. Barrett 1988).

The second influence was that of 'difference'. Most feminists were very ready to admit that every group's experience is to some extent unique and should be voiced, a particularly appropriate attitude in view of the post-structuralist climate prevailing in post-Marxist intellectual circles in the 1980s and the 'deconstructionist' emphasis of the literary, linguistic and media studies which were becoming central to the new field of Women's Studies. The essence of 'deconstructionism' is the belief that all identities are socially constructed, in terms of a 'discourse' which reflects the perspective and interests of the dominant group and subordinates the rest. The only route to liberation is by deconstructing this discourse and 'privileging' one's own, oppressed identity. For a feminist, therefore, the object of deconstructing the dominant, masculine discourse is not only to reveal its secret, misogynist agenda, but also to liberate all the women's voices and experience it has denied. The trouble with relativism, however, is that if taken to what is often regarded, perhaps mistakenly, as its logical conclusion it produces as many fragments as there are people; similarly with deconstruction, if all identities are socially constructed, then *no* identity can be immune from deconstruction. For feminism, the outcome was a movement of diverse and overlapping oppressed groups, whose feminism was only the common factor, not the primary one.

One of the most illuminating, but also destructive episodes of deconstruction was the so-called 'sexuality' debate. Initial reaction to lesbian feminism was very positive; here was another oppressed group which must be heard. At its most militant, however, it produced the demand for 'political lesbianism', according to which heterosexuality was a construct of the dominant culture designed to keep women down, all sexual relations with men were a form of male power politics and women who were guilty of 'sleeping with the enemy' *could not be considered feminists;* lesbianism or celibacy were the only options open. This extreme form of separatism obviously overlapped with essentialist views of men as irredeemable, illustrating the pattern which has been repeated with each fragmentation episode: each strand interacts with, and feeds on all the others *and* the 'essentialism' dichotomy to produce a seemingly endless proliferation of different 'feminisms'.

The specific claim that liberation equals lesbianism inevitably made the women's liberation movement an uncomfortable place for heterosexual feminists of all persuasions (Segal 1994). At the same time, it was exploited by the mainstream media to characterise the whole women's movement, and radical feminism in particular, as 'man-hating'. At the theoretical level,

however, liberation by deconstruction has not simply undermined the unity of feminists; it has also brought an *intrinsic* problem of modern feminism into focus.

The revolt against the oppression of women puts feminists in the difficult position of simultaneously trying to articulate the women's voices which male-dominated cultures are suppressing (i.e. to speak from the point of view of women who have been 'gendered' and advance their interests) *and* to escape from the tyranny of gender altogether. Each project is essential; the first enables feminism to mobilise its natural constituency while also bringing issues like rape, lesbianism and violence against women into the open and revealing the power relations underlying them, while the second provides the dynamic of the liberation movement. However, the tension between them and the fact that they are both taking place inside living societies, produces endless ambiguity and conflicting strategies and goals. When we talk about women, what kind of women do we mean - women as a biological sex, 'women' as gendered cultures make them, or 'liberated women'? By speaking for 'women' as a social group and pursuing their interests according to a strategy derived from gender difference are we actually reinforcing gender as a construct (the so-called 'dilemma of difference'), or as other feminists would argue, is this the only practicable route to the empowerment of feminists and a gender reformation? If we accept the view of some self-styled post-modernists that our sex is now divided into liberated feminists (themselves) and an obsolete mass of theoretical inferiors (the rest of the female population), are we not being deluded into abandoning feminism altogether, at a point when all we have gained is a new intellectual elite within it? And how do we reconcile the post-modernist view that there are *no* fixed bases for identity with the facts (and alleged facts) of biological difference on which a variety of feminists, including French philosophers, some eco-feminists and lately also lesbians are making a new case for essential difference?

The fact that these intellectual dilemmas have to some extent become institutionalised in the field of Women's Studies has been a mixed blessing. On the plus side, it has created an autonomous, protected space in which some women can produce a pool of new knowledge and insights on which others can draw from within their disciplines. Without this, the study and legitimisation of issues like rape, pornography and violence against women would not have taken place. The obverse is that this space may become a ghetto, insulating the outside world from feminist ideas which might subvert it (as in the case of political science), and fencing in the inhabitants from dialogue with a

sufficiently wide range of others to prevent their becoming introverted, or even colonised by a hegemonic doctrine like Marxism or post-modernism. Indeed, a markedly doctrinaire and even theological tendency runs like a continuous thread through the debates of modern feminism, along with the tendency for feminist writing to become so intellectual and esoteric as to exclude the vast majority of women. Thus while feminists of the 1970s and early 1980s had to grapple with the difference between socialists, socialist-feminists and socialist feminists 'without the hyphen', those of the 1990s are expected to pursue complex distinctions between feminists, 'postmodern feminists' and 'feminist postmodernists' (e.g. Sylvester 1993). The frequent use of seemingly standard terms like post-structuralism and post-modernism in non-standard ways makes these distinctions all the more obscure.

Nevertheless, many feminists have continued on their way, welcoming diversity but still adhering to a recognisably feminist, political agenda. Recently, this has produced two different kinds of political science writing (Coole 1993). One makes enthusiastic use of 'postmodern (deconstructive) strategies' from which the feminist perspective is tacitly exempt, but stops short of abandoning women as a social base. The other consists of 'modernist' works which address the material world in which social roles, economic activity and politics continue to be structured on a gender basis. There are corresponding differences of emphasis in their versions of culture, gender and feminist politics. For the 'modernist', culture is the result of interaction between ideas, experience and action in a structured world of social, economic and political relationships, gender has its roots in sex and feminism is a political and social movement. Under the influence of post-modernism, culture tends to become a disembodied world of ideas, signs and signifiers, where sex is a merely a sign, feminism is a state of mind and political action comes close to being equated with discourse.

There is a considerable irony in the departure of feminism to the realm of disembodied cultural studies, since one of the strongest themes in modern feminism has been its critique of the dualism of reason and nature in Western culture, according to which culture (the fruits of reason) is attributed to men and base (i.e. devalued), material nature to women (Ortner 1974, Griffin 1981, Plumwood 1993). In fact, the perception of dualism as a central problem of domination is now shared by radical feminists (the dualism of gender), Marxist feminists (the dualism of class), black feminists (the dualism of race) and eco-feminists (the dualism of man *vs* nature).

The need for a common approach to the problem of dualism/dominance is now being asserted most urgently by eco-feminists. In philosophical terms, this has produced a new/old 'reductionism' derived from the existentialist proposition (proposed by de Beauvoir in her Introduction to *The Second Sex* back in 1949) that the hierarchical dualism of gender is derived from an even more fundamental dualism in the development of human consciousness (the dualism of 'self' and 'other' which enables us to construct ourselves as subjects). Arguing that this has produced a distinctive 'master consciousness' in Western civilisation, Plumwood (1993) identifies a 'mutualism' with nature in some non-western societies as an admittedly imperfect, but preferable alternative. At the normative level, the emphasis is on integration; eco-feminism seeks to create 'a democratic culture beyond dualism', and a 'realignment of reason' with the cultural riches of diversity. Significantly, all these are presented as specifically *feminist* insights, reflecting what appears at the time of writing to be a fairly general falling-back - of eco-feminists, feminist philosophers, liberal feminists, deconstructionists, post-modernists and new essentialists as well as 'modern' feminists of various hues - on the 'feminist perspective', a concept which is sufficiently ambiguous about the role of women as its social base to be acceptable to all.

In fact the view that 'difference' has gone too far is being expressed, albeit with caution, in many quarters, not least on account of the way that postmodernism has swept through American academe in the last two years (Hoff 1994), but also because some of the 'differences', such as that of black and white, seem a lot less categorical on closer examination (Nain 1994). The desire to find some common ground, and the belief that feminism cannot survive in any meaningful form without its roots in women as its social base, is particularly acute among feminists whose concern with politics and social action leads them to view the recent history of feminism with some dismay (Carroll and Zerilli 1993, Lovenduski and Randall 1993). Another development which may bear positive results, is the emergence of new male allies who are also gender rebels. Alliances with men always have been a vital factor in the history of feminism, destructive in their tendency to pull the movement apart in directions which reflect male interests, but constructive in their ability to produce limited but real rewards within male-dominated systems. The fact that gender is the principal target of both 'gays' and heterosexual men who seek less rigid roles certainly brings these alliances closer than any other to the central concerns of feminism. The prospects are far from clear, but neither are they altogether bleak.

The 'Feminist Perspective' in Political Science Today

In addition to the fragmentation process, there are two other, rather obvious reasons for the limited impact of feminism on political analysis. One is the small number of women in the discipline, perhaps due partly to a feeling, justified or not, that women are particularly unwelcome in such a male-dominated subject or even to a belief that the study of politics is *inappropriate* for feminists, given the radical repudiation of male politics. Whatever the reason, there is certainly a limit to what a handful of people can achieve. Equally obvious is the natural inclination of men to resist an alien perspective as long as possible. Since the most threatening and incomprehensible aspect of the feminist agenda was its holistic approach, it is not surprising that one response has been to subdivide and compartmentalise it, into chapters here and there on feminism and this or that aspect of the political science canon (which can be left unread) and into separate courses, or sub-sections of courses. The obverse of this has been the readiness of feminists to treat feminism as a subject in itself, instead of exploring their mutual concerns with people studying different mainstream topics. The result is that feminism has made more headway as an *area* of political analysis (for feminists) than as a living influence inside it. The results are very uneven, reflecting changes in the mainstream context as well as the different pre-occupations and strategies of feminists in different times and places.

Feminism and Political Thought

Feminism calls for a complete re-appraisal of the whole system of male political ideas and their epistemology; logically, neither should be studied without reference to the other. This dialectical approach is not a problem for feminists, whose ideas have developed in the form of critiques of male ideas and practice which lead to new insights. Where the heritage of political thought is concerned, feminist scholars have examined the implications of the treatment (or non-treatment) of women by male political philosophers, shown how the sexist assumptions of modern male scholars have distorted their understanding of their own political traditions, and brought a feminist perspective to bear on social contract theory (Okin 1979, Saxonhouse 1985, Pateman 1988). However, there has been little reciprocal interest of men in feminist ideas and as late as 1987 mainstream theory was still impervious to feminist concepts of democracy (Pateman 1987). Compartmentalism was

almost certainly one reason for this; men did not read feminist texts. At the same time, feminist political scientists may not have made enough effort to assemble feminist political theory from its diverse and scattered sources in feminist writing and practice or to explain its common ground with other theories. Pateman was not just the latest feminist to complain about the invisibility of feminism in the mainstream, but also one of the first to make it clearly visible, in terms of mainstream theories. However, it is where feminist challenges overlap with those being made by men that they are most likely to find an opening to the mainstream. The contemporary citizenship debate, fuelled by the decline of the old left and the rise of new male opposition interests, is a prime example.

Part of the impetus for the citizenship debate came from the feminist critique of liberal democracy and its gendered concept of the citizen, universal in theory, but really rooted in a public sphere derived from masculine values and the structural characteristics of the male gender role. Because of the identification of women with the 'private', domestic sphere and the limitations this places on their lives even now, it has always been difficult - originally impossible - for them to qualify as citizens (Saxonhouse 1985, Phillips 1993). Social contract theory, in spite of its emphasis on universalism, individualism and the consent of the governed, actually reinforced women's exclusion (Pateman 1988). Following custom and interest rather than logic, liberal theorists either tacitly assumed that women were 'naturally' subject to men or claimed that they were 'contracted' by marriage to a subordinate, non-civic role; in practice the 'individual' was male. Not that citizenship was originally conceived as universal even among men; modern democracies developed in the course of a long struggle of male out-groups and women for the civic rights that liberal systems denied them. Even now, the ideas of the 'good citizen' as the successful man and the 'good woman' as one who subordinates herself to his career have a lot of life in them; both surfaced as strong themes in Thatcher's Britain, with the corollary that poor people are failures as citizens and that successful women (Mrs T excepted) are bad people.

Predictably, formal political status has been a hollow gain. The exercise of civic rights and duties, such as participation and elite recruitment, depends on resources which are not available to women as they are to men. Rights may be 'universal', but if there are real differences of situation, cultural identity and resources among individuals (and especially between different 'kinds' of people) they will have different potential (and different value) for different social groups (Phillips 1993). Likewise, laws will have variable

outcomes; they may apply equally to all in theory, but if the situations of men and women are really different, then so will the results be. In a gendered society, the idea of 'gender neutral' law is a fallacy (Dahl and Hernes 1988).

Unequal resources and the illusory autonomy of politics from social and economic differences are therefore crucial problems to be overcome if a more 'woman-friendly ' citizenship is to evolve. Two lines of thought have emerged, both developing a group-based, rather than individualist, conception of citizenship and seeking, in very different ways, not only to de-gender it but to avoid simply replacing one source of domination and exclusion with another; both are making important contributions to mainstream, as well as feminist , debate.

The first derives from the standpoint of social democracy and 'state' feminism. It links the concept of the citizen to the development of the 'mature' welfare state and what is called the 'care culture', a set of values and expectations derived from the welfare state experience but hopefully undermining both the paternalistic role of the state and the gender bias in society. The concept of 'welfare citizenship', most fully developed by Nordic feminists, is not just concerned with political status but with social and economic rights and duties. Caring and welfare are matters of collective interest - everyone has a right to them - but they are also a matter of personal, civic obligation (Hernes 1987, Sim 1991). A gender dichotomy which has unpaid women providing sixty per cent of the care work carried out in a society, while the state provides the rest, is not compatible with construction. The hope is that women, empowered by the state and supported by a culture which make men susceptible to feminist pressure, will be able to put through innovative legislation which will either draw men into caring or else eliminate the distinction between paid and unpaid work.

A different argument for group-based citizenship seeks to address the recent proliferation, especially in the USA, of new collective cultural identities and mobilising groups (such as gays and Hispanics as well as feminists) which may be labelled deviant as well as marginal. The tendency of the dominant culture to impose its own 'exclusive' concept of the citizen has to be countered by 'inclusive' values, supported by appropriate political reforms which include radical decentralisation, obligatory out-group representation at the highest levels of the policy process and participatory democracy both inside disadvantaged groups and in community self-government; thus hitherto excluded voices (differences) may be heard at every point (Young 1989). In

current 'female-gender talk', this is described as 'weaving stories together that invite dialogue across our differences' (Jones 1993)

Both approaches are equally relevant also to the fate of women and democracy in post-communist countries, matters of great concern to western feminists. The tendency to pursue exclusive citizen identities at minority expense is a major threat to the democratisation process, while the re-integration of political and socio-economic rights within a democratic framework and a new conception of the welfare state seem indispensable if Central and East European women (and other disadvantaged groups) are not to constitute a subordinate, disillusioned majority to be exploited by populist, authoritarian and patriarchal leaders (Chapman 1994, Dahlerup 1994).

Feminism, The State and the Policy Process

There is a predictably wide range of feminist perspectives on the state (Walby 1990, Dahlerup 1994). The radical view, condemning all institutionalised hierarchies as inimical to the interests of women (and other out-groups) and insisting that feminists who attempt to achieve their goals 'from within' by participating in existing male-constructed systems must fail since they cannot advance without 'selling out' to the system, was epitomised by Kathy Ferguson's *The Feminist Case against Bureaucracy* (Ferguson 1984).

The contrary case for participation in conventional structures, and the conditions in which the state may be an effective instrument for the achievement of feminist goals, are most positively presented by Nordic feminists such as Hernes in her *Welfare State and Woman Power* (1988). Although the welfare state incorporates the values of the male-dominated labour market, it has played a crucial part in politicising women by invading the traditionally private sphere ('reproduction going public') and drawing women into the public sphere by employing them in low-level administrative and caring roles. Low pay, lack of promotion and awareness that men are taking policy decisions which affect women's lives lead to women's unionisation and political participation and, as their frustration grows, to their engagement with feminism as a social movement seeking fundamental change. The co-existence of a separate women's movement is seen as indispensable if anything is to be achieved, not only as a source of feminist consciousness and creative politics but also as a spur to women in conventional structures and a potential threat to the system which will encourage far-seeing men to compromise with feminist demands.

19

The idea of the **'critical mass'** is crucial to this strategy. As the proportion of women in legislative and other policy-making positions grows so will their legitimacy in their own eyes and those of male politicians; they will feel able to act concertedly and as overt feminists who recognise women's interests, in a highly-gendered society, as different from those of men. The critical point will come when women's presence in the system and their pursuit of women's interests are taken for granted by all concerned. Empowered by the state instead of marginalised, they will be able to pursue the goal of a 'woman-friendly' social order, in which women will enjoy 'a natural relationship to their children, their work and public life' (Hernes 1987, p.15) and not have harder choices forced on them than society expects of men. Although this requires the pursuit of a 'difference' strategy in order to mobilise 'traditional' as well as feminist women and expose the gendered character of their experience, social roles, and political interests, the ultimate goal for most state feminists is to overcome the tyranny of gender in favour of a more or less androgynous society.

Dahlerup is also one of the few leading feminists (along with the Dutch scholar Outshoorn), in the field of modern policy analysis, using a feminist perspective to extend and apply the theory of non-decision making (Bachrach and Baratz 1962, Lukes 1974), which provides a framework for analysing the failure of out-group interests to reach the policy agenda or, if they get into the policy process at all, to make effective progress (Dahlerup 1984, Outshoorn 1991). In the USA, Gelb and Palley (1987) have focused on the possibilities of incrementalism , the 'mobilisation of bias' and the use of insider strategies, while Australian feminists are discussing strategies for 'playing with' the state (Watson 1990).

In Britain, the theory of policy analysis has been largely ignored by feminists apart from Stedward (1987), and there has been very little interest in evaluating feminist policy strategy in this framework, except on the abortion issue. One reason is that anti-state orientations were strong in the UK, reinforced by disillusionment with Labour governments and research into women as helpless welfare clients of the patriarchal state (McIntosh 1978). The creative approach, exemplified by Sheila Rowbotham's famous essay in *Beyond the Fragments* (1980), was very decentralist, reviving the ideals of communitarian socialism and participatory democratic theory in the attempt to construct a feminist model for a new kind of socialism. Although the highest hopes of the 'seventies' died with the abolition of the GLC, their legacy lives on in tenants' and other community action groups in which women are active

as well as in the women's movement itself, where local groups like Women's Aid often apply feminist decision-making principles and employ a flexible approach to participation in 'the system' with some success (Stedward, 1987, Lovenduski and Randall 1993). It lives also in the absence of women from political elites and the isolation of those who try to work within the policy process. Latterly, however, reaction to the Thatcherite attack on the welfare state and the decline of the traditional left have encouraged a more instrumental line towards the state. One result is a new interest in researching and evaluating the policy impact of feminism. Lovenduski and Randall (1993) not only provide a perceptive review of the theory and practice of the British women's movement, but also use a variety of methods to investigate and evaluate its policy strategy and inputs in five key areas; elite representation, equality policies, reproduction, childcare and male violence.

Where policy-making is concerned, the multi-disciplinary character of Women's Studies and its links with feminist political action have been crucial for the analysis of specific issues of male power. However, political science, by comparison with sociology, takes more interest in the policy process than in actual policies (and the sheer size, complexity and diverse locations of the feminist literature is often overwhelming). Women's policy inputs are most likely to become visible when they impinge on 'larger' issues such as European integration, where feminism finds common ground with mainstream interests, or when issues like abortion and pornography engage male opposition groups as well powerful male interests (like churches, medical establishments and big business). A considerable literature, much of it comparative, deals with the mobilisation of women on the abortion issue, their alliances with non-feminist interests and diverse abortion attitudes (Marsh and Chambers 1981, Chapman 1986, Lovenduski and Outshoorn 1986). The feminist debate on pornography and sexuality is extremely prolific and wide-ranging (Freccero 1991) and has radicalised mainstream sociological, psychological and social work perspectives, but it is the most obviously political works (like Dworkin, 1979), and those impinging on the conflict of male economic and libertarian interests (Burstyn 1985, Ross 1989) which are most visible to political scientists. Advances in reproductive technology and the conflicts of interest they have revealed among women are also of intense concern to feminists (Stanworth 1990) and, since the issues involved challenge the pre-conceptions of men as well as women, the inputs of active feminists to the policy process are unlikely to be ignored.

Feminism and Fieldwork

Much of the social research carried out today by public agencies, research institutes and academic sociologists is being conducted against a background of diffuse feminist influence and in areas of feminist concern; many of the researchers are women too. In political science, by comparison, feminist empirical research began well but has faltered. The first clearly feminist contribution to the empirical field was a badly-needed critique of American behavioural research (Bourque and Grossholtz 1974, Lansing 1974, Goot & Reid, 1975). Standard works on participation, attitudes and voting behaviour were revealed as sloppy and inconsistent in their treatment of the sex variable and absurdly sexist in their conceptualisation of politics. Women were sometimes left out of investigations altogether, small variations were exaggerated into generalisations about broad (and by implication fixed) male-female differences, and some generalisations were made from absurdly few cases, in disregard of sampling rules. In interpreting data, the tendency was to draw on cultural stereotypes to explain the differences found in simple sex comparisons, instead of conducting the kind of rigorous analysis which would be applied to variation among men; differences which would disappear if the analysis controlled for socio-economic background variables, like region, age and education, were attributed to women's nature (Lansing 1974). Since male behaviour and assumptions about the nature of politics were taken as the norm, female differences were seen as deviant (e.g. Greenstein 1965). Also, areas of activity in which women were more involved than men (like school boards and local issues) were classed as non-political and omitted apparently for that very reason, creating a false picture of low female levels of participation (Jennings and Niemi 1979).

These revelations were followed by feminist research on themes of special interest like socialization (Iglitsyn 1974 , Flora and Lynn 1974) and the 'gender gap' in political participation (Welch 1977, 1980), and a wealth of data-gathering on political recruitment, female candidacies and the composition of elites which continues to the present day. Much of this work was immaculately executed and some definitive in its field (e.g. Christy 1987). A work of a more innovative kind was Carol Gilligan's *In a Different Voice* (1982), a flawed but persuasive work on gender and moral reasoning which deeply offended many feminists at the time with its stress on 'difference', but is more in tune with feminist thinking now. In Europe, the gender dimension of attitudes and behaviour is the subject of cross-national

surveys sponsored by the EU (e.g. Mossuz-Lavau 1991). Danish, Swedish, Belgian and Dutch feminists also employ quantitative techniques in behavioural and policy research. In the UK, the focus of academic research has tended to be on elite recruitment. My own comparative work on patterns of local political recruitment (partisan and non-partisan) in several countries, has identified dominant socio-economic patterns of recruitment among men and their implications for women (Chapman 1993). Women, trapped in a 'scissors' problem of gendered difference, lack the attributes which are associated with self-selection, institutional selection and the successful candidacies of 'winning' men; women thus resemble 'losing' men. At the UK parliamentary level, however, the findings are not so clearcut. Norris and Lovenduski (1993), who adopt a conceptual framework of 'supply' and 'demand' for their recent study of British parliamentary candidate selection, found a similar relationship between socio-economic background variables and *self* -selection, which affects the 'supply' of candidates but not 'demand'; where the latter is concerned, a preference for younger applicants was the only evidence of selector bias that they found.

Much contemporary political research could be described as 'conventional' or even 'mainstream' in its approach, however. Systematic research which draws on feminism for its conceptual framework and tries to advance the frontiers of *feminist* knowledge is rare ; in the U.K., my own research on adult socialisation (1985), consciousness-raising (1987), political activism and personal experience (1991), and patterns of political recruitment is said to be almost unique (Randall 1994). This research gap may be due partly to an attack on empirical methods in the course of the feminist epistemology debate. Some lesbian sociologists, researching uncharted areas of women's experience from standpoints labelled 'deviant' in the dominant sociology, experienced all existing research methods as 'positivist', i.e. representing the dominant culture and its structural arrangements as the only 'right' ones (Stanley and Wise 1993). Although these influential authors disclaimed any demand for a completely different 'feminist method' of data collection and analysis, it is difficult to read their arguments against *any* use of dichotomies ('Cartesian binaries') and their criticisms of qualitative as well as quantitative research without interpreting them as a rejection of all systematic methods. To me, it seems that the failings of male behavioural methodology - its dominant-culture bias, the huge gaps where women's experience ought to be and the predilection for the most impersonal, closed and costly methods - were not attributable to the methods in themselves, but to

the way they were applied. They could be corrected by the adoption of a clearly specified, feminist perspective and a sensitive selection of techniques, in particular the combination of quantitative and qualitative methods. Instead, the demand for 'a new feminist methodology' seems to have widened the gap between feminist political science and most kinds of fieldwork.

This is especially unfortunate where the dimensions of difference are concerned, since one of the principal objects of systematic survey and in-depth research is to show how things vary and surveys are also the only way that the variable experience of women in general, rather than feminist activists, is likely to be recorded. The fact that good behavioural research uses control groups also means that it is unlikely to be so woman-centred as to lose sight of *men* and their experience, or to reach unwarrantable conclusions about the extent of similarity or difference among women. The gap between feminism and fieldwork of all kinds, quantitative or qualitative, is even more damaging where the women's movement is concerned. Feminism is naturally an absorbing subject for feminists, a brilliant succession of whom have examined and analysed its origins, objectives, ambiguities and achievements in historical and recent times (e.g. Freeman 1984, Taylor 1984, Rendall 1985, Banks 1986, Segal 1987, Phillips 1987, Rowbotham 1992 to name but a few). However, very few attempts indeed have been made to relate the feminist movement to social movement theory (specifically Freeman 1984, Dahlerup 1986, Randall, 1987, Gelb 1989, Chapman 1993) and political science remains largely blind to the significance of the women's movement in itself as the main theatre of women's political engagement and an incomparable resource for researching feminist democracy.

The absence of formal, national organisations, especially in the UK, certainly impedes the researcher; the flexibility which helps feminism to survive its disputes also renders much of what feminists do invisible to non-participants and makes the movement, with its lack of clear boundaries and formal membership, very difficult to pin down. However, this is not an adequate reason for ignoring matters so specific to political science as its size, composition and distribution, or the density and social basis of its various groups and tendencies; on the contrary, it is an argument for designing new research strategies to cope with these problems.

As feminist theory becomes ever more removed from everyday experience, our ignorance is all the more frustrating; how can we put the conflicts among feminist intellectuals into political perspective or assess the political implications of the fragmentation process, when we lack the most

24

basic information about the development of the broader movement and its social base? Even more serious is our inattention to some of the most obviously 'political' dimensions of the feminist agenda. It is really astonishing that Freeman has had the negative, last word on alternatives to conventional, hierarchical politics for over twenty years, considering that 'unstructured' and egalitarian forms of participatory democracy have actually been the common practice of women's groups in the western world throughout this period. As anyone with personal experience of such groups can attest, a process of trial and error has arrived at several different techniques for non-hierarchical decision-making which not only *work* , but also produce very different results from conventional approaches. The fact that they do not *always* work (Rowbotham 1986), and the problems which arise at the point where feminist practice intersects with the conventional system (Chapman 1993, pp.258-64, Lovenduski and Randall 1993, p.294), are inadequate reasons for ignoring them.

Feminism and International Relations

IR (International Relations) has been one of the aspects of conventional politics least studied by feminists, perhaps because it seemed to be the archtypically 'male' domain - not just male-dominated but glorifying the male gender values most antithetical to women's role, such as competition and killing as opposed to nurturing and giving birth, and taking the masculine application of reason, hierarchy and science to an extreme where emotional values, natural bonds and the objects of most people's everyday lives disappeared from view entirely. There was certainly no other political science arena where the dualism of 'their' values and reasoning and 'ours' was more acutely experienced by women political scientists or one's personal complicity in sustaining the former and marginalising the latter more painfully obvious.

This situation has begun to change. First came the Greenham Common women, touching a chord with millions throughout the Western world with their use of feminist values and symbols to challenge male military power and rationale and thus beginning to break down the compartmentalism which has made people feel so helpless in respect of international affairs. The sting in the tail of the peace movement for the sceptical feminist was the tendency of some of its members towards essentialism, by treating the gender stereotypes of violent men and peace-loving women as if they were innate, fixed differences. Also, many women were inhibited by the ability of both sides in

the Cold War to distort and exploit any attempt to deal with issues of international relations outside the East-West adversarial framework. Next, however, came 'black' feminism and the fragmentation of the women's movement, making it impossible for feminists to go on sweeping discordant facts and third world voices under the carpet; the downside of this was the efforts of some women to appropriate the feminist movement as a support group for organisations like the IRA and the PLO. Finally, there was the demand of American liberal feminists that girls, too, should be allowed to play with guns and the readiness of the US military to make up their dwindling numbers with female recruits; evidently, the relationship between sex, gender and IR was much more problematic than had been thought.

In the long run, this complexity (reinforced by the fall of communism and the end of the Cold War), has actually made it easier for feminists to engage with IR (Sylvester 1993). In 1987, academic perceptions were transformed by Jean Bethke Elshtain's *Women and War*, a work which re-examined war, peace and politics as objects of Western political discourse and re-discovered them as complex cultural constructions in which women have played a great variety of parts, as diverse mythological figures and images and also as individuals with personal experience which often overlaps with that of men (Elshtain 1987). This has already made the field more accessible to women by bringing entirely new research topics into view (e.g. Enloe 1989) and, so Elshtain argues, made feminists more sceptical of grand, Utopian projects. There is a real danger, however, that the feminist presence in IR will be appropriated by feminist post-modernists; this, along with the self-consciously 'feminine' and 'post-modern' language that some of them affect (e.g. Sylvester 1993), may prevent a useful dialogue with mainstream IR and alienate a wider potential readership.

Conclusion

The feminist political agenda had its origins in the early radical feminist proposition that the primary dualism was that of gender, which made all the others possible, and even inevitable, by artificially separating the human values of caring and mutualism from those of competition and dominance, and 'naturalising' the tension between them in the unarguable dichotomy of biological sex. The liberation of women was therefore an all-embracing, revolutionary project for changing everything, including male gender.

It has become axiomatic now to condemn the primacy of gender as reductionist and to deconstruct all systems of dualism/domination as separate, though inter-related phenomena. This has added greatly to our understanding of diversity and made feminists a good deal more sceptical about 'grand theories', which may have a lot of truth in them, but never *all* the truth. However, the continuous assertion of difference and its interaction with the 'essentialism' dichotomy, have inevitably undermined the coherence of feminism as a political movement. This is even more profoundly threatened now by the rapidly extending influence of postmodernism, which would detach feminism altogether from its social base in women. Recently, feminists of different kinds are trying to recover some kind of unity and potential for political action on the basis of the 'feminist perspective' and new alliances with men.

There is a strong resemblance here to the cycle of first-wave feminism, which also started in revolt, developed in autonomy but ended in fragmentation and alliances with men. The outcome then was a considerable advance in formal equality, plus some welfare laws; the price was that feminism collapsed and disappeared. This time round, the male allies include men in revolt against the tyranny of gender; the rewards for women may be that much greater, but it remains to be seen if the price is lower.

Meanwhile, the influence of the feminist perspective on political science has been uneven. This can be attributed partly to the changing character of feminism and partly to compartmentalism between the study of feminism and of mainstream topics. The integration of feminism into the mainstream has gone largely by default until the recent emergence of 'new' topics (like the contemporary citizenship debate) where feminism makes common cause with new intellectual currents and interests among men. Also, although discourse analysis is one direction in which feminists are expanding the range of political science methods, their distaste for empirical research has marginalised some of feminism's most significant political objectives and left large areas of women's political experience and practice unexplored. We have a long way to go before either feminism or political science has opened fully to the other.

References

Bachrach, P. and Baratz M. (1970) *Power and Poverty* (New York, Oxford University Press).

Banks, O. (1986) *Faces of Feminism: the Study of a Social Movement* (Oxford, Basil Blackwell).

Barrett, M. (1988) *Women's Oppression Today: The Marxist-Feminist Encounter* (London, Verso).

Barth, E. (1986) Keynote Address to the International Congress of Women, Göttingen.

Bauman, Z. (1992) *Intimations of Postmodernity* (London, Routledge).

Beauvoir, S. de (1972) *The Second Sex* (Harmondsworth, Penguin).

Bourque, S. and Grossholtz, J. (1974) "Politics an Unnatural Practice: Political Science Looks at female Participation", *Politics and Society,* Vol. 4.

Burstyn, V. (ed.) (1985) *Women Against Censorship* (Vancouver).

Carroll, S.J. and Zerilli, L.M.G. (1993) "Feminist Challenges to Political Science" in A.W. Finifter (ed.) *Political Science: The State of the Discipline II* (Washington DC, American Political Science Association), pp. 55-76.

Chapman, J. (1986) "The Political Implications of Attitudes to Abortion in Britain" *West European Politics,* Vol. 9.

Chapman, J. (1985) "Marital Status, Sex and the Formation of Political Attitudes in Adult Life" *Political Studies*, Vol. 23, pp. 592-609.

Chapman, J. (1987) "Adult Socialization and Out-Group Politicization: An Empirical Study of Consciousness-Raising" *British Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 17, pp. 315-40.

Chapman, J. (1991) "The Political versus the Personal: Participatory Democracy and Feminism", *Strathclyde Papers in Government and Politics*, No. 81.

Chapman, J. (1993) *Politics, Feminism and the Reformation of Gender* (London, Routledge).

Chapman, J. (1994) "Democracy: Does it Pay? Slovak Political Development and Democratisation Theory", *Comenius Papers in Politics and Human Rights*, no 2.

Chodorow, N. (1978) *The Reproduction of Mothering: Psychoanalysis and the Sociology of Gender* (Berkeley, University of California Press).

Christy, C. (1987) *Sex Differences in Political Participation: Processes of Change in Fourteen Nations* (New York, Praeger).

Cook, A. and Kirk, G. (1983) *Greenham Women Everywhere: Dreams, Ideas and Actions from the Women's Peace Movement* (London, Pluto).

Coole, D. (1994) "Whither Feminisms?" *Political Studies* , Vol. 42, pp. 128-34.

Dahl, T.S. and Hernes, H.M. (1988) "After Equality", *Scandinavian Political Review*, Summer.

Dahlerup, D. (1984) "Overcoming the Barriers: An Approach to How Women's Issues are Kept from the Political Agenda" in J. Stiehm, (ed.) *Women's View of the Political World of Men* (New York, Transnational Publishers).

Dahlerup, D. (ed.) (1986) *The New Women's Movement: Feminism and Political Power in Europe and the USA* (London, Sage).

Dahlerup, D. (1994) "Learning to Live with the State: State, Market and Civil Society: Women's Need for State Intervention in East and West", *Women's Studies International Forum*, Vol. 17, pp. 117-27.

Daly, M. (1978) *Gyn/Ecology (The Metaethics of Radical Feminism)* (London, The Women's Press).

Delphy, C. (1993) "Rethinking Sex and Gender" *Women's Studies International Forum* , Vol. 16, pp. 1-9.

Elshtain, J.B. (1987) *Women and War* (New York, Basic Books).

Enloe, C. (1989) *Bananas, Beaches and Bases: Making Feminist Sense of International Relations* (London, Pandora).

Ferguson, K. (1984) *The Feminist Case against Bureaucracy* (Philadelphia, Temple University Press).

Firestone, S. (1979) *The Dialectic of Sex* (London, Virago).

Flora, C. and Lynn, N (1974) "Women and Political Socialization: Considerations of the Impact of Motherhood" in J. Jaquette, (ed.) *Women in Politics* (New York, John Wiley).

Freccero, C. (1990) "Notes of a Post-Sex Wars Theorizer" In M. Hirsch and E.F. Keller, (eds.) *Conflicts in Feminism* (New York, Routledge).

Freeman, J. (1984) "The Women's Liberation Movement: Its Origins, Structure, Activities and Ideas" in J. Freeman (ed.) *Women: A Feminist Perspective* (Palo Alto, Mayfield).

Gelb, J. and Palley, M. (1987) *Women and Public Policies* (Princeton, Princeton University Press).

Gelb, J. (1989) *Feminism and Politics: a Comparative Perspective* (Berkeley, University of California Press).

Gilligan, C. (1982) *In a Different Voice* (Cambridge, Harvard University Press).

Githens, M., Norris, P. and Lovenduski, J., (1994) *Different Roles, Different Voices: Women and Politics in the United States and Europe* (New York, Harper Collins).

Goot, M. and Reid, E. (1975) *Women and Voting Studies: Mindless Matrons or Sexist Scientists* (London, Sage).

Griffin, S. (1981) *Pornography and Silence: Culture's Revenge Against Nature* (New York, Harper and Row).

Harding, S. (1987) "Introduction: is there a feminist method?" in S. Harding (ed.), *Feminism and Methodology* (Milton Keynes, Open University Press).

Hernes, H.M. (1988) *Welfare State and Woman Power* (Oxford: Oxford University Press).

Hirsch, M. and Keller, E.F. (eds.) (1990) *Conflicts in Feminism* (London, Routledge).

Hoff, J. (1994) "Gender as a Postmodern Category of Paralysis" *Women's Studies International Forum,* Vol. 17, pp. 443-447.

Iglitsin, L. (1974) "The Making of the Apolitical Woman: Femininity and Sex-Stereotyping in Girls" in J. Jaquette, (ed.) *Women in Politics* (New York, John Wiley).

Jennings, M. K. and Niemi, R. (1979) "Another Look at the Life-Cycle and Political Participation" *American Journal of Political Science,* Vol. 73, pp. 755-71.

Jones, K.B. (1993) *Compassionate Authority: Democracy and the Representation of Women* (New York, Routledge).

Lansing, M. (1974) "The American Woman: Voter and Activist" in J. Jaquette (ed.), *Women in Politics* (New York, John Wiley).

Lovenduski, J. and Outshoorn, J. (1986) *The New Politics of Abortion* (London, Sage).

Lovenduski, J and Randall, V. (1993) *Contemporary Feminist Politics: Women and Power in Britain* (Oxford, Oxford University Press).

Lukes, S. (1974) *Power: a Radical View* (Basingstoke, Macmillan).

Marsh, D. and Chambers, J. (1981) *Abortion Politics* (London, Junction Books).

Mark-Lawson, J. and Witz, A. (1990) "Familial Control or Patriarchal Domination? The Case of the Family System of Labour in 19th-Century Coal Mining"in H. Corr, and L. Jamieson (eds.), (1990) *The Politics of Everyday Life: Continuity and Change in Work and the Family* (London, MacMillan).

McIntosh, M. (1978) "The State and the Oppression of Women" in A. Kuhn and A.M. Wolpe (eds.), *Feminism and Materialism* (London, Kegan Paul).

Mossuz-Lavau, J. (1991) *Women and Men of Europe Today: Attitudes Towards Europe and Politics* (Commission of the European Communities, Women of Europe Supplements no 35).

Nain, G.T. (1994) "Black Women, Sexism and Racism: Balck or Anti-Racist Feminism?" in M. Githens, P. Norris, and J. Lovenduski, *Different Roles, Different Voices: Women and Politics in the United States and Europe* (New York, Harper Collins 1994).

Norris, P. and Lovenduski, J. (1993) '"If Only More Candidates Came Forward": Supply-Side Explanations of Candidate Selection in Britain' *British Journal of Political Science,* Vol. 23, pp. 373-408.

Okin, S.M. (1979) *Women in Western Political Thought* (Princeton: Princeton University Press).

Ortner, S. (1974) "Is female to male as culture is to nature?" in M. Rosaldo and Lamphere L. (eds.), *Woman Culture and Society* (Stanford, Stanford University Press).

Outshoorn, J. (1991) "Is This What We Wanted? Positive Action as Issue Perversion" in E. Meehan and S. Sevenhuisen, (eds.), *Equality Politics and Gender* (London, Sage).

Pateman, C. (1987) "Feminism and Democracy" in G., Duncan, (ed.), *Democratic Theory and Practice* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press).

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

Pateman, C. (1989) *The Disorder of Women: Democracy, Feminism and Political Theory* (Cambridge, Polity).

Phillips, A. (1987) *Divided Loyalties: Dilemmas of Sex and Class* (London, Virago).

Phillips, A. (1993) *Democracy and Difference* (Cambridge, Polity Press).

Plumwood, V. (1993) *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature* (London, Routledge).

Rachels, J. (1986) *The Elements of Moral Philosophy* (New York, McGraw Hill).

Randall, V. (1987) *Women and Politics* rev. ed. (London, Macmillan).

Randall, V. (1994) "Feminism and Political Analysis" in M. Githens, P. Norris, and J. Lovenduski (eds.), *Different Roles, Different Voices: Women and Politics in the United States and Europe* (New York, Harper Collins).

Rendell, J. (1985) *The Origins of Modern Feminism: Women in Britain, France and the United States 1780-1860* (London, Macmillan).

Rich, A. (1977) *Of Woman Born: Motherhood as Experience and Institution* (London, Virago).

Ross, A. (1989) *No Respect: Intellectuals and Popular Culture* (New York, Routledge).

Rowbotham, S., Segal, L. and Wainwright, H., (1980) *Beyond the Fragments; Feminism and the Making of Socialism* (London, Merlin).

Rowbotham, S. (1986) "Feminism and Democracy" in D. Held and C. Pollitt (eds.), *New Forms of Democracy* (London, Open University Press).

Rowbotham, S. (1992) *Women in Movement: Feminism and Social Action* (London, Routledge).

Saxonhouse, A. (1985) *Women in the History of Political Thought: Ancient Greece to Machiavelli* (New York, Praeger).

Segal, L. (1994) *Straight Sex: The Politics of Pleasure* (London, Verso).

Sim, B. (1991) "Welfare State, Gender Politics and Equality Policies: Women's Citizenship in the Scandinavian Welfare States" in E. Meehan, and S. Sevenhuisen (eds.), *Equality Politics and Gender* (London, Sage).

Snitow, A. (1990) "A Gender Diary" in M. Hirsch and E.F. Keller (ed.), *Conflicts in Feminism* (New York, Routledge).

Stedward, G. (1987) "Entry to the System; A Case-Study of Women's Aid in Scotland" in A.G. Jordan and J.J. Richardson, *Government and Pressure Groups in Britain* (Oxford, Clarendon Press).

Stanley, L. and Wise, S. (1993) *Breaking Out: Feminist Consciousness and Feminist Research* rev. enlarged ed. (London, Routledge).

Sylvester, C. (1994) *Feminist Theory and International Relations in the Post-Modern Era* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press).

Taylor, B. (1984) *Eve and the New Jerusalem* (London, Virago).

Walby, S. (1990) *Theorising Patriarchy* (Oxford, Basil Blackwell).

Watson, S. (ed.) (1990) *Playing the State: Australian Feminist Interventions* (London, Verso).

Welch, S. (1977) "Women as Political Animals? A Test for Some Explanations for Male-Female Political Participation Differences", *American Journal of Political Science* Vol. 21, pp. 711-30.

Welch, S. (1980) "Sex Differences in Political Activity in Britain", *Women and Politics,* Vol. 1, pp. 29-46.

Woodhouse, M.B. (1994) *A Preface to Philosophy* (California, Wadsworth).

Young, I.M. (1984) "Is Male Gender Identity the Cause of Male Domination?" in J. Trebilcot, (ed.), *Mothering: Essays in Feminist Theory* (Totowa, Rowman and Allanheld).

Young, I.M. (1989) "Polity and Group Difference: a Critique of the Ideal of Universal Citizenship" *Ethics,* Vol. 99, pp. 250-274.

About the Author:

Jenny Chapman is a Senior Lecturer in Politics at the University of Strathclyde. In 1988-9 she held a Nuffield Research Fellowhip for work on gender, participation and local elite recruitment. She is currently engaged in cross-national research into political attitudes and participation in Scotland and Central Europe, assisted by a three-year award from the British Council for research and curriculum development at Comenius University, Slovakia. She is the author of *Politics, Feminism and the Reformation of Gender* (Routledge 1993).

Address:

Department of Government, University of Strathclyde, Glasgow G1 1XQ, UK.

Tel: 0141 552 4400 (Ext. 2215), Fax : 0141 552 5677
E-mail: chgs27@ccsun.strath.ac.uk