
Original Article

Conservatism, feminisation and the representation of women in UK politics

Rosie Campbell^{a,*} and Sarah Childs^b

^aDepartment of Politics, Birkbeck, University of London, 10 Gower Street, London WC1E 6HJ, UK.

^bSPAIS, University of Bristol, 11 Priory Road, Bristol, BS8 1TY, UK.

*Corresponding author.

Abstract The Feminization of the Conservative party was one of the most visible leitmotifs of Cameron's modernization strategy in the period 2005–2010. In this article we assess the extent to which the party, while in coalition with the Liberal Democrats from 2010–2015, delivered on its pre-2010 commitments for women. We consider two dimensions of feminizing politics; the descriptive representation of women within the Conservative party in the House and in Government, and the substantive representation of women's interests in the form of policy programmes and legislation. In respect of descriptive representation we find that the Conservative party has faltered since 2010: refusing to use quotas and even dropping the 2010 'A list' equality promotion strategy. Turning to the substantive representation of women it is clear that the Conservative party has instituted an array between these inclinations, although there is a tension between the party's liberal inclinations and its continued emphasis on the value of the traditional family. A more radical critique is levelled at the party's commitment to financial austerity and the disproportionate effect this has had on women; the question as to whether women are viewed as the target of spending cuts or collateral damage depends on whether one employs an economically liberal or more leftist definition of feminization.

British Politics (2015) **10**, 148–168. doi:10.1057/bp.2015.18

Keywords: gender equality; descriptive representation; substantive representation; conservative feminism

Introduction

The Feminization of the Conservative party was one of the most visible leitmotifs of Cameron's modernization strategy in the period 2005–2010, even if it was too often overlooked by mainstream British political science. In the academic literature, feminizing politics refers to the insertion and integration of women both in terms of numbers and ideas (Lovenduski, 2005, p. 12). On both dimensions Cameron was



clear. He would, he declared in his leadership acceptance speech in 2005, seek to change the ‘scandalous under-representation of women in his party’. Following a series of reforms to the party’s selection processes, the number of women MPs returned at the 2010 general election more than doubled, from 17 to 49. Increasing the number of Conservative women MPs was never going to be a one-off, however. One ‘test’ of whether Cameron’s commitment to women’s descriptive representation was ‘electoral/rhetorical’ or ‘substantive/transformational’ is to look at selection rates for women in 2015 (Childs and Webb, 2012). The second dimension of feminization was addressed in 2010 via the explicit appeal to the woman voter in the general election manifesto (Campbell and Childs, 2010). With an array of policy pledges ‘for women’, this turned out to be much more competitive on women’s terrain (Ashe *et al.*, 2010). Again the question would be what would happen once the Conservatives were elected to office. And in 2010, of course, they entered into a Coalition government with the LibDems.

Cameron and the Government would be afflicted by an apparent ‘woman problem’ throughout the 2010–2015 Parliament; a critique that was directed at the party’s failure to promote significant numbers of women to the front bench alongside concerns regarding the substantive representation of women’s interests (www.telegraph.co.uk/women/womens-politics/10621577/David-Camerons-women-problem-is-worse-than-we-thought-hes-not-even-aware-of-it.html). The dominant narrative is one of a sustained and highly critical commentary. Most notably, the Coalition’s austerity politics became an explicitly ‘feminist’ issue (Campbell and Childs, 2015 forthcoming), with substantial criticism of economic policy on the grounds that it disproportionately and negatively impacted upon women. As the more likely users, employees, and beneficiaries of the welfare state, women would be, by definition, most affected by government cuts. Moving above the level of policy analysis, some feminists, academic and activist, have offered broader criticisms of neo-liberalism which contend that feminism and neo-liberalism are incompatible ideologies even if it very much looks like feminism has been co-opted for neo-liberal ends (Fraser, 2009). Such an approach seems to be in tension with some feminists writing within gender and politics scholarship who have offered a conceptualization of women’s substantive representation that seeks to include conservative representative claims to be ‘acting for women’. In other words, these authors contend that the inclusion and integration of women’s issues and perspectives does not presume a universal set of women’s interests (Celis *et al.*, 2014).

Together these analyses suggest that evaluations of the feminization of the UK Conservative party since 2010 will be complex and contested. Our approach is first to argue that women’s substantive representation does not equal feminist substantive representation. Conservative actors may very well conceive of women’s interests in ways that feminists will contest. That said, within the contemporary UK Conservative party, a certain form of liberal feminism is present, with women to the ‘left’ of, and more feminist than, Conservative men (Campbell and Childs, 2014). Attention



given to what might be termed ‘safe’ women’s issues – those associated with women’s bodily integrity is also apparent (Childs and Webb, 2012). At the same time, a more socially conservative bent is present within the contemporary Conservative party, most notably in respect of marriage-tax relief, and an underpinning conception of the family as a private institution, and one undifferentiated by gender hierarchies that stands before the State. Together, these ultimately limit the extent of modernization read as a *feministization* of the Conservative party.

Women MPs as the Markers of the First Dimension of Feminization

If Margaret Thatcher proves to be a successful prime minister, perhaps 10–15 years from now an influx of young women taking their cue from her achievements *may be permitted to flow into the political elite*. As always, political change in Britain moves with glacial speed. (Rasmussen, 1981, p. 620, emphasis added)

Rasmussen, one of the early (and few male) political scientists to address women’s descriptive representation, was not entirely prescient. For the Conservative party political change has indeed moved with glacial speed;¹ but his 10–15 years has become more like three decades. And whether the 49 Conservative women MPs elected to the UK parliament in 2010 constitute an ‘influx’ is a moot point. His analysis was spot on, however, when he wrote of women being ‘permitted’ to enter politics, pinpointing the critical role that political parties play as the gatekeepers of political recruitment (Norris and Lovenduski, 1995) that suggests a demand side explanation for women’s under-representation in the House of Commons. The 2010 general election did see the Conservative party improve their descriptive representation of women, as Table 1 below shows. Having secured less than 10 per cent women among their MPs before the general election, 2010 saw them reach 16 per cent, more

Table 1: MPs elected to the house of commons, 1983–2010, by sex and party

	<i>Labour</i>	<i>Conservative</i>	<i>Liberal democrat</i>	<i>Other</i>	<i>Total</i>
1983	10 (4.8%)	13 (3.3%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	23 (3.5%)
1987	21 (9.2%)	17 (4.5%)	1 (4.5%)	2 (8.7%)	41 (6.3%)
1992	37 (13.7%)	20 (6%)	2 (10%)	3 (12.5%)	60 (9.2)
1997	101 (24.2%)	13 (7.9%)	3 (6.5%)	3 (10%)	120 (18.2%)
2001	95 (23%)	14 (8%)	6 (11%)	4 (12.5%)	118 (17.9%)
2005	98 (27.7%)	17 (8.6%)	10 (16%)	3 (9.7%)	128 (19.8)
2010	81 (31.6%)	49 (15.7%)	7 (12.3%)	7 (21.8%)	143 (22%)

Source: Ashe *et al.*, 2010.



than doubling their number if not their percentage. There was accordingly some inter-party rebalancing. In 1997 Labour women MPs constituted 84 per cent of all women MPs, 81 per cent in 2001, 77 per cent in 2005 and 57 per cent in 2010. But Labour in 2010 still had more women MPs than all the other parties added together.² Furthermore, the Conservatives had the potential to secure 24 per cent women MPs, for this was how many women candidates they selected overall. But too many were selected for the party's unwinnable seats (see Campbell and Childs, 2010).

Conservative reforms to their selection processes for the 2010 general election which stopped short of party quotas (detailed in Box 1) very much reflected the perception that women's under-representation in the party was predominantly a supply-side problem; that too few qualified women put themselves forward as candidates. Hence, the Conservative party's reliance on equality rhetoric and promotion measures; leaders will make statements encouraging women to come forward; the party will provide training and mentoring programmes for women (Lovenduski, 2005). At the same time the logic underpinning many Conservative selection reforms – those addressing the composition, role and training of selectorates – suggested that the Party leadership were aware that Conservative women candidates were not facing a level playing field. Primaries, for example, give selection powers to the public, registered supporters or ordinary members; switching the role of the Executive Committee empowers the ordinary member. Both these reforms imply that the existing selectorate are more likely to discriminate against women. Further evidence for such a conclusion came from Cameron himself. He admitted that the selection of women good enough to be candidates was too slow (Speaker's Conference, 2010), and in so doing he named selectorate discrimination operating within this Party.

The logical outcome of acknowledging selectorate discrimination is the adoption of equality guarantees, such as the Labour Party's party quota, All Women Shortlists (AWS) (Campbell *et al*, 2006). In his Speaker's Conference evidence (2010) Cameron claimed that his party would introduce AWS in the immediate run up to the 2010 election.

From January, we move to what we call our by-election procedure ... it's my intention that if we continue as we are, *that some of those shortlists will indeed be all-women shortlists* to help us boost the number of Conservative women MPs and also to recognise the fact that although about 29 per cent of our candidates are women, there are many very, very good women on our priority list of candidates who haven't yet been selected.

This announcement came as a surprise to Conservative women with responsibility for women's selection in the party, who had not been consulted by Cameron (Childs and Webb, 2012). As it turned out there were none. In any case, Tory AWS would not have warranted the label of equality guarantees. There was no systematic strategy or proper plans for implementation. Rather, in a particular seat the 'best' aspirant

**Box 1:** Conservative party selection reforms 2005–2010

<i>Date</i>	<i>Reforms</i>
May 2006	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) the creation of a 'priority list' of candidates, of whom at least 50 per cent would be women, with a 'significant' percentage from black/minority ethnicity and disabled communities; (2) a 3-month progress review; (3) the use of headhunting, mentoring and guidance of local associations; and (4) the option of holding primaries (either open or closed) or 'community panels' to select candidates. Associations in vacant Conservative-held and target seats would be 'expected' to select from among the priority list candidates.
August 2006	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Constituency Associations with fewer than 300 members are expected to hold a primary; (2) Where Associations choose not to employ a primary model, Members will draw up a shortlist of three or four candidates from a list of 12–15. The shortlist would be sex balanced: two women and two men; the final decision would be made by the EC on the basis of in-depth interviews; and (3) If the EC shortlists an AWS (by default), the existing model of selection could be retained.
Jan 2007	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Associations are permitted to choose from the full list of approved candidates with a requirement that at each stage of the selection process at least 50 per cent of the candidates have to be women; (2) Associations could still choose to select solely from the Priority list.
Sept 2009 ^a	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) All applications were to be sifted by Association Officers along with the Party Chairman and a representative from the Candidates Department; (2) Six candidates were to go before (ideally) a Special General Meeting or Open Primary; (3) The Association Executive may meet to remove the 'completely unsuitable' and add a reserve in 'exceptional' circumstances; the final field could be reduced to four; (4) Any seats where the sitting MP announces his or her retirement after 1 January 2010 will be selected by 'by-election rules'; Associations would simply be presented with a list of three candidates by the party from which to choose.^b

^aIn November 2009 Cameron announced that the candidate list would be reopened. Jeremy Middleton, Chairman of the National Conservative Convention (Conservativehome, accessed 7 August 2009), stressed that the Association picks the shortlist, does the interviews and runs the selection process and, moreover, that the rules were agreed 'collectively' by 'all members' of the Board, presumably to preempt accusations that representatives of the voluntary party were excluded.

^bThe Party Chairman preferred that sitting MPs announce their retirement pre-Xmas (Conservative-home.com, accessed 30 July 2009). Jonathon Isaby of Conservativehome makes the same appeal to avoid 'the scenario where the members who have loyally worked for them over the years have that restrictive shortlist foisted upon them' (*Times online*, 19 November 2009).

Source: Ashe *et al* (2010).



candidates shortlisted via the party's by-election rules would, by happenstance, be women. Cameron's intervention looked with hindsight more like astute politicking, disarming the Speaker's Conference as well as the media.

The story since 2010? It is worth reflecting on what might constitute assessment of Conservative recruitment. As Childs and Webb wrote back in 2010:

Without some 'top down' initiatives those in the party active on women's descriptive representation might well be left with the conclusion that the party's efforts to date were (to paraphrase Kittilson, 2006, p. 135) less about a fundamental shift than a 'short-term symbolic' strategy to gain women's votes. This is because, logically, Cameron only needed to signal a transformation in his parliamentary party in advance of the 2010 election ... *if women's descriptive under-representation is pursued no further in the 2010 Parliament, one might reasonably infer that Cameron's motivation was instrumental rather than principled. If, on the other hand, efforts that change the parliamentary face of the Conservative Party continues apace, it would be harder to deny that his was an authentic desire to address the 'scandalous under-representation of women' in the Conservative party.* [emphasis added]

Taking 'top down initiatives' as 'the' test, the Conservative Party heading into the 2015 general election has to be found wanting. Though the Party has maintained its equality promotion measures associated with Women2win, and the Party centre has continued to push the message of women's representation and to train selectorates, its strongest equality promotion measure, the 'Priority' or 'A' list was 'quietly dropped'.³ The equality rhetoric looks publicly lesser too, perhaps as a result of the party's shift in strategy from targeting centre-ground voters away from New Labour, such professional and middle-income women, to focusing on voters on the right who are attracted to UKIP. Against this background, the parliamentary candidate selection figures (January 2015) were less than promising. Conservative women long associated with women's representation began to voice their fear that the numbers of Conservative women MPs at the 2015 general election would fall back. Campbell and Hudson's analysis of the three main parties' selection data from January 2015 shows that Labour had selected 38 per cent of women candidates; Conservatives 33 per cent; Liberal Democrats 30 per cent; Greens 34 per cent, Plaid Cymru 29 per cent; UKIP trailed behind with just 14 per cent women candidates. This difference was greater when the parties' selection in the 100 most marginal seats was considered (based on the 2010 general election): 50 per cent of Labour's 66 selections were women compared with 25 per cent of the Conservative's 49 selections. Percentages were similar for the LibDems (31 per cent), the Greens (34 per cent) and Plaid Cymru (33 per cent), and again, with UKIP well behind at 15 per cent. The continued importance of Labour's use of all-women-shortlists was also apparent when looking at retirement seats (where the incumbent's party had selected its candidate): 70 per cent of Labour candidates in retirement seats were women, compared with the



Liberal Democrats who had selected 5 women (46 per cent) and the Conservatives had selected 9 women (32 per cent).

The potential for behind the scenes pressure that might have altered the selection rates of women between the summer of 2014 and the general election of 2015 remained, although it was said (in summer 2014) by key insiders that no new measures would be adopted. In the absence of parity representation among newly elected MPs in 2015 the Conservative party will surely find itself in difficulties trying to refute the charge of token representation of women. How has this situation come about? A number of the 2010 intake women MPs have been publicly critical of AWS, not least in the 2012 and 2014 parliamentary debates on the Speaker's Conference. Busy as Home Secretary, Theresa May has been the less high-profile party's spokesperson on the issue in this Parliament compared with the previous ones. Yet it would not be fair to present women's descriptive representation outcomes as a failure of commitment by those women who were active on women's representation before 2010. If anything some of these have become more politicized on this issue over time. Halfway through the 2010 Parliament there was an emergent realization that too many 'good' women candidates were failing to 'click' with constituency selectors; unable to 'swagger', women candidates were succumbing to selectorate bias (www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/opinion/columnists/article4139436.ece; britishpolitics.blogspot.co.uk/2014/07/swaggering-is-gendered-attribute-it.html). Consciousness of these practices felt all the more real to those Conservative women who had been long seeking women's presence. They felt strongly that the male Party leadership was not taking women's under-representation sufficiently seriously and that it had walked away from the strong equality promotion measures of 2010 (www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/tories-quietly-drop-david-camerons-alist-for-minority-candidates-8199985.html). In short, leadership political will at the very top is felt to be lacking. Public voices included senior Cabinet and ex-Cabinet women MPs such as Maria Miller, Caroline Spelman, and Nicky Morgan alongside Peers such as Baroness Jenkin, one of the co-founders of Women2win. Their response was to demand that post-2015 'all options' including AWS must be 'on the table' (www.conservativehome.com/platform/2014/04/from-anne-jenkin-tweetbrooks-the-party-needs-more-women-candidates-and-heres-how-to-get-them.html; <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-26177763>). And if the 2015 general election were to deliver fewer Conservative women MPs, do not be too surprised if, a week or two later, a group of senior Conservative women, flanked by a few of their male allies, collectively come out of the quota closet and demand all-women-shortlists (www.theguardian.com/politics/2015/feb/05/tories-female-mps-bernard-jenkin).

In April 2009 Cameron looked above the legislature and announced on BBC Radio 4 Woman's Hour that a third of his Government would be women by the end of his first term. His first Cabinet with four women had the same number of women Secretaries of State as Gordon Brown's outgoing Labour one, although only May held one of the big Offices of State. His numbers then went down to three – a glass



floor that we had not expected to return to. Cameron's final reshuffle before the 2015 general election saw the number of women in the Cabinet rise to five – 24 per cent – with an additional three women attending Cabinet. Labour's Shadow Cabinet is, in contrast, 40 per cent female. Again only May held one of the key offices of state. One month later, Baroness Warsi resigned over foreign policy in Gaza – arguably, an instance of the substantive representation of Muslims by a Muslim representative. Against his own target Cameron had objectively failed. For Heppell (2012) this was never a realistic target. There were always fewer than 50 Conservative women MPs to choose from. And part of Cameron's problem was the failure of the Liberal Democrats to provide any Cabinet women at all. But given that his pledge was made knowing much of this, Cameron could and should have put in place measures to both advance women in the early years to gain experience, and actively taken on those critics who would decry the 'passing over' of Conservative male MPs (<http://www.democraticaudit.com/?p=2933>).

The Inclusion and Integration of Women's 'Ideas': The Second Dimension of Feminization and the Problem of Conservatism and Feminism

Making cupcakes: some consider this to be a harmless hobby ... others view it as a *feminist* hobby which sees women producing their own cakes, rather than buying; whilst yet others view it as part and parcel of gendered constructions of femininity packaged up as retro chic targeted as white, middle class women (Evans, 2015)⁴

The New Labour governments of 1997–2010 laid claim to constituting the most *feminist* UK governments in history (Annesley *et al*, 2007; Childs, 2008). But is this the correct measure by which to judge the feminization efforts of the 2010–2015 Conservative Coalition government, or the post-2010 Conservative party, if we prefer to see the two as distinct? (Campbell and Childs, 2015, see also Quin *et al*, 2010) Conservatives simply may not seek to act in a feminist fashion, even while they may still address women and women's issues. And, if acting in a 'feminist' direction is considered the test of Conservative modernization, what definition of feminism are we to deploy? Does liberal feminism rank below leftist feminism, in some kind of feminist hierarchy? Can there be such a thing as Conservative, or corporate, or free-market feminism? And is this a lesser form of feminism than other types? (See Evans, 2015).⁵ Recent gender and politics literature prompts us to ask whether women's interests are the same as feminist interests. The approach adopted here is, first, to debunk any claim that the integration of women's issues and perspectives in politics can only ever mean the inclusion or integration of *feminist* issues, perspectives and interests (Celis and Childs, 2012). Second, we review the



policy terrain and policy direction characteristic of the Conservative party in Government between 2010–2015 (Campbell and Childs, 2015). In this we focus in particular on the tension between women and the family, and broader gendered austerity critiques. A slight detour into debates within the recent gender, and gender and politics literature is necessary to contextualize our evaluation of the contemporary Conservative party. These query whether feminism is by very definition on the left, reconsider what constitutes women's interests, and what counts as the substantive representation of women. Such debates moreover question whether the UK Conservative party can only ever be considered unmodernized if it remains underpinned by neoliberal economic analysis, and traditional understandings of sex, gender and gender relations.

On first blush feminism and conservatism appear polar opposites – the former seeks to overturn traditional gender relations, the latter to preserve them. Back in the 1980s, Campbell (1987) drew attention to the fact that conservatives lack a conceptual framework to explain women's oppression as a social system. Conservatives speak of individuals and not structures; discrimination and not oppression; cannot seek special assistance for women; and cannot envision a positive role for the state. In this view conservatives rely upon a conception of the individual that is revealed to be, very much, male. They would also be accused of leaving unproblematized women and men's consequent differential societal position. More recently Fraser (2009) has offered a forceful critique of second wave feminism's co-option by neo-liberalism (see also Lerner, 2000). In this she contends that second wave feminism 'unwittingly supplied' succour for capitalism: the 'feminist romance' of cracking the glass ceiling (for women at the top) and finding in work material security, self-betterment and liberation from traditional authority (for women at the bottom) (Fraser, 2009, p. 111). For Campbell (2013, p. 5) twenty-first century capitalism 'presents itself as liberation logic'. In these representations, capitalism becomes (unintentionally) 'feminist'.⁶ What might be termed neo-liberal feminism would see Sheryl Sandberg types requesting 'a place at the table' (McRobbie, 2013, p. 120). Having a career provides for women's security in the face of divorce and reduces the cost of welfare (ibid). Elizabeth Evans specifies four challenges of the neo-liberal environment for feminism: (i) At the discursive level, the frames of self-reliance and responsible decision making, empowerment, choice and freedom, 'make it hard' to imagine group identities and structural and social constraints (Evans, 2015); (ii) 'amorality', which constructs the rational free market versus the ideologically driven and intervening state; (iii) the focus on market based solutions; and (iv) the inherent belief in the power of individualism and individual agency.⁷ According to Benn and McRobbie respectively:

ambitious young women [are offered] a chance to join the elite through highly competitive and supposedly meritocratic education systems. Implicitly then, the relative lack of earning and public power of the majority of women are



considered an expression not of direct discrimination but either of nature (women choosing to do less paid work and care for others) or a kind of personal inadequacy (poor career planning, or lack of will (Benn, 2013a, p. 225).

The idea of the active (en route to the gym) sexually confident mother ... consistently pitched against an image of the abject, slovenly, and benefit dependent 'underclass' single mother (McRobbie, 2013, p. 120)

The solution according to these accounts is to reconnect feminism to the critique of capitalism – positioning feminism 'squarely on the left' (Fraser, 2009, p. 116; Benn, 2013a, b; McRobbie, 2013; Evans, 2015). The 'choice' and 'competition' of neo-patriarchal neo-liberalism (Campbell, 2013, p. 5) must be replaced by an appreciation of 'dependency, mutuality and cooperation that are the conditions of life itself'. McRobbie's analysis furthermore raises the question of whether there is a neo-liberal consensus across left and right parties in the UK (2012, see also IPPR (2013)).⁸

And yet there are Conservative women representatives in the United Kingdom, and elsewhere, who are today claiming to act for women, and in some instances also claiming to be feminists (www.theguardian.com/politics/2012/jan/08/tory-women-mps-new-feminism). This should not by default be dismissed as a sleight of hand, or simply a tactical use of language. Potential compatibilities between feminism and conservatism reside in both ideologies' internal heterogeneity (see Bryson and Heppell, 2010; Childs and Webb, 2012). Crudely speaking, social conservatives might share a platform with maternal and some radical feminists regarding women's familial roles or pornography and prostitution, for example (Evans, 2015), and they might also share a critique of the competitive, atomistic individual of liberal feminism, liberalism and capitalism, referred to above. Conservatives of an economically liberal bent might find themselves sitting even more comfortably next to liberal feminists (as indeed the leftist feminists already cited suggest), agreeing over a shared belief in individual rights, equal opportunities and justice, and acknowledging that women experience some disadvantages based on their sex and gender roles (Dillard, 2005). In the latter conception, there can be such a thing as a conservative feminist. They might not necessarily identify *as* feminists – although some do and do so publicly – but they will support a definition of 'gender equality' (Dovi, 2008, p. 154), and seek to undermine rather than promote gender hierarchies (Dovi, 2008, p. 163). They will advocate policies to improve the situation for women or claim a right for women (Celis, 2003, p. 3), via cautious reform (Dillard, 2005), even as they recognize that perfect justice cannot be achieved because of human nature.

There is evidence of liberally-feminist attitudes within the UK Conservative Party, and much less evidence of socially conservative or anti-feminist conservative ones, akin to those evident in the United States (citing Dodson, 2006; Reingold, 2008; Childs and Webb, 2012). Indeed, the 2010 Conservative women MPs are



overwhelmingly socially liberal (Heppell, 2013), and had the potential to play the role of the missing 'Tory left' (Bale, 2012). The Cameron Conservative party can be thought of as constituted by three major groupings (Bryson and Heppell, 2010): Traditional Conservatives, Thatcherites and Liberal Conservatives. Liberal Conservatives appear the most feminist in the abstract but it is traditional ones who are most feminist when it comes to specific policies. Traditional Conservatives are more likely to be female and working class than those who comprise the other groups. Surveys and interviews with Conservative MPs, party members, supporters and identifiers also reveal clear sex differences. In short, women are more economically wet, more centrist, less post-materialist and more one-nation (Childs and Webb, 2012; Campbell and Childs, 2014). Women members are more pre-disposed to feminism than men, whether in terms of equal opportunities, women's suitability for politics, the impact of women's paid work on family life and child care. The issue of equal pay polarizes women and male members' views further. These findings have an additional purchase on feminization debates: the Conservative party may not want more women representatives but to represent its women voters/supporters/members' views it might well need women MPs, which takes us back from substantive representation to descriptive representation, the first dimension of feminization, with which we opened this piece. The logical manifestation of identifying both the potential for conservative feminism and the presence of liberally feminist women within the contemporary Conservative party is that these concerns and perspectives would become more central to mainstream Conservative party policy.

There is, however, an alternative reading of conservative feminization in general. The starting point is the acknowledgement of women's heterogeneity and the corresponding diversity of views among women (Celis and Childs, 2012); feminism does not speak for, or to, all women (Schreiber, 2008). One should not then be surprised to see a competition amongst political actors over what constitutes women's interests. To be sure, conservative ones might sometimes espouse feminist politics (of some sort, probably of the liberal persuasion as noted above), but they might not and, indeed, they may articulate explicit anti-feminist perspectives. In other words, conservative representatives may well share a political agenda with (some) feminists – at times agreeing on what constitutes women's issues – but conservative representatives frequently have very different views on what constitutes women's interests. This is the distinction between women's issues (the broad policy category) and women's interests (the content given to this category by various actors) (Celis *et al.*, 2014). Accordingly, to judge conservative political actors – or in this case, the Conservatives under Cameron – only against feminist criteria will both likely find them 'failing' to act like their leftist feminist sisters, and miss their acts that, while not feminist, are nonetheless gendered (Erzeel and Celis, 2009).⁹ In other words, this second reading suggests the possibility of feminization (read: the inclusion and integration of women's ideas) without this requiring the policy direction to be a feminist one.



Conservative (Coalition) Policies on Women, the Family, and Gendered Austerity

The impetus behind the policy feminization of the Conservative party under Cameron was a belated acknowledgement that British society had undergone a transformation in gender relations; the values of liberal feminism have undoubtedly triumphed at the societal level and within electoral politics (Fraser, 2009; Campbell, 2014).¹⁰ Women have made huge advances in educational and employment terms, even if gender equality still remains a long way off, and even as women's experiences are affected by their other social characteristics. If only for reasons of electoral competitiveness the Conservative party needed to rethink its position. Its 2010 general election manifesto is a good marker of Cameron's starting position. In this the party had much more to say than at previous elections and they were more competitive relative to the other parties too. Analysis suggests that Conservative pledges for women reflected feminist analysis in so far as gender relations are recognized as being bifurcated, hierarchical and problematic (Childs and Webb, 2012). Nevertheless, what the party was offering to the electorate needs further unpacking: it contained liberal feminist policies for sure, but this was alongside socially conservative ones, and an overarching economic framework that would turn out to be highly gendered. Such a mix should not be surprising of course, reflecting as it does the earlier 'uneasy alliance' of New Right, neo-conservatism and neo-liberalism (Gamble, 1994; Bashevkin, 1998).

The 2010 manifesto was notable in stretching the limits of liberal arguments about the role of the state (Ashe *et al*, 2010; Campbell and Childs, 2010). Take gender pay audits, for example: there would be statutory regulation where companies were found guilty of sex discrimination (*ibid.*; Williams and Scott, 2011) alongside voluntary measures and desired attitudinal change on behalf of companies. There was also a stretching of conservative analysis in that the gender pay gap was understood as resulting not from individual actions but were of a more systemic nature (*cf* Campbell, 1987). The Conservatives were moreover offering policies that recognized and encouraged women's participation in the workplace – not least its emphasis on extending the right to request flexible working – but also in terms of re-balancing mother care with flexible parental leave (see Campbell and Childs, 2010). Again, a business case would be made (Williams and Scott, 2011). At the same time, and seemingly in Cameron's mind not incompatibly, was a commitment to recognize marriage in the tax system. A policy he was committed to before becoming party leader, this symbolic move reinforces a single earner model, and arguably incentivizes women to stay at home (Bashevkin, 2014; see also IPPR, 2013). Critics would see in this policy a clear socially conservative bias, even as Cameron's would have the policy include gay relationships.

This balancing of modern and more traditional gender roles also plays out in the ways in which some women's issues can be considered 'safe' for conservatives and



the Conservative Party to address (Ruiz-Jimenez, 2009; Childs and Webb 2012, 2014; Hayton, 2010). This is because they leave untouched, for the most part, established relations and hierarchies. Such issues include gendered crime, women's 'cultural degradation', and the problem of 'sex without commitment' (Dillard, 2005; Campbell and Childs, 2015). Domestically and internationally the Coalition government has introduced a series of measures to address women's health, violence against women, and overseas development (Campbell and Childs, 2015; Yurdakul and Korteweg, 2013; House of Commons Library, 2014; House of Commons Home Affairs Committee, 2011; Jenkinson and Tapp; Hester et al, 2008; Gill and Mitra-Khan, 2012; Gill 2011; Charsley et al, 2012). Legislative interventions include: making stalking a specific offence (Bryson, 2012); the enactment of the 2010 EU Commission's anti-trafficking directive, in the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012;¹¹ the development of a Modern slavery Bill in 2014–2015; and the introduction of an action plan regarding FGM (it was first made illegal in 1985) (CEDAW, 2011, p. 55.). May, the Home Secretary Chaired a national oversight group on domestic violence, and there would be consideration of making domestic violence a separate crime (www.theguardian.com/society/2014/jul/25/david-cameron-consider-new-domestic-violence-offence). The Prime Minister hosted a summit in 2014 on FGM. Many of these interventions have been high-profile media events: the then Foreign Secretary William Hague walking, sub-Reservoir Dogs, alongside Angelina Jolie and Brad Pitt, most notably. That said, feminist critics forcefully questioned the level of substantive support amidst funding cuts (Bryson, 2012; Walby and Towers, 2012) and debated the appropriateness of particular measures such as criminalizing FGM. The reliance on gender relations as the consequence of choice, as noted of the pre-2010 Conservative stance, is another means by which conservatives can offer liberally feminist policies without endorsing gender-transforming outcomes. In Conservative feminist rhetoric choice plays out most clearly in respect of women and men's work and family life. Although the focus on 'choice' allows the party to side step issues around the normative value of gender roles it leaves unanswered questions about whether women have access to the resources to enable them to make their choice (Childs and Webb, 2012; Campbell, 2014; IPPR, 2013).

Families have become a dominant actor in UK political debate in recent years. Across all of the three main party manifestos, and distinct from manifestos of the previous decade (Childs *et al*, 2012) women (as a category) are much less likely to be 'named'. The audience to whom the parties are now speaking are parents and families. Cameron declared in 2008 that his would be the 'most family friendly' government in Europe (news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk_politics/7298364.stm), but such a commitment need not automatically make it the most 'women friendly'. Leaving aside for the moment discussion of austerity politics, substantive commitments to the family came rather late in the Government's term. The introduction of a marriage tax allowance – quintessential Cameron – would not come into effect until 2015/2016 (Tax, Marriage & Transferable Allowances SN4392 (31 March 2014) Antony Seely,



Business and Transport Section (House of Commons Library)). The policy was stymied by the more socially liberal Chancellor, George Osborne, and it was unsupported by the LibDems (Campbell and Childs, 2015). Cameron's emphasis on marriage – even in its progressive gay friendly form – risked appearing old fashioned rather than 'modern' (see also Bale, 2010, pp. 311, 316). Symbolic rather than substantive, not even Cameron believes that the couple of hundred pounds will persuade people to get married, the policy risks recontamination of Conservative brand, by those voters who regard marriage as either a 'lifestyle choice' independent of any moral value, or something that one aspires to but many not necessarily achieve (this is Campbell and Childs's (2010) 'golden hello' to the younger, blonder model).¹² It also undermines the principle of independent taxation. Moreover, while gay marriage may well sit easily with the party's metropolitan elite, and indeed wider society, it is less comfortable for many Conservative MPs and party members who continue to maintain that marriage by its very definition a union between a man and a woman.

Around Cameron, the claim to be the party of marriage and the family is evidently not felt to be incompatible with more modern views of gender roles and relation. In summer 2014 – the 'silly season' – Cameron's commitment to the family took centre stage: from now on all domestic policies would be subject to a family 'impact' assessment.¹³ Cameron's definition of the family was once again inclusive (see also Hayton, 2010): homosexuality would be no barrier to adoption, for example. But it still valorizes the two parent, two child family. Cameron was careful to credit the 'inspirational single parents' out there; acknowledge the victims of domestic violence; and those for whom splitting up is 'the right thing'.¹⁴ In a further nod to feminist activism he responded positively to the social media campaign to have mothers' names on marriage certificates as well as fathers. Nevertheless, the dominant rationale was socially conservative: 'As a husband and a father' albeit not a 'perfect' example of either, Cameron declared, the family is at the 'heart of my politics'. It is before the welfare state and a bulwark against the 'all powerful state'. It is the answer to crime, addiction, welfare dependency and educational outcomes. Policy wise, Cameron committed to funding relationship counselling; the role of health visitors in supporting the 'whole family' rather than just the mother and child; the introduction of family friendly internet filters; the age rating of online music videos; and extending to an additional 400 000, troubled family initiatives. In all this, the continuity from Thatcherism, the Centre for Social Justice's policy analysis and the pre-2010 Conservative policy review under Iain Duncan Smith (IDS) is clear (see also Buckler and Dolowitz, 2012). Indeed, it is to IDS that responsibility for delivering the family impact pledge falls.¹⁵ Jill Rutter, from the Institute for Governance, is sceptical about the substance of Cameron's personal intervention (www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk/blog/8785/family-friendly-government/). It is a 'U-turn' on impact assessments which the government had regarded as 'internal bureaucracy'. That the family will be subject to impact assessments while the Government had got rid of gender equality audits (Bashevkin, 2014; Campbell,



2014; Campbell and Childs, 2015), is telling about the relative priorities accorded women versus families. The family audits also lack institutional backing and ignore the ‘many problems with existing policies’ (Rutter, 2014). A few days later it was announced that the Conservatives, led by the Home Secretary, would consult on the aforementioned introduction of a new law on domestic violence. The absence of this from Cameron’s speech is similarly revealing.

Of course, the individual measures signposted by Cameron are beneficial to some families. The Women’s Budget Group analysis of Coalition child care policies welcomes the greater provision of free child care and the subsidization of the cost of child care, even as they state their preference for public provision of child care in opposition to free-market provision (Campbell and Childs, 2015). But there is also in this insufficient appreciation of the family as an institution comprised of individuals among whom there may very well be differential power relations, and differential resources. Nor is there acknowledgement that women’s participation in the public sphere remains significantly constrained by gender roles in private; that women may well find it difficult to achieve the status of the competitive individual demand by, and rewarded in, the public sphere (Childs and Webb, 2012). In this, feminist analysis of what is necessary to bring about gender role transformation, not least the sharing of domestic responsibilities, and the accommodation of care is underplayed (Fraser, 2009; McRobbie, 2013). Note however that Sheryl Sandberg’s *Lean In*, according to Benn (2012, p. 226) contains a ‘sharp recognition of how hostile traditional capitalism is to family life’. The right to request flexible working has been extended, and welcomingly so; there is greater child-care support; and parental leave has become more flexible since 2010, but added together these fall short of a transformation in gender roles. Many women remain employed in low-paid part-time work, self-employed on low wages, and undertake a disproportionate amount of child and elder care, and housework (Macleavy, 2011).

Whether a government acts ‘for women’ is not just about its policies on explicitly women’s issues; it is also about its wider policies. And it is in respect of the Coalition’s austerity economic policy that much sustained feminist criticism has been garnered.¹⁶ Prioritizing spending cuts over tax rises would always disproportionately disadvantage women facing the ‘triple jeopardy’ of greater reliance upon welfare state services, benefits, and employment. The Women’s Budget Group, the Fawcett Society, and the Labour Party have all sought to lay bare the economic costs for women (see Campbell and Childs, 2015). Criticism of the Conservative part of the Coalition for its preference on spending cuts resides in a suspicion that these have an ideological as well as an economic underpinning (www.theguardian.com/commentsfree/2010/oct/24/ed-miliband-coalition-spending-cuts). Defenders admittedly will have little truck with much feminist criticism that austerity is a feminist issue, arguing that the policies are not designed to disproportionately affect women – the ‘collateral damage’ defence. Instead they will argue that ultimately women will



benefit from deficit reduction. It is by no means sure however that the Conservatives are not (in the meantime) running the risk of returning themselves to a more socially conservative family versus the state terrain. And recall too that Conservative women have more leftist attitudinal pre-dispositions, found at the supporter, identify, member and elite level and as a result a move towards a traditional conception of gender roles and a shift to the right ideologically may damage the party's attempts to secure women's votes

Conclusion: Modernization with a Masculine Face?

Conservative party modernization from 2005 onwards was supposed to have a female face: women's bodies – greater in number – would be a simple heuristic, confirming that the 'nasty' Tory party, identified by May, was no more. The woman voter, she who had been won over by Blair, would also now be targeted by Conservative policies that reflected the gendered reality of women's lives in the United Kingdom. In 2010 the Conservative Party was definitely more feminized than it had been hitherto (Childs and Webb, 2012). There were more Conservative women MPs returned to the House of Commons than ever before and the 2010 Manifesto offered a series of policies for women that addressed the balancing of work and family life, addressed violence against women, and addressed women and development concerns in particular. Feminization is however a process. And in respect of descriptive representation – the first dimension of feminization – the Conservative party have faltered since 2010. Refusing to accept the logic of quotas, even the 2010 'A list' equality promotion strategy is missing. Unsurprisingly to academics, and indeed for those in the party who have been most active over the last decade or so regarding the recruitment of women, the numbers are not looking especially good for 2015.

The second dimension of feminization is rather harder to judge. It is evident that across a series of women's issues the Conservative party have instituted an array of liberally feminist policies; in many instances taking forward the legacy of New Labour. Against this, emphasis on the family and most especially the privileging of marriage acts as a reminder of the limits of Conservative feminism in the social sphere. Serious questions remain too in respect of whether the Coalition has found it easier to act in a legislative fashion (symbolically) rather than provide the necessary funding to support such interventions (substantively). At the macro level the neo-liberal critique comes to the fore: it finds the Coalition Government guilty of making women pay for an austerity economics that was and is a left/right *and* gendered political choice. This charge maps onto feminist debates about whether feminism is by definition on the left, as resurgent socialist feminists suggest, which in turn would require the a leftist-feminist transformation of the Conservative party.



Notes

- 1 Whether Mrs Thatcher constituted a role model for women in politics has not been the subject of systematic academic research. See Childs (2004) for discussion of New Labour women MPs and role models. Anecdotally Conservative women MPs have spoken of her influence on their political participation.
- 2 101/120; 95/118; 98/128; 81/143 in 1997, 2001, 2005 and 2010, respectively.
- 3 See Appendix for the Party's response to the Women In Parliament APPG's request for information regarding Speaker's Conference Recommendations.
- 4 See the debate in *The Guardian* <http://www.guardian.co.uk/lifeandstyle/2008/aug/22/women> and The Subversive Cupcake company http://subversivecupcakes.co.uk/?page_id=28 and on the F Word http://www.thefword.org.uk/features/2012/08/cupcake_feminis
- 5 Added to these considerations should be the acknowledgement that any consensus of a straightforward relationship between descriptive and substantive representation has been questioned by scholars: whether a political party or government acts for women is much more complicated than the number of women MPs present in the political institution.
- 6 Note of course the rise of third and fourth wave feminism and debates about whether these go with or against the grain of neo-liberalism. See Evans (2015); Benn (2013a, b), not least in respect of the emphasis on cultural rather than material critiques.
- 7 Evans notes how such neo-liberal feminist discourse is evident in claims made by politicians across the political spectrum.
- 8 Evans that what counts as 'left' on the party spectrum in the United Kingdom is some distance from the left of extra-parliamentary politics. Personal correspondence.
- 9 See Celis and Childs (2012) for a discussion of three criteria by which to 'test' the quality of representative claims made by conservative representatives: (i) the strength of the relationship with conservative women's concerns in society; (ii) correspondence between a particular claim(s) and subsequent action; (iii) how particular claim(s) fit with other claims.
- 10 See Evans (2015) for discussion of contemporary feminist movement politics in the United Kingdom and the United States.
- 11 Hof C 2014 SN/HA/4324. See also CEDAW (2011).
- 12 Bale (2010, p. 340) writes of concerns that the policy would render the 'left and abandoned wife worse off than a man on his fourth marriage'.
- 13 This intervention restated some of his comments made back in 2008 (Hayton, 2010, p. 497). But see also Stephenson 2014.
- 14 Hayton (2010) suggests that Cameron at least in 2010 had been able to balance marriage with a tolerance of other groups.
- 15 Bale (2010, p. 340) writes that modernizers were worried about Cameron's closeness to IDS.
- 16 Such criticism speaks of course to the already noted feminist debates regarding neo-liberalism.

References

- Annesley, C, Gains, F. and Rummery, K. (2007) *Women and New Labour: Engendering Politics*. Bristol: Policy Press.
- Annesley, C. and Gains, F. (2014) 'Can Cameron Capture Women's Votes? The Gendered Impediments to a Conservative Majority in 2015'. *Parliamentary Affairs*.
- APPG WIP (2014) Improving Parliament. <http://issuu.com/appgwinp/docs/appg-report-online-final/1?e=12673634/8581247>.



- Ashe, J., Campbell, R., Childs, S. and Evans, E. (2010) Stand by your man. *British Politics* 5(4): 455–480.
- Bale, T. (2010) *The Conservative Party*. Cambridge: Polity.
- Bale, T. (2012) Whither the Tory left? The demise of progressive conservatism. *Public Policy Research* 19(2): 84–91.
- Bashevkin, S. (1998) *Women on the Defensive*. Chicago, IL: CUP.
- Benn, M. (2012) is actually Benn 2013b. *What Should we Tell our Daughters*. London: Hodder and Stoughton.
- Benn, M. (2013a) After post-feminism: Pursuing material equality in a digital age. *Juncture* 20(3): 223–227.
- Benn, M. (2013b) *What Should We Tell Our Daughters?* London: Hodder.
- Bryson, V. (2012) As austerity measures begin to take full effect the gap between the Conservative party's 'women friendly' rhetoric and reality will become more apparent. <http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/politicsandpolicy/category/valerie-bryson/>.
- Bryson, V. and Heppell, T. (2010) Conservatism and feminism: The case of the British conservative party. *Journal of Political Ideologies* 15(1): 31–50.
- Buckler, S. and Dolowitz, D. (2012) Ideology matters: Party competition, ideological positioning and the case of the consv party under David Cameron. *The British Journal of Politics and International Relations* 14: 576–594.
- Campbell, B. (1987) *Iron Ladies*. London: Virago.
- Campbell, B. (2013) *End of Equality*. London: Seagull.
- Campbell, R. and Childs, S. (2010) Wives, wags and mothers But what about women MPs, sex and gender at the 2010 general election. In: A. Geddes and J. Tonge (eds.) *Britain Votes: The 2010 General Election*, Special Edition Of *Parliamentary Affairs*, 63(4). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Campbell, R. and Childs, S. (2014) 'To the left, to the right', representing conservative women's interests. *Party Politics*.
- Campbell, R. and Childs, S. (2015) What the coalition did for women: A new gender consensus, coalition division and gendered austerity. In: A. Seldon and M. Finn (eds.) *The Coalition Effect*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Campbell, R., Childs, S. and Lovenduski, J. (2006) Equality guarantees and the conservative party. *Political Quarterly* 7(1): 18–27.
- Celis, K. (2004) 'Substantive and Descriptive Representation: Investigating the Impact of the Voting Right and of Descriptive Representation on the Substantive Representation of Women in the Belgian Lower House (1900-1979)', Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, Chicago, IL, September 2-5.
- Celis, K. and Childs, S. (2012) The substantive representation of women: What to do with conservative claims? *Political Studies* 60(1): 213–225.
- Celis, K., Childs, S., Kantola, J. and Krook, M.L. (2014) Constituting women's interests through representative claims. *Politics and Gender* 10(2): 149–174.
- Centre for Women and Democracy (CWD), <http://www.cfd.org.uk/>.
- Charsley, K., Storer-Church, B., Benson, M. and Van Hear, N. (2012) 'Marriage Related Migration in the UK'. *International Migration Review* 46(4): 861–890.
- CEDAW (2011) *CEDAW/C/GBR/7*.
- Childs, S. (2004) *New Labour's Women MPs*. London: Routledge.
- Childs, S. (2008) *Women and British Party Politics*. London: Routledge.
- Childs, S. and Webb, P. (2012) *Sex, Gender and the Conservative Party: From Iron Lady to Kitten Heels*. Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Childs, S. and Webb, P. (2014) Women, the family and contemporary conservative party politics: From Thatcher to Cameron. In: S. Farrall and C. Hay (eds.) *The Legacy of Thatcherism*. London: British Academy.



- Childs, S., Webb, P. and Marthaler, S. (2010) Constituting and substantively representing women: Applying new approaches to a UK case study. *Politics and Gender* 6(2): 176–192.
- De Benedictis, S. (2012) Feral' parents: Austerity parenting under neoliberalism. *Studies in the Maternal* 4(2).
- Dillard, A. D. (2005) Adventures in conservative feminism. *Society* 42(3).
- Dodson, D. L. (2006) *The Impact of Women in Congress*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Dovi, S. (2007) *The Good Representative*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Dovi, S. (2008) Theorizing women's representation in the United States. In: C. Wolbrecht, K. Beckwith and L. Baldez (eds.) *Political Women and American Democracy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Erzeel, S. and Celis, K. (2009) Women, feminists and the left: Critical actors in the substantive representation of women? A cross-national study of MPs and the substantive representation of women. Paper presented at the ECPR General Conference, Potsdam, 10–12 September.
- Evans, E. (2015) *Title TBC*. Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Fawcett Society Women and the Economy. <http://www.fawcettsociety.org.uk/our-work/campaigns/women-economy/>.
- IPPR (2013) *Great Expectations, Exploring the Promises of Gender Equality*. London: IPPR.
- Fraser, N. (2009) Feminism, and the cunning of history. *New Left Review* 56.
- Gamble, A. (1994) *The Free Economy and the Strong State*. Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Gill, A. (2011) Exploring the Viability of Creating a specific Offence for Forced Marriage in England and Wales: Report on Findings. University of Roehampton, July.
- Gill, A. and Mitra-Kahn, T. (2012) Modernising the *other*: Assessing the ideological underpinnings of the policy discourse on forced marriage in the UK. *Policy and Politics* 14(1): 107–122.
- Hayton, R. (2010) Conservative party modernisation and David Cameron's politics of the family. *Political Quarterly* 81(4): 492–500.
- Heppell, T. (2012) Ministerial selection and the Cameron gov't: Female ministerial repre and the one-third objective. *Representation* 48(2): 209–219.
- Heppell, T. (2013) Cameron and liberal conservatism. *British Journal of Politics and International Relations* 15: 340–361.
- Heppell, T. and Lightfoot, S. (2012) We will not balance the books on the backs of the poorest people in the world: Understanding conservative party strategy on international aid. *Political Quarterly* 83(1): 130–138.
- Hester, M., Chantler, K., Gangoli, G., Devgon, J., Sharma, S. and Singleton, A. (2008) Forced marriage: The risk factors and the effect of raising the minimum age for a sponsor, and of leave to enter the UK as a spouse or fiancé(e), www.bristol.ac.uk/vawrg.
- Hill, M. (2013) Arrogant posh boys? The social composition of the parliamentary conservative party and the effect of Cameron's 'A' list'. *Political Quarterly* 84(1): 80–89.
- House of Commons Library (2014) Human trafficking: UK Responses, SN/HA/4324.
- House of Commons Home Affairs Committee (2011) Forced Marriage, Eighth Report of Session 2010–2012.
- Jenkinson, S. and Tapp, D. Forced Marriage – Culture or Crime?.
- Kerr, P., Byrne, C. and Foster, E. (2011) Theorizing Cameronism. *Political Studies* 9: 193–207.
- Kittlison, M. and Caul, (2006) *Challenging Parties, Changing Parliaments*. Columbus: Ohio State Univ. Press.
- Larner, W. (2000) Neo-liberalism: Policy, ideology, governmentality. *Studies in Political Economy* 63(Autumn): 5–25.
- Lovenduski, J. (2005) *Feminizing Politics*. Cambridge: Polity.
- MacLeavy, J. (2011) A 'new politics' of austerity, workfare and gender? The UK coalition gov't's welfare reform proposals. *Cambridge Journal of Regions, Economy and Society* 4: 355–367.
- McRobbie, A. (2013) Feminism, the family and the new 'mediated' maternalism. *New Formations: A Journal of Culture/Theory/Politics* 80: 80–81.



- Norris, P. and Lovenduski, J. (1995) *Political Recruitment*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Quin, T., Barra, J. and Bartle, J. (2011) The UK coalition agreement of 2010: Who won?. *Journal of Elections, Public Opinion and Parties* 21(2): 295–312.
- Reingold, B. (2008) *Legislative Women, Getting Elected, Getting Ahead*. Colorado: Reiner.
- Rasmussen, J. (1981) Female political career patterns and leadership disabilities in Britain. *Polity* 13(4): 600–620.
- Ruiz-Jimenez, A. M. (2009) Women and decision making participation within rightist parties in Portugal and Spain. *Análise Social* 44(191): 235–263.
- Rutter (2014) is referenced in the attached footnote: <http://www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk/blog/8785/family-friendly-government/>.
- Schreiber, R. (2008) *Righting Feminism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Speaker's Conference (2010) Speaker's Conference (on Parliamentary Representation). <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/spconf/239/239i.pdf>.
- Stephenson, M.A (2014) Misrepresentation and omission – An analysis of the review of the public sector equality duty. *Political Quarterly* 85(1): 75–80.
- Tax, Marriage & Transferable Allowances SN4392 (2014) *Antony Seely, Business and Transport Section*. House of Commons Library.
- Walby, S. and Towers, J. (2012) Measuring the impact of cuts in public expenditure on the provision of services to prevent violence against women and girls. *Safe – The Domestic Abuse Quarterly* 41.
- WBG (2010a) *Spending Review 2010*. WBG, http://www.wbg.org.uk/RRB_Reports_4_1653541019.pdf.
- WBG (2010b) *2010 Budget*. WBG, http://wbg.org.uk/documents/WBG_Emergency_Budget_Response_June_2010.pdf.
- WBG (2010c) *Report on Party Manifestos*, http://wbg.org.uk/RRB_Reports_12_3556891183.pdf.
- WBG (2011a) *Budget 2011*. WBG, http://www.wbg.org.uk/index_7_282363355.pdf.
- WBG (2011b) *Gender Analysis Changes Indirect Tax Intro by Coalition 2010–1*. WBG, http://wbg.org.uk/pdfs/Indirect_tax_Budget_2011_final_report_June_20.pdf.
- WBG (2012a) *Budget 2012*. WBG, <http://wbg.org.uk/pdfs/The-Impact-on-Women-of-the-Budget-2012-FINAL.pdf>.
- WBG (2012b) *AFS 2011*. WBG, <http://wbg.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/The-Impact-on-Women-of-the-AFS-2011.pdf>, accessed summer 2014.
- WBG (2013a) *Impact on Women of AFS 2013*. WBG, http://wbg.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/The-Impact-on-Women-of-Autumn-Financial-Statement-2013_final.pdf, accessed summer 2014.
- WBG (2013b) *April 2013 Budget*. WBG, http://wbg.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/WBG_Budget-Analysis_2013.pdf, accessed summer 2014.
- WBG (2013c) *AFS 2012 and Welfare Benefits Up-Rating Bill 2013*. WBG, <http://wbg.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/WBG-AFS-2012-FINAL-2.pdf>, accessed summer 2014.
- Williams, S. and Scott, P. (2011) The nature of convs party modernization under David Cameron. *Parliamentary Affairs* 64(3): 513–529.
- Women's Budget Group (WBG) Budget (2014) Giveaways to men, paid for by women.
- Yurdakul, G. and Korteweg, A. (2013) Gender equality and immigrant integration: Honor killing and forced marriage debates in the Netherlands, Germany, and Britain. *Women's Studies International Forum* 41: 204–214.



Appendix

Table A1: Conservative response to speaker's conference recommendations (APPG WIP, 2014)

Guidelines and support on diversity for local Party Community champions and improved talent spotting	Regional Party team are tasked to support local Associations to encourage diversity Vice Chairmen for Women, Disabilities, BME, LGBT and Youth appointed Focused outreach within under-represented groups and in local government by Conservative Women's Organisation and Conservative Disability Forum
Clarity on the role of a MP	MP's videos on 'Life as a MP' Case Studies on MPs on Women2Win website
Monitor background of MPs	Candidate profiles on website to view publically Disclosed details are monitored centrally
Experience required for MPs	Diverse experience and backgrounds welcomed No requirement to have worked in politics Parliamentary candidates assessed on a competency framework
Role of Party Leaders to support diversity	Minister for Women & Equalities at Cabinet table First Asian MP appointed to the Cabinet
Diversity awareness training	Coaching provided to local Associations and selection committees in key seats
Monitor progress on diversity	Vice Chairmen attend weekly meetings with Party Chairman to review progress Prime Minister personally leads and receives regular reports
Publish selection details	Details of all selected candidates published online
Publish data on diversity	Details of all selected candidates published online Aim is for gender parity in Parliament
Ceiling for expenses during selection	A limit on materials produced already exists
Expectations of candidates and Associations	Expectations explained and discussed individually as well as at Candidates Association network
Mentoring and buddy systems for candidates	Mentoring and coaching provided by MPs (male & female), Women2Win and CWO
Training for candidates	Programme of training is available for candidates MPs approached when required
Central list of candidates for internships and vacancies	Central list will become outdated too quickly
Campaigning code of conduct	Code of conduct for all candidates
Policy on maternity, paternity and caring leave	Personally agreed with Whips – but very supportive to date
Pairing to support MPs leave	Already in place where needed
Information for disabled MPs	Support this and will pass on information

Full update available at: <http://appgwomeninparliamentinquiry.wordpress.com/>